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# The LUTHERAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

*what is it?*



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*Why do many Lutheran congregations maintain schools when public schools are available to all children?*

Lutherans know that public schools are necessary, and therefore they support them exactly as all citizens do. Lutheran schools, then, are not opposition schools. But supporters of Lutheran schools believe that education must do more than prepare for a life on earth. In the Lutheran view, faith in God and in the Savior Jesus Christ constitutes the heart of wisdom. Therefore education needs to be tied up with Christ and with God's Word and will throughout. To achieve such education many Lutheran congregations maintain their own schools. They simply carry their Christian convictions to the logical conclusion by establishing schools which provide the same Christian instruction and training which is given in the Christian home.

It is interesting to note that Christian schools are gaining in favor, not only among Lutherans, but among many others who take their Christianity seriously and who want also their children to take it seriously. Christian schools appeal to both Protestants and Roman Catholics. They appeal even to large numbers of parents



who belong to no church, but who sense the value of a Christian training and are more than willing to pay for it. As a result, Lutheran schools must annually turn away a large number of children for whom they have no room.

### How does the curriculum of the Lutheran school differ from that of the public school?

For one thing, instruction in the Bible is given daily, in keeping with God's commands: "Train up a child in the way he should go" (Prov. 22:6) and "Teach them diligently" (Deut. 6:7). This instruction would be impossible in the public school. The greatest difference is, however, that all subject matter is considered in relation to God and His will. Lutheran educators believe that in the sight of God there should really be no such thing as "secular" education, but that God's purposes should be emphasized in everything. Thus scientific achievement is intended for the glory of God and the benefit of man, not for self-glorification or destruction. National resources are to be used wisely and economically, with the welfare of future generations in mind. History reveals God's dealings with man, and its lessons are to be heeded. These are only examples to indicate how the curriculum of the Lutheran school differs from that of the public school. Christian viewpoints are emphasized in all instruction.



Besides this distinctively Christian emphasis in the curriculum, the pupils in Lutheran schools are constantly under Christian guidance and training, and prayer and worship are part of every school day. The Lutheran school, therefore, is clearly and distinctively Christian in its teaching, training, and outlook. It impresses and applies Bible teaching in a way that cannot be matched by the Sunday school or the other part-time agencies of Christian education.

### What textbooks are used in Lutheran schools?

In Religion, Church History, and certain other school subjects The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod provides its own textbooks. These books are produced under the supervision and direction of Synod's Board for Parish Education. In some of the school subjects books of other publishers are used, but these are carefully screened to make sure that they contain as little as possible of teaching that is contrary to Christian beliefs and practices. Such books are used in connection with a course of study which outlines the Christian viewpoint for the various school subjects and which indicates what the objectives and curriculum of a Christian school ought to be. Lutheran teachers also make use of various professional books which outline the Christian principles that underlie a Lutheran education. Likewise, they keep themselves informed in the field of general education and school administration.

### Just how can the Lutheran school help my child?



It keeps the child conscious of the fact that faith in the Savior Jesus Christ is essential for eternal happiness as well as for happiness here and now. It daily supports this faith by the teaching of the Word of God. It teaches the child what a Christian life is, and through guidance, training, and admonition encourages the child to live as a Christian. At the same time the Lutheran school gives the child as good an education in the common school branches as any other school; better in fact, because, as the Christian point of view is developed, the child learns to see things as God wants him to see them. The Lutheran school can do this for your child, by the grace of God.

### What can the Lutheran school do for my home?

The Lutheran school trains for obedience and for Christian behavior. In short, the school is concerned about making your child a better

child by means of Christian instruction and training. A Christian training is best achieved when home and school work closely together, when both have the same purposes, and when they confer from time to time in the interest of the child. While even the Christian child remains a sinner, his gratitude for salvation through Jesus Christ, as well as his conscience, sharpened by the

Word of God, will make child training in the home much easier. Thus an obedient, helpful, Christian child brings joy and happiness into the home. Here is where the Christian school is a great aid to Christian parents.



