**LEA Values; a framework for living**

Values provide a framework for decision making. The Lutheran Education Australia framework, *Lifelong qualities for learners* “defines the ethos of Lutheran Schools: ‘As central to their mission and ministry, Lutheran schools seek to nurture individuals who are aware of their humanity, open to the influence of the holy spirit and growing in and living according to a cohesive worldview while living in community and reflecting the characteristics of God through core values, especially love, justice, compassion, forgiveness, service, humility, courage, hope, quality and appreciation” (LEA Statement of Values).

This resource provides thought starters, theological underpinnings and suggestions as to how this framework can be utilised in classroom devotions and college worship and staff bible studies.

A word of note: this resource has been compiled to run across campuses – so adaptation will need to be made to make it age appropriate. Use those resources that are helpful. If you find other resources, email them to me, so that they can be made available to others for future years.

**Term 1 Week 7 (Lutheran Schools Week)**

**(THEME: Forgiveness) Check out LEA website for additional resources**

(Please note that the theme FORGIVENESS runs for two weeks)

**LIFELONG QUALITIES FOR LEARNERS STATEMENT**

Forgiveness (benevolence, grace, mercy, amnesty, excuse, pardon, understanding, kindness, absolve, acquit, reprieve …

Forgiveness is breaking the cycle of un-grace, pardoning the wrongs others have done to us and seeking pardon for the wrongs we have done to others. Forgiveness often comes with pain and can involve stepping over our hurt. Forgiveness releases both ourselves and others, enabling new starts and new beginnings, another chance.

Matthew 18:21-22, Luke 17:3-4, Romans 4, Colossians 3:13, Matthew 5:7, Ephesians 4:32 …

**CODE OF ETHICS statement**

**Forgiveness**

*We pardon the wrongs others have done to us, seek pardon for the wrongs we have done to others and in doing so, focus on making a new start*

*Therefore we:*

*+ deal proactively, openly and decisively with dysfunctional relationships and see them as opportunities for God to transform and heal*

*+ accept our obligations to put damaged relationship right*

*+ understand that genuine forgiveness can be a difficult process, but that it is a biblical imperative, made possible in the lives of people through the grace of God*

*+ accept that at times our actions lead to consequences (including disciplinary action) and that these are not incompatible with forgiveness*

**Key Texts, Biblical Comment and Devotional Ideas:**

*Make allowance for each other’s faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. (Colossians 3:13, NLT)*

***The context:***

In Paul’s letter to the Colossians, Paul begins chapter 3 with a very important phrase… “Since you have been raised to new life with Christ” (v1). Lutheran theology understands this as a connection to baptism; we have died to Christ and raised to new life in Him (Romans 6:3-4). This starting point of any genuine response of forgiveness is an awareness of who and whose we are in Christ. Verse 12 continues this theme… “Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.” Therefore we are to “make allowances for each other’s faults”.

***Teaching thought:***

No one is perfect.

My father always used to say, never point a finger at someone else, as there are always three fingers pointing back at you! The emphasis in this passage is that if we understand the extent to which God has forgiven us, we will want to forgive those who have offended us. The bible tells numerous stories about this deep response to God’s forgiveness; see Matthew 18:21-35 and Luke 7:36-50

***Discuss****:*

Consider the story, “My father always used to say, never point a finger at someone else, as there are always three fingers pointing back at you!” What do you think this is saying to you?

In the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus says “forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us”. What do you think he means by this? Now consider this in the context of Luther’s explanation in the Small Catechism;

“And forgive our guilt, as we forgive those guilty of sinning against us. *What does this mean?*  We pray in this request that our Heavenly Father will neither pay attention to our sins nor refuse requests such as these because of our sins and because we are neither worthy nor deserve the things for which we pray. Yet He wants to give them all to us by His grace, because many times each day we sin and truly deserve only punishment. Because God does this, we will, of course, want to forgive from our hearts and willingly do good to those who sin against us.”

***Additional Resources:***

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fBSUNcY4rrI> Black Box drama “The Unforgiving Servant”

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Czj20wScFw> Lego Version of “Pay it Forward”

***Symbols***

Use one of the following pictures or symbols to explore what that picture might suggest about the topic.

 

***Inspirational Item***

Each inspirational item is an abstract item with no ‘obvious’ link to the Bible or the Christian faith – this is where the challenge begins! We challenged students and teachers to find that link, to make sense of that item and see where it has meaning in our Christian lives.



***Action/Response:***

How might you respond?