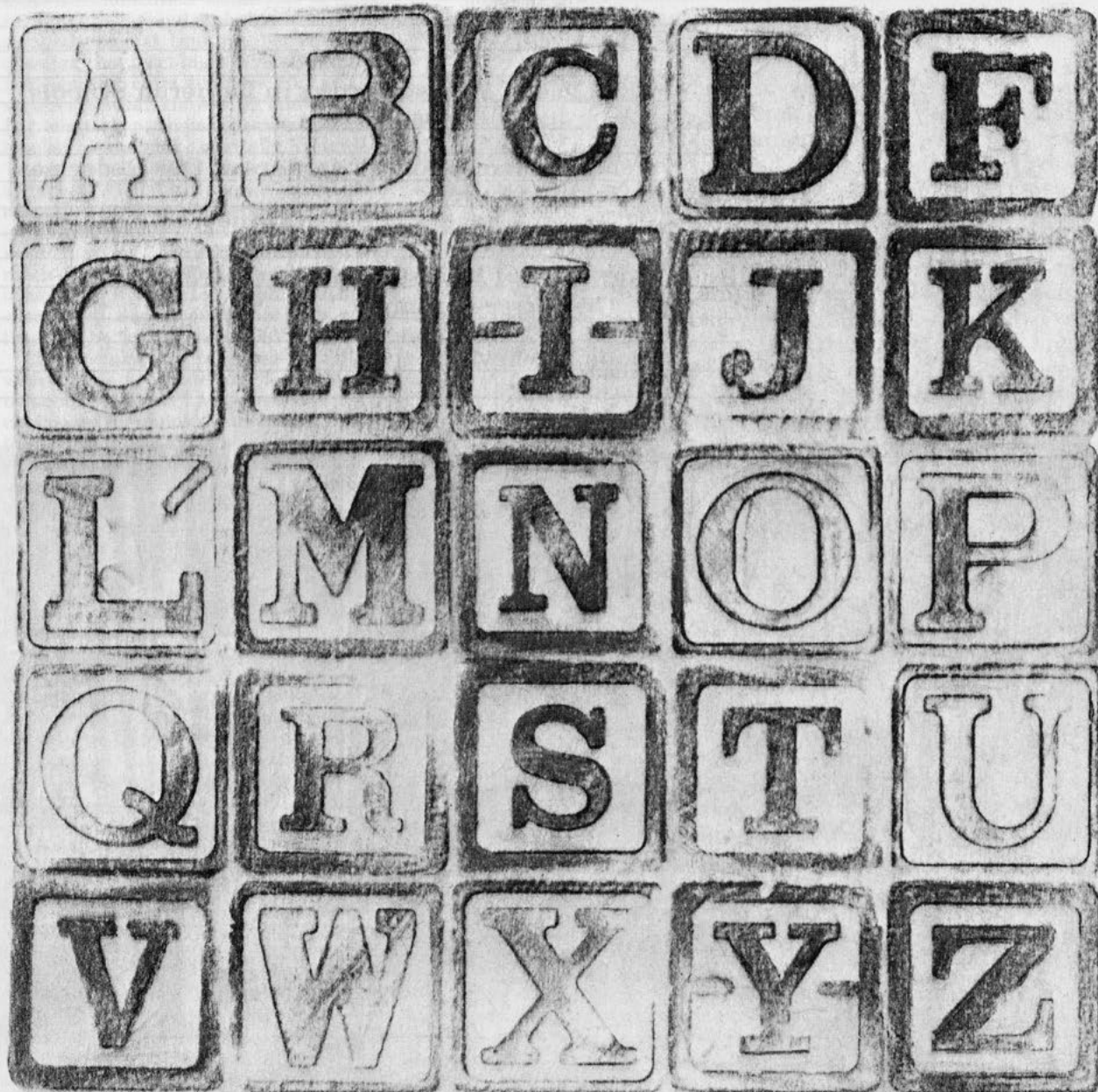


ISSUES

IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Spring, 1984

Vol. 18, No. 2



Concordia College
ARCHIVES
Seward, Nebraska

Finding room for
EXCEPTIONAL LEARNERS

Spring, 1984
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ISSUES

IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

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EDITOR'S NOTES

For some time it has been the intention of the Editorial Committee to provide ISSUES readers with a number of our publication dealing with the opportunities and problems associated with teaching exceptional learners. Other themes took precedence, e.g. Luther, and delayed our featuring the topic until now. Perhaps that is an advantage. Enough time has passed since L.B. 94-142 became the law of the land that we have a better idea as a society concerning what both mainstreaming and special classes mean in reality in our communities.

We are especially pleased to have enlisted as authors some of the people who know "special education" and its impact on the church, particularly at the congregational and teacher education levels. Their first hand knowledge and experience with this field becomes apparent from their presentations in these pages.

editorials

Is Special Education Special?

What's so special about special education? Teaching Braille to blind children requires special skills. Using the total communication techniques of speech reading, the manual alphabet, and singing demands special training. No one would question that teaching a severely multiply-handicapped child to chew and swallow requires special knowledge and methods. But what about the children traditionally labeled "educable mentally retarded," "learning disabled," and "emotionally disturbed"? What's so special about special education for them? At the risk of sounding either insensitive or naive, the response would have to be nothing, or at best, not much — certainly not enough to justify their systematic exclusion from Lutheran elementary and secondary schools where they can be "nurtured in the Word."

The specialness of programs for children with mild to moderate learning and behavior problems has been convincingly challenged for almost two decades. The idea that nothing is very special about special education for some children is not a casual observation but one that has substantial support in the research literature of special education efficacy studies. There is simply no evidence that the segregation of children into EMR, LD and ED programs is beneficial to their academic or social progress. In fact, some research studies conclude that students placed in these programs are slightly worse off than if they had been left in regular classrooms. Although these results present a serious indictment of past practices in special education, they also tender a serious challenge to Lutheran education at all levels — elementary, secondary and higher education.