### What can the school do for our congregation?

The quality of a Christian congregation depends on the quality of its members. Strength of faith in the individual members and the willingness to do the will of God in all things make congregations strong. These are the qualities toward which the training in Lutheran schools is directed. The daily instruction and training in the Lutheran school strengthens the congregation, because it strengthens the individual. Several extensive studies have shown that congregations which maintain schools contribute more per capita for home purposes and missions than congregations without schools; congregations with schools, generally speaking, are also

more successful in enlisting members for the choir, for Sunday school teaching, and for other activities in the church. Also, a surprisingly large number of pastors and teachers have had parochial school training in their youth. Thus the Lutheran school helps in providing active church workers for the home congregation as well as for the church at large.

### What can the school do for my community and country?

A community or country is what its citizens are. The larger the number of Christian, law-abiding, active citizens, the better the community or country will be. As in the case of the home and the congregation, the community is strengthened because the individual educated and trained in the Christian school is the kind of person who helps to make for a strong community. When a nation is rocked by dishonesty and scandals, it is a sign that large numbers of individual citizens have failed in understanding or in discharging their civic responsibilities. When godlessness increases and threatens the safety of a nation, it is a sign that individuals have gone wrong. The need of our country is for Christian citizens, and the Lutheran school helps to provide them. The Lutheran school emphasizes Christian knowledge, Christian attitudes, and Christian behavior. It seeks to

give its pupils a faith to live by, and moral stamina which can stand up under temptations and difficulties. It trains for Christian citizenship which is honest, dependable, fair, strong, and courageous, out of love for God and in obedience to God. The Christian has the best training and the best possible motives for good citizenship.

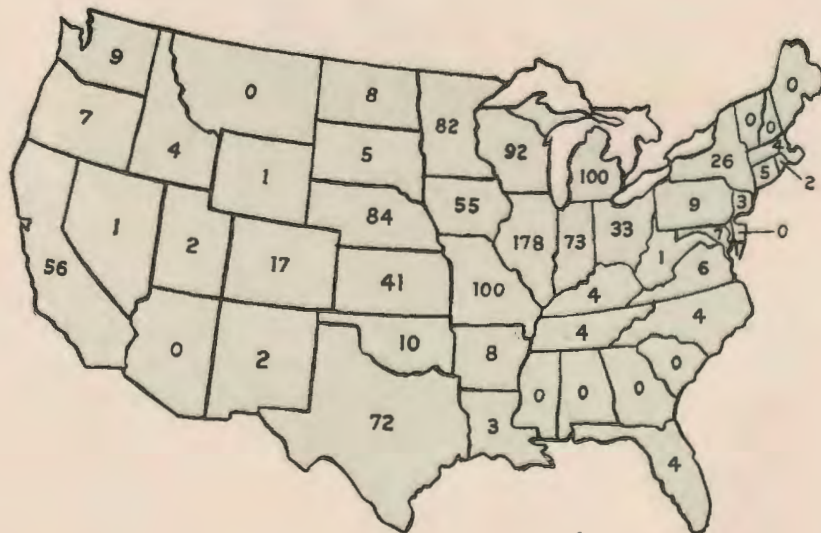


### How many Lutheran schools are there?

In 1951 The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod had 1,271 schools with an enrollment of 100,413 pupils. These pupils were taught by 3,273 teachers. The Wisconsin Synod also maintains several hundred schools, and smaller numbers are found in other Lutheran bodies.

### Where are the elementary schools of the Missouri Synod located?

In 1950 Illinois had 178 schools, the highest number; Michigan and Missouri had an even 100 schools each; Minnesota, Nebraska, Wisconsin, between 75 and 99; California, Indiana, Iowa, Texas, between 50 and 74; New York, Ohio, Kansas, between 25 and 49; Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Nevada, Kentucky, West Virginia, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, Pennsylvania, Florida, North Dakota, Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Maryland, North Carolina, Virginia, Louisiana, Wyoming, Arkansas, Tennessee, 24 or less. There are ten States which have no Lutheran elementary school. Canada has six Lutheran schools; Mexico, two; Hawaii, one; and Cuba, one. Schools are maintained also in South America and in various other countries.



### How are teachers secured for Lutheran schools?

The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod maintains two teachers' colleges, one at River Forest, Illinois, the other at Seward, Nebraska. Both colleges train men and women teachers. Teachers may also be secured at times from other Lutheran colleges or other teacher training institutions.

