

SCHOOL LIGHT LINES



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Jesus' School . . .

“I Am Meek and Lowly in Heart” | Ken Kauffman

In the previous issue, we introduced the concept that Jesus' call to “take my yoke upon you” was the call of a rabbi to his school—“take my *school* upon you.” However, Jesus' description of Himself as a teacher was quite unlike those of the typical rabbi—“I am meek and lowly in heart.” It's doubtful other rabbis ever introduced themselves as meek and lowly, much less carried themselves in that way.

The teacher—not the lesson—is the power and force of the learning process. Jesus seemed to recognize this and wanted His students to know what kind of teacher He was.

Rabbi Jesus particularly singled out and called twelve students. Most of them would apprentice as future teachers. In those days students followed and virtually lived with the rabbi. They'd shadow him; watch his every move. They'd soak in his instructions. They'd observe and emulate his lifestyle and habits. A common metaphor was to say of a student, “He's covered in the dust of Rabbi x.”

Jesus' twelve students did likewise. They saw firsthand His lowliness and utter selflessness. He poured out His life for them—and for others not enrolled in His school. He adapted His instructions to the lowliest and slowest among them. He paid special attention to little children and rebuked the upper graders who hadn't yet learned His heart. He became small,

accessible, humble . . . to death . . . at the hands of rabbis that were not meek and lowly.

Rabbi Jesus was meek. When faced with the cruel taunts and accusations of His enemies, He was non-retaliatory. He taught His students to offer the other cheek—a strange new lesson—and modeled this new kind of love. And He was always invitational. “Come unto Me. Take My school . . .”

This Master Teacher understood (and taught) the fundamental principle that the student will be like his master. He said He was meek and lowly. He lived it out—perfectly. His students would bear the same characteristics. Not always perfectly, but meekness and lowliness would be evident in their lives.

Two millennia later. Rabbi Jesus is still inviting attendance at His school. Have you attended? Does meekness and lowliness describe your teacher-heart? Is your classroom one of the campuses of Jesus' school? [■](#)

Ken taught school for eight years, served on several school boards, and served as a Christian Light school rep for nearly eighteen years. He and his wife Barb have six children and eleven grandchildren. They recently moved to Virginia to work at Christian Light. Ken is the editor of LightLines.



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Acquiesce

Dear Julia,

The school board visited us yesterday evening. They were clear, kind, and proper—but left me fuming. It was about certain children checking other children's books and how this makes some of them feel . . . exposed? misused? jealous? Now they have asked us to deal with our checking some other way.

As if there were any good way to deal with checking. Do they realize, I stormed, that I work ten hours solid at school and still take books home? That without student help, I would be up till ten o'clock every night? That some teachers have mothers coming after school to help with the workload?


I have a definite suspicion a mother was behind this school board visit. Deborah failed an English lesson last week. When Deborah gets her feelings hurt, she takes a sob story home to a sympathetic mother. And I suspect this mother embellished the story to her sympathetic school-board-chairman husband. As a result, we are supposed to replace a perfectly operative method of checking with a way that caters to Deborah's sensitivities.

This morning, I have regained sanity, at least so far as to realize that three respectful men have addressed us in a respectful way, proposing a reasonable change, which hinders my teaching not one iota. If their suggestion doesn't work, we can tell them. If Plan B is to send Deborah's mother to help check, well, then we'll try that.

My number one focus must be to treat these men with the respect due them. How they reached their decision is not my business. Whether they caved in to their wives' tears or asked the bishop. Whether they drew a solution out of a hat or let the Bible fall open and took the verse they saw as an answer. So what if they are inexperienced, incompetent, or . . . right. Whichever. They are in authority—over me.

There is wisdom in respecting the position of authority, whether or not the men in that position are worthy. If I cannot conscientiously comply, I can refuse with humility and accept the consequences with grace. Often, though, it's not a matter of conscience. As in this case. A new checking arrangement will keep me flexible.

It's high time I quit fuming. Otherwise, guess who would be the sobbing, manipulative woman in these men's lives.

Sincerely,
Teacher Elizabeth 

Elizabeth Riall is a member of the Old Order Amish church in Humansville, Missouri. After homeschooling her siblings for two terms, and teaching in Ontario one winter, she has taught in the local one-room school since 2004.

