

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
Office of National Mission

Policy Area 6: Lutheran Schools and Youth Ministry

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.” (Deut. 6:5-7)

Our Lutheran schools afford opportunities for mission work as they teach the Word of God and preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to Christians and non-Christians alike. Lutheran schools also exist for the purpose of assisting and supporting Christian parents in their God-given vocation of rearing their children in the Christian faith and life. Christian parents desire that their children grow up believing in their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and that they learn to live as faithful, responsible, God-fearing citizens in the world in which God has placed them. Advocacy for Lutheran schools within the Synod will emphasize doctrine and practice that is faithful to the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions; curricula that are informed and shaped by the educational reforms of the Lutheran Reformation; schools that are connected to Lutheran congregations and affordable to families; training of Lutheran teachers and administrators; and resources for assisting congregations in the establishment of new schools. Youth ministry will focus on teaching youth to pray, confess, and live faithfully in their vocations.

1. Lutheran Schools are to be closely associated with the Word and Sacrament ministries of local congregations and are to be under the doctrinal oversight of Lutheran pastors.
2. The ONM will work collaboratively with all Synod districts to identify and/or provide resources to schools to enhance their Gospel outreach to their communities, families and students, and to make Lutheran education available to all families within districts.
3. The ONM will work collaboratively with districts in identifying new areas for establishing Lutheran Schools within their districts by providing resource support (e.g., feasibility studies, financially sustainable models for funding, etc.) to the districts for congregations to establish schools alone or in cooperation with other congregations and circuits.
4. The ONM will work collaboratively with all Synod districts and congregations to identify and/or provide resources to establish and strengthen a Lutheran ethos in our schools and youth ministry (See 2016 Resolution 8-01A), emphasizing:
 - a. daily prayer which utilizes Holy Scripture, Luther’s Small Catechism, the hymnal, and the liturgical tradition of the Lutheran Church;
 - b. the centrality of the forgiveness of sins;
 - c. memorization of Holy Scripture and Luther’s Small Catechism;
 - d. ongoing training of teachers in Holy Scripture and our Lutheran Confessions;
 - e. integration of our scriptural and confessional worldview into all the arts, sciences, and academic disciplines, recognizing these disciplines as gifts of God to be informed by the Word of God;

- f. an understanding of the place of law in the secular and spiritual kingdoms;
 - g. honor and respect for parents and authorities as representatives of God;
 - h. a partnership and involvement with parents in every aspect of their child's education and spiritual growth;
 - i. the promotion of Christian vocation, characterized by faith in Christ and love for one's neighbor; and
 - j. the reception and acceptance of children and young adults from all backgrounds and cultures without partiality or prejudice.
5. The ONM will work collaboratively with the Concordia University System and other Synod stakeholders to ensure provision of resources and opportunities for continuing education for Lutheran teachers, administrators and youth leaders to be faithful to the Scriptures and the Confessions and effective in their respective callings.
 6. The ONM will grant accreditation to Lutheran schools, preschools, and early childhood centers that are consistent with the aforementioned policies (See also 2023 Resolution 12-01A).

Scriptural References for Policy Area: Lutheran Schools and Youth

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD *is* one!

[or "*The LORD is our God, the LORD alone,*" i.e., "He is the only one"]

⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

⁶ "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.

⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children,
and shall talk of them when you sit in your house,
when you walk by the way,
when you lie down,
and when you rise up.

⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Colossians 3:12-17

¹² Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; ¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do*. ¹⁴ But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. ¹⁵ And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. ¹⁷ And whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.