### How are the teachers in Lutheran schools employed?

The men teachers, though not pastors, are regarded as ministers of religion, and they receive a call from a congregation similar to that of the pastor. Women teachers are usually employed under the terms of a "Solemn Agreement," in which the spiritual nature of their work is set forth.

### What is the cost of maintaining Lutheran elementary schools?

The cost varies, depending on the investment in buildings and equipment, the salaries paid the teachers, and the services which are furnished. A good school always costs considerable money, but the results justify the expenditure, for a Christian education is priceless. Most congregations maintaining schools save money on other congregational expenditures. The school building is often used for other purposes, such as Sunday school sessions, meetings, and recreational purposes. Usually one of the teachers serves the congregation as organist and choir director, or teachers perform other services

for which they have received some specialized training and preparation at a teachers' college. These extra services often result in a saving of money.

### How do the Lutheran elementary schools compare in achievement with the public schools?

In general achievement, as substantiated by tests, the Lutheran schools compare favorably. Most public high schools are glad to admit graduates of Lutheran elementary schools without examination, on recommendation of the principal. Over and above all this, graduates of Lutheran schools have received a thorough grounding in religious knowledge and a training in Christian life, which are the first essentials of a complete education and the chief benefits of the Christian school.

### How large must a congregation be in order to operate a school?

The answer depends on a number of factors. Many small congregations, some with fewer than 100 communicant members, maintain schools, because they fervently believe that a school can do more for the child, the home, the church, and the nation than the other agencies of Christian education can. The financial resources of the members must also be considered, but, in general, financial ability is not nearly so important in the maintenance of a school as the conviction that the school helps Christian parents and the church to provide the kind of Christian education for their children that God commands.



### Do others besides Lutheran churches maintain their own schools?

The Roman Catholics enrolled more children in their own parochial schools than any other church body. The National Union of Christian Schools sponsors schools for thousands of children in Dutch and Christian Reformed churches. Seventh-Day Adventists, Mennonites, and others also maintain schools. The National Association of Christian Schools sponsors schools in the church bodies which comprise the National Association of Evangelicals. Among the Protestant bodies in the United States, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod maintains the largest system of elementary schools.



One out of every eight elementary school children in the United States attends a parochial or a private school. A total of over 2½ million children were enrolled in such schools in 1951. What is more, the percentage of children attending such schools is increasing.

### How can a congregation go about opening a school?

Where there is a will, there is usually a way. Trust in God, fervent prayer, and careful planning will lead to success. District officials stand ready to offer advice and help. Printed materials and suggestions for congregations desiring to open schools may also be had from the Board for Parish Education of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Among these materials a tract titled "Planning a Lutheran School" is especially helpful. It offers a variety of suggestions for the very important committee which is to organize and promote the project.



**Is it practical for several congregations to maintain a school jointly?**

The answer depends on the nearness of the co-operating congregations to each other and on the working agreement which they set up. The number of interparish schools is growing, and experience has shown that it is feasible and practical for congregations to maintain schools co-operatively. Help and advice on this point may be had from District officials and from the Board for Parish Education of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod. A tract titled "Lutheran Central Schools" provides useful information regarding Lutheran interparish schools.

**Where do the pupils in Lutheran schools come from?**

Mostly they are children of members belonging to the congregations which maintain the schools. Some are children of unchurched parents who believe that their children ought to have a Christian school education and training. Some are children from other than Lutheran churches whose parents believe that the Lutheran school offers an education and training which will have a wholesome effect on their children. Approximately eight per cent of the pupils have no church connection, and another eight per cent belong to other churches.

**How might the benefits of the Lutheran schools be summarized?**

The Lutheran school trains the whole child — body, soul, and mind. It emphasizes Christian faith, Christian knowledge, Christian attitudes, and Christian conduct. It enables the church and the home to join hands in providing a Christian education which keeps God's gracious promise of salvation through Jesus Christ uppermost and which emphasizes training in Christian living. It enables the home and the school to work toward a common goal: the training of a Christian child who knows his duty toward God and his fellow man and who will be a good, useful citizen here, and eventually a blessed citizen of heaven.

WM. A. KRAMER