I'm Glad They Tattled | Karlan's teacher

It was happening again—this boy-girl problem. Throughout my teaching years, I had concluded that if you ignored it, it went away, and if you fed it by drawing attention to it, it got bigger.

I was certain that was what the girls were whispering about. They looked disturbed and like they wanted me to notice. Karissa and Marilyn wiped quick tears as I stood with them on the back porch at school. The other students had all

left, another proof there was something amiss.

"Something appears to be bothering you," I ventured. "Can I help with anything?"

"Yes," Marilyn, the shyer one, spoke up. She looked at Karissa, uncertain how to proceed.

Karissa burst into tears.

"Are you bothered about something, Karissa?"

She nodded. Again, Marilyn spoke up. “Karlan is being terribly mean to Karissa. It’s not right.”

These problems were usually best avoided, but this time it could not be pushed away. The girls needed help and were appealing to me, their teacher.

After more inquiry, I understood their dilemma and agreed it wasn’t right.

Karissa burst into fresh tears. “But I don’t want Karlan to know I tattled.”

“But you didn’t really. Marilyn is the only one who told me anything that I can use to deal with Karlan. Are you okay with that involvement, Marilyn?”

“Yes! I told Karissa I will talk for that very reason.” She smiled.

Marilyn was Karlan’s “girlfriend,” and he detested Karissa, the new girl who had just moved into the community. And for the class picture (that a completely clueless photographer had taken), the students were arranged so that Karissa stood beside Karlan and so that David, his rival who also claimed Marilyn, stood beside Marilyn.

In Karlan’s mind, it was treason. The only way to resolve it was to treat Karissa with scorn. Thus, the girls’ anxiety.

It was tricky to be sure. I called Karissa’s mom first, who naturally knew all about the fiasco. “Even though I am glad if you can help the situation, I shake at the deeper pain they may have to go through to learn their lesson.”

“There has been some rivalry between the boys,” I stated, “and naturally none of us want this stuff in our school. This time I think it’s mainly Karlan’s problem. I will do my best to protect Karissa.”

I didn’t feel quite as confident as I sounded. I knew I would get Karlan’s parents’ complete support; I called them next. His mother Naomi was appalled. “I think he needs to apologize to Karissa face-to-face, and since most of the school knew what was happening, he can skip softball for a week. I know that’s what my husband would say.”

Well, that was a bigger, more public punishment than I had thought of, but Naomi and her husband generally left no stones unturned. “I will send him to school earlier tomorrow,” Naomi offered, “and will tell him that “Teacher Gladys needs to talk with him.”

Karlan came biking in half an hour before school started. His walk to my classroom was much more subdued than his usual rambunctious scramble. He walked up to my desk, his

head hanging.

“Good morning, Karlan. Do you know why I need to talk to you?”

“Not sure,” he muttered, his deep voice meek with emotion.

“Shall I help you out? What about the class picture?”

His head dropped farther. “Yeah?”

“You didn’t like where the photographer placed you and your classmates, right?”

With a heavy sigh, he nodded.

“Do you agree that the photographer had no idea that you wished to stand beside Marilyn and that you felt David should *not* get that privilege?” My heart ached for this young teen.

He looked up, his eyes full of misery. “Yes.”

“Do you also agree that there is only one person in this scenario who made any real mistakes?”

Again, he nodded.

“And that person is . . . ?”

“Me,” he answered in a cracked whisper.

“Thank you, Karlan. And then you took it on yourself to punish Karissa for the photographer’s ‘mistake’?” I air quoted.

He looked startled. “You know about that?” he whispered.

“It was Marilyn who told me, not Karissa. Marilyn is not letting you get away with such cowardly behavior. A man does not treat a woman like that. Nor does a friend let her friend be battered by unkindness.” I could only imagine how he was groaning inside—he now knew he had lost any chance with Marilyn.

“So, Karlan, what shall we do about this? How can it be resolved?”


“Whatever you say, Teacher. Whatever you say.” He was truly penitent.

“Then I will call Karissa in, and you need to apologize to her,” I said. “You will also miss a week of ball games. Most of the students knew what was happening, right?”

He nodded, blinking hard.

Karissa came in with tears, poor girl. Her mom had said Karissa was terribly worried she would cry and then Karlan would “hate her” all the more. But there was no anger left in him, just contrition. It was touching to hear him clear his case like a man.

He followed me into the hallway one day when no one else was around. “Thanks for helping me out of that mess with Karissa and Marilyn. I’m glad they told on me.”

My heart sang. “Thank You, God!” 



Effectively Reaching Them While Teaching Them

Connecting with the Girls Women | Jody Rhodes

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“Reach them while teaching them.” Ideal. Noble. Impactful. It’s what teachers dream about and aspire for, yet it’s often lost in daily routine, hormones, emotions, and enough drama to keep teachers on their knees. Reaching students’ hearts should be a major thrust of every Christian teacher’s vision, but explaining that process in an article is challenging.

Why should we reach them?

Why exert extra emotional energy into an already draining occupation?

First, can we ask for a better platform than within our classrooms where teacher and students interact closely every day? The *daily-ness* of teaching is perfect soil for exemplifying consistency and godly living.

Another *why* factor is that our young women’s souls are caught in the battle of right and wrong as well as seeking identity and security in the unsettled season of adolescence. The sobering reality is that they will find that identity and security somewhere; I want them to find it in a place of Truth. What better reason to invest in our young women than to realize that if we (the church) don’t win their hearts, something else will?

Added to the above arguments, it’s important for *me*. If I don’t invest in the lives and hearts of those in my classroom, I miss out on life-giving fulfillment. I can grow into a more empathetic, compassionate, nurturing person if I allow myself to feel, grow, and learn alongside the young women in my classroom.

How should we reach them?

While it’s true that there are no foolproof formulas to meaningful relationships, I have found a few tips to be true, no matter the demographics or community culture.

Genuine care. Relationships happen when we feel cared about—like we matter to the other person. The same is true within a classroom. However, genuine care is not an act; it is a heart posture. I will burn myself out by trying to make young women *feel* cared for if I don’t really care about them.

Notice the details. Show them you care by noticing small things. Are they having an off day? A piece of chocolate on their desk or a quick note on a quiz could be an appropriate response. Stay tuned with what is happening outside of school. Did they get their learner’s permit last night? Or what did the youth do over the weekend? Sometimes, I learn little details about the young women in my classroom through doodles they sketch during story time or quotes they pin onto their desk’s backboard. By keeping my ears and eyes open, I have access and opportunity for connection.

Offer yourself. As a teacher, I tend to distance myself from the young women in my classroom and adopt the “me and them” mentality—forgetting that they are human beings with human needs (and who usually want a relationship with their teacher!). I can offer myself to them by becoming a part of their world, remembering what it felt like to be thirteen or fourteen. Sometimes, it might be telling a humorous story from my adolescent years, or it might be as personal as an encouraging note tucked into a textbook. I have found that laughing with the young women in my classroom allows them to see my lighter side; as a result, they tend to share their joys with me in return. Offering myself to them relationally spans the gap between teacher and student.

Acknowledge their worth. We all like to be reminded that we have a purpose and gifts to offer

the world; young women are no exception. As we tune in to their lives, we will start to see areas where they shine. Tap into those areas by asking Jill if she would like to do some lettering on the chalkboard for program night. Could Harmony help first grade with flash cards tomorrow? Using their strengths validates and confirms their worth.

Good relationships within the classroom are a result of a strong connection with the Originator of relationships, the One who cares about every detail of our lives and daily offers Himself to those who seek Him. He values our humanity to the extent that He gave His Son to connect with us. God is the perfect example of connection and relationships. [u](#)

When not in the classroom with teenagers, Jody enjoys exploring the world through traveling, hiking, and reading. She also enjoys meaningful conversations with friends, iced maple breves, and a good game of softball. Her current teaching experience has taken her to the Northwoods of Wisconsin, where the cheese is as plentiful as the mosquitoes.

Johnny Lied Again | Mary Hein Dueck

His parents named him Johnny. From the first day of school, he filled the corners with bright smiles, sparkling eyes, and funny jokes. He was a monkeying clown. The times his shenanigans didn't turn out well, he laughed as hard as the rest of us.

There was the heart-stopping moment I caught him hanging from the porch rafters by one leg, bent at the knee. Then there was the time he was trying to drown a frog. Or the day he drafted a classmate to help dig a hole to China.

Once, Johnny slipped and fell at recess, as all boys do at times. “Johnny fell down!” cried a classmate.

“And broke his crown,” Johnny finished the rhyme, getting

to his feet lightly.

Everyone loved Johnny.

Then one day, he lied to me. It was black and white. I confronted him. Finally, he admitted it.

I punished him. It was hard. He was such a small thin person. So lovable. So cute. But he had lied, and punishment was his due. He promised he would not lie again.

The next day, he was good as new, laughing, twinkling, monkeying. I was delighted. The punishment had not spoiled our good relationship. He smiled happily at me whenever he caught my gaze.

I was stunned when, only a week later, Johnny lied again.

Continued on page 8.

The heavens declare...

Terminal Velocity | Morris Yoder



Earth has an invisible automatic braking system. It's the atmosphere. Not only does it have the perfect amount of gases to support life on earth, but it's also enough to protect it. If it weren't for the drag effects of air, we might look at clouds as being pressure washers waiting to unleash their torrents of water and worry about the next rainstorm stripping all the leaves off the trees.

Earth's gravity pulls things down at an acceleration of 9.81 m/s^2 or 32.1 f/s^2 . In simple language, this means that a falling object adds 9.81 meters or 32.1 feet per second velocity for every second after it's dropped. One second after an object is dropped, it moves at 22 mph; in two seconds its speed is 44 mph; in three seconds it's 66 mph. However, drag in the atmosphere puts a speed limit on falling objects. That speed limit is called terminal velocity.

Terminal velocity is not the same for all objects. Lighter objects generally have a lower terminal velocity than heavier objects. As an object moves faster through the air, the resistive force pushing back against it increases. Because of this, a heavy object has to travel through the air faster before it encounters enough resistance to equal the force of the gravitational pull downward and stop its acceleration. At this point it will maintain a steady speed.

Light objects have extremely low terminal velocities. Very small particles like dust take so long to push through the air and reach the ground that they generally float around on mini air currents for a while before settling. You can see the effect when looking at a beam of sunlight streaming through a window. The movement of air in your house pushes the dust up and around faster than it can descend to the floor.

An average feather has a higher terminal velocity. Its velocity is high enough to go more or less directly to the ground without taking the long route like dust. A feather speeds up for just a fraction of a second after being dropped and then levels off at about 3 mph.¹ This is still slow, but a feather doesn't fall slowly just because it's light; it will drop just as fast as an elephant in the absence of air. The Apollo 15 astronauts did an experiment on the moon to verify Galileo's observations on gravity. They dropped a feather and hammer at the same instant from the same height, and the objects both struck the ground at the same time.

¹ From a test conducted in the author's basement. Feathers of different sizes will likely have different terminal velocities.

² Information from the American Meteor Society and compared/verified with a few other sources.

Now back to rain. A large raindrop reaches its terminal velocity at about 20 mph. Hail of the same size falls at about the same speed. Some hail drops from near the top of tall cumulonimbus clouds. If it weren't for this providential speed limit, this hail could be moving at over 1,000 mph when it hits the ground!

Insects and small animals can drop off skyscrapers and fall to the ground unscathed because they reach terminal velocity before they get to fatal speeds. A squirrel, for example, could jump from a tree or even an airplane and reach its terminal velocity within a couple of seconds and then leisurely float down and hit the ground at a less-than-lethal speed. Humans are different, but some still feel a bizarre urge to jump out of airplanes. A person with arms and legs outspread will accelerate for about three seconds and then maintain a speed of about 120 mph toward the ground, which is why most people don't jump out of airplanes.

Objects that are as dense as and more massive than humans will have an even higher terminal velocity. For this reason, giant meteoroids from space can pierce through the atmosphere and retain enough speed to blast out huge craters in the ground.

Meteoroids strike the atmosphere at blistering speeds of 25,000 to 160,000 mph.² The small ones are obliterated in less than a second. Larger ones take longer to be snuffed out as the friction-induced heat burns through the outer layers of the meteor until nothing is left. Meteors that weigh from a few pounds to about 8 tons can actually survive the fiery trip without completely vaporizing. They will slow down to an average speed of 7,000 mph, which is when the burning stops. Then when they reach terminal velocity at the relatively slow speed of 200-400 mph, they basically drop straight out of the sky.

Now for the really big meteors, it's an entirely different situation. If a meteor weighs over 100,000 tons, it will completely ignore the speed limit and smash into the earth at full speed. Thankfully, these are rare enough that worrying about such a catastrophe is almost as pointless as worrying about tree-shredding rain showers. [📖](#)

Morris, his wife Beth, and their six children live in Montezuma, Georgia. He has taken a keen and well-studied interest in the heavens since he was a little boy coping with the death of his father. He is the author of The Celestial Message, published by CAM Books and available from Christian Light. You can learn more at createdheavens.com.

I hoped to find him innocent, but all the evidence was there. He had lied.

I kept him after school. “Tell me about it,” I said. The truth came out. He had lied.

“Johnny,” I said gravely. “You realize that I will have to punish you, right? We cannot have a wonderful boy like you growing up to be a liar. You must learn that lying has very painful consequences.”

“The more deep-seated the habit gets,” I explained to him afterward, “the more painful the consequences. I don’t want to hear any more lies from you. Do you understand?”

He was contrite. “Yes.”

I wished the story would end right here—happily ever after. But it didn’t.

Three weeks later, when I realized that Johnny had lied to me again, I went down on my knees. I was shocked and depressed.

I prayed. I searched my heart. I felt cheated. *If two punishments were not enough, what would a third accomplish?* Part of me felt energy surging up for a severe beating. Another part of me felt depleted and discouraged.

I talked to a friend. She listened to more than just my torrent of words; she listened to my heart. She was open with me. “You are depending on the fear of punishment to keep him from lying again,” she wisely observed. “The second time was more severe, and you hinted that even more would be coming if it happened again. You hoped it would frighten him into telling the truth after this.”

“Right,” I agreed.

“But we don’t get to Heaven simply by being scared of Hell,” she stated.

What a revelation!

The next day when I confronted Johnny, he looked guilty and scared. I put my arm around his trembling little shoulders. “What is it?” I asked quietly.

“I lied yesterday,” he admitted.

“Was it a good idea?” I asked.

“No.”

“Did you feel happy?”

“No.”

I reached for my Bible. “Come, Johnny. There is a better way of life.” I turned to John 8:32. “Read this.”

He read it out loud. At the words, “the truth shall make you free,” he glanced at me.

“You feel pretty trapped, right?” I asked.

“Yes,” he admitted.

“The truth will make you free,” I spoke encouragingly. “You must practice telling the truth. If you realize you have lied, you need to speak up right away and admit you said something that wasn’t true. By doing that, you will break free from the trap of lying. Jesus wants to help you, and I will do all I can to help as well.”

Johnny looked at me. I could tell he was listening. “Are you willing to try?” I asked.

“Yes, Teacher.” He tried to smile. “Are you going to spank me this time?”

I took the paddle out of the closet and handed it to him. “You spank yourself as hard and often as you think you deserve.”

His eyes grew round. He hesitated and then reached for the paddle. To this day, I smile when I recall his spanking that day. Like the clown he naturally was, he whacked his legs, his back, his hands, his arms. He added a few cracks to his head and one sharp nip to his mouth for good measure.

He handed the paddle back to me. “There,” he said with a happy grin. “That should teach me to tell the truth.”

Johnny never lied to me again. ■

Mary taught school in Belize for eleven years in grades ranging from first to eighth. She is a stay-at-home wife and mother in Boley, Oklahoma, where her husband Justin also taught the upper grades.

Questions | Carolyn Martin

A group of men clustered on the temple floor. In hushed tones, they discussed their problem. There was a teacher among them who had many followers. Their position and authority were threatened by this teacher's wise teachings. They needed a plan to disgrace the teacher and rid the city of Him.

They sent out a delegation to confront this Great Teacher. "Master, we know You are true, and You teach the truth of God. You are not partial to any man no matter his political or social standing. Tell us then, is the tribute money a lawful tax?"

The Great Teacher understood their trap. "Show me the tribute money," He requested. "Whose image and superscription are on this coin?"

Questions create an active learning encounter. Questions pull the listener from a passive role into a participatory one. Using the right questions, a teacher can take a student from the unknown to the known more effectively than merely telling him.

Questions for review

An obvious place to use questions is when reviewing material. That is part of checking for understanding. A good teacher will start a class with a few questions of review to tie together previous knowledge with the new that is to be learned. Classes such as reading and history will often end with a few questions to check how well the lesson was comprehended.

Questions at the end of a class should also recap the written work students may be doing.

When students need reminders about procedures and routines, such as at the beginning of the school term, a teacher should ask the students for the information rather than just telling them again. If students need to respond in some way, they are actively engaged and are less likely to let the teacher's words roll off their backs like a duck sheds water. Here the use of questions is only for review and practice. The teacher has

already clearly taught what the expectations are.

Questions as introductions

A good question can also introduce a lesson. The answer to the question will be found in the lesson. Asking young students, "What did Abraham Lincoln store in his hat?" or "What was the purpose of the Lewis and Clark Expedition?" will keep them looking for the answer as class proceeds.

This type of question can be used to find out the information students already know and give them a reason to engage in the lesson.

Questions to check for understanding

Use questions as you move through the lesson to keep students engaged with the material. Don't wait until the end of the lesson to check if students understand what is being taught. Use questions throughout the lesson to make sure they know what is going on.

Ask questions as you go through history and science texts or a reading story. Some questions may be to summarize what has just happened, and some may lead into the next part. Questions such as, "What do you think is going to happen next?" don't need a vocal answer. Students can internalize their answers.

Methods of requesting answers to questions

In my first-grade classroom, the purpose for asking questions is to invite active learning from my students. The more they are engaged, the better they understand. Therefore, when I ask a question, I usually want a response from the whole class. There are various ways I do this, depending on the type of response a question needs.

- **Group response:** If the response to a question is a one-to-three-word definitive answer, I will ask for a group response at the given signal. Example: "What shape has

15 Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk. 16 And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men. 17 Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? 18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? 19 Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. 20 And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? 21 They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's. 22 When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way. 23 The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him, 24 Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. 25 Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother: 26 Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. 27 And last of all the woman died also. 28 Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her. 29 Jesus

Did you catch our mistake?

In the last issue of *LightLines*, we inadvertently dropped the word *thousand* from the first sentence of Morris Yoder's article. The speed of light is indeed 186 *thousand* miles per second. That's a LOT faster than only 186 miles per second. Special thanks to the *LightLines* readers who speedily enlightened us.

Socrates on writing

"For this invention will produce forgetfulness in the minds of those who learn to use it, because they will not practice their memory. Their trust in writing, produced by external characters which are no part of themselves, will discourage the use of their own memory within them. You have invented an elixir not of memory, but of reminding; and you offer your pupils the appearance of wisdom, not true wisdom, for they will read many things without instruction and will therefore seem to know many things, when they are for the most part ignorant and hard to get along with, since they are not wise, but only appear wise."

This was *written* nearly 2,400 years ago by Socrates' pupils (after his death). Is there any merit to Socrates' logic?

Phaedrus, written circa 370 B.C.

— <https://www.historyofinformation.com/detail.php?id=3439>

Check your spam folder

If you subscribed to receive *LightLines* by email and are not receiving it, check your spam and trash folders. You can also try whitelisting noreply.lightlines@clp.org in your firewall settings.

On a Rainy Thursday

Sherri Steiner

The cloudiness that shrouded every hour
Trips, topples, tumbles into every space
Unguarded by the keeper of the door.
The stress is struggling. I can feel the power
That grips my mind and wrestles with my face.
Teach me the grace that makes my spirit poor.

The scholars pull their heads within their shells.
And though I pour my knowledge on their heads
The vacant stares escape my earnest gaze.
I love them—and I love dismissal bells—
Perhaps their brains will stir within their beds—
Teach me resilience wept on rainy days.

The dusk awash with joy and hope and fears
Slides down the sky. I grasp to try to see
Past caterpillars nibbling childish things
And see the dawning of tomorrow's years
Where children live in possibility.
Teach me tenacity to wait for wings. ■

First published on *thecurator.org*.
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Sherri lives in Dalton, Ohio, and is in her fourth year of teaching locally. Some days the students learn things; some days she wonders. Most days she drinks coffee and tries to find hope woven through the thick of reality.

three angles?” Group answer, “Triangle.”

- **Partner response:** If the needed answer is less objective or is longer than a few words, we tell the answer to our partners. This works well for review purposes and for open-ended questions. Sometimes, questions are just to get students to start thinking; I don't necessarily need to hear the answer. Often, I can tune into their responses, or I may ask a few to share their response. In the case of review questions, I may state the correct answer after they have all shared with a partner.
- **Individual response:** Sometimes they take turns saying an answer, or I will call on a raised hand. I use this method when I'm checking for individual understanding or when I have a harder question for which only a few of the class might have an answer.

These types of responses work well for younger students. Teach students how to respond properly. Making use of signals in group and partner responses helps students to know when to respond. Observe the students' responses. Are they all engaged? Are they answering correctly?

Allow a “wait time”

An important part of receiving answers to questions is to allow

a wait time of three to five seconds for students to form a response. Moving too quickly to the next person or for the choral answer deprives the brain of interaction with or the retrieval of the required information.

Invite the students to participate in your classes with questions. The more interaction they have with the lesson, the less likely they will be to lose focus and attention. Questions ask students to do something besides absorb what the teacher is telling them. Questions can also propel thinking and grappling with subject matter beyond what the teacher can state. Questions allow students to own their answers. A good teacher knows when and how to use good questions. [📖](#)

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Carolyn calls the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia home. She's taught first grade at Hickory Hollow Christian School in Dayton, Virginia, for over thirty years. Carolyn enjoys reading books, taking photos, and exploring history. If time travel were possible, she'd go back to twelfth-century England and the High Middle Ages, but only for a brief visit, and with the ability to take along a modern camera.

Growing trend: Bans on cell phone use in classrooms

To minimize distractions, some U.S. states and Canadian provinces are cracking down on cell phone use in classrooms. On August 15, Manitoba's Education and Early Childhood Learning Minister Nello Altomare announced a ban on using cell phones in the classroom starting in September.

“We want young people to be able to focus in class so they can learn more and feel confident. We know cell phones can be a real distraction for students—studies show it can take up to 20 minutes for a child to refocus on what they were learning once distracted,” Altomare said. “These provincial guidelines will give teachers the tools they need to keep students focused and ensure class time is spent on learning.”

Manitoba's ban applies to students in kindergarten to Grade 12 with cell phone use permitted for Grades 9-12 during breaks and lunch. It includes clear guidelines for cell phone use for staff. Guidance for exceptions was also issued.

“I have noticed that with these restrictions in place, when students would finish work or assessments early, it has given them the opportunity to read more books or engage more with their peers and teachers. The restrictions have also increased students' focus without the distraction of their phones,” stated one educator. [📖](#)

— <https://news.gov.mb.ca/news/?item=64657>



“Ask Another” is a question-answer space for teachers. Teachers are invited to pose questions on school-related subjects, offer responses to questions, or reply to responses. (LightLines will occasionally assign questions to experienced teachers for their qualified response.) Send questions or responses by email to lightlines@christianlight.org or by mail to LightLines Editor, P.O. Box 1212, Harrisonburg, VA 22803. (Try to limit responses to fewer than 400 words.)

Ask Another

Why are you planning to teach again next year? In no more than two sentences, explain the reason(s) you are choosing to teach again.

— Question posed in LightLines, Summer 2023 issue

I find teaching to be very fulfilling work that I know will help the future generation. I also believe that this is where God wants me right now.

— Pennsylvania

Having finished my first year of teaching, it would feel like an uncompleted job to quit now. But my biggest reason for teaching again is to have a chance to positively impact souls for the future.

— Indiana

The need, the sacrifice, the joys, and the rewards are real.

— Arkansas

I am teaching again this year because I feel that God has called me to teach and given me the skills and talents to do it. I am giving it my all, but He will be faithful to complete it (Philippians 1:6) and to cover my inadequacies.

— Pennsylvania

I am teaching again because it is my career; after my second year, I decided to teach for 10 years before reconsidering. This will be my 10th year.

— Manitoba

Because teaching is fun, and time really flies when you're having fun!

— Missouri

I'm teaching next year because this is my job. It's a good job and I like it.

— Pennsylvania

I'm teaching again because I believe it's a meaningful way to serve in Christ's kingdom. While I don't enjoy some of the frustrations that come along with being a teacher, I enjoy the interaction with young people, the intensity of the school day, and the joys of a summer to reflect and plan in silence.

— Missouri

Next question: I teach Grades 5-6. I need ideas for rainy day activities. We do not have a gym.

Please respond with your ideas by December 2, 2024. We'll print responses in a future issue of LightLines. Please send responses to lightlines@christianlight.org, fax them to 540-433-8896, or mail them to LightLines, P.O. Box 1212, Harrisonburg, VA 22803. [📧](#)

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