Unlike the public school system, Lutheran schools and professionals do not share the barrier-filled history that has divided the field of education into special and regular sectors. There are very few organized special education programs (less than five?) in the Lutheran school system which seek to serve mildly handicapped students. Perhaps the Church's educational neglect of children with mildly handicapping conditions is in some respects an advantage. Lutheran teachers do not have to overcome the firmly entrenched, but questionable practices of psycholinguistic training and perceptual-motor remediation activities that have no proven generalizability to academic skills, of senseless jargon that mystifies and intimidates more than it clarifies or elucidates, and of a classification system that often leads to the arbitrary placement of children with non-specific symptoms into ineffectual programs.

Untouched by these historical problems, the Lutheran school system has a real

A FORE WORD

Ministry to Exceptional Children

It can be stated as a basic assumption that the Christian church is to be concerned about exceptional human beings. This is true simply because the church is to be concerned about all people. This universal concern for all stems from the universality of God's love in Christ and Christ's redemptive sacrifice "for all." All are God's creatures and all are to have the Gospel preached to them.

Few, if any, in the church would disagree with these statements. Differences arise, however, among church leaders, Christian educators and parents regarding how best to express our concern and love for the physically handicapped, the mentally retarded and the emotionally disturbed people in our society.

Two different basic points of view emerge. The first says, "Let's provide separate facilities, specialized programs, separate settings and isolate these exceptional persons together in an environment where experts can concentrate on their special problems and focus all attention and energy on them." The second point of view, and one that appears to be gaining wider acceptance in our society, is, "Let's try to keep the exceptional persons in the regular, normal environment. Let's not isolate them altogether from those who are not handicapped." This latter view is called *mainstreaming* and is more professionally defined and explained in the accompanying article by Dr. Judith Preuss.

What specifically can a congregation do for handicapped children even if it does not have an elementary school? This question is addressed in the article by Margaret Bauer and Elaine Payne. George Kovtun's article describes the complexity of the challenge of mainstreaming for the Christian day school teacher. Reading the articles and editorials in this issue of ISSUES is bound to help all of us become more aware of both our responsibilities and opportunities to serve more compassionately as our "brother's keeper," especially when our brother (or sister) happens to be one of God's exceptional people.

M.J. Stelmachowicz



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opportunity to emerge as a model that reflects the cultural, and indeed moral, imperative of Public Law 94:142 — the mandate for inclusive rather than exclusive practices. No one denies that there are children who experience serious school-related problems, academically and/or behaviorally. The challenge to accommodate their needs has always existed, and for Lutheran schools, has often and too easily been met with a referral to the public school system. That is the one "historical habit" Lutheran teachers must overcome. It is a habit that ultimately denies a number of children the opportunity for hearing and living the Word in their daily classroom life.

What then does it take to implement the inclusive spirit of the law, to embrace the notion that all education should truly be "special education" in the best sense? Four ideas come to mind: first, a recognition of the discrepancy between what traditional approaches to special education for mildly handicapped students promised and what they have delivered; second, a willingness to see beyond the artificial and arbitrary labels of EMR, LD and ED which are too conveniently applied to children who present instructional challenges; third, a commitment to professional preservice and inservice development which actively responds to the promises of recent research relating to teacher effectiveness, direct instruction, classroom management and cooperative learning structures and their benefits to all children; and finally, a vision of Lutheran education where "special regular teachers" teach in "special regular classrooms" — special people in special places that responsibly serve the diverse needs and abilities of children who have a right to be included in (rather than excluded from) an education which is uniquely and "specially" Christian — one where they can become rooted in the Living Word.

Judith D. Klingsick

The Solution to Unequal Treatment

In a letter to the editor of a Midwest city newspaper, the mother of a 22 year old retardate commented, "The seven years we have been in 'Midtown, USA' have been the most horrible in our lives. Midtown people as a whole do not accept the retarded . . . Police were called because our daughter walked down the street . . . Our daughter's pet dog was poisoned by the neighbors and died in her arms." Another mother of a 24 year old mildly retarded son mentioned that her son could not find a job. While it is true, many people are unemployed today, this mother's complaint was that employers were unwilling to invest time teaching her son how to do a job. These examples indicate intentional or unintentional

discriminatory acts against handicapped persons who are frequently treated as being unequal on the block and in the community. Sometimes this disparate treatment also extends into churches.

The same mother who experienced her daughter's rejection and saw the dog die wrote, "Our daughter was turned down . . . for membership in a _____ church . . ." This may be an unusual case because most acts of inequality are more subtle.

The subtle nature of our insensitivity to handicapped persons and the church's lack of leadership in bringing about social change is supported by this statement which appeared in a sociology book: "The church is a follower, not a leader of social change." As a result, federal and state governments seem to have to mandate social reform through laws, rules and regulations. Two such examples are P.L. 94-142 which resulted in "the least restrictive environment" and "mainstreaming" of handicapped persons, and a recent Minnesota law which made it illegal to observe a crime and not assist the victim.

Christians do, however, have the solution to the propensity to treat handicapped persons unequally. God has provided the solution through his only begotten Son. For, as Timothy said, "There is one God, and there is one who brings God and men together, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself to redeem all men." (GN I Tim. 2:5) This Gospel message "reveals how God puts men right with himself." (GN Rom. 1:17) As a result of this redemptive act all are righteous and equal in God's eyes. A Native American eloquently stated this truth, "We are all equal in the sight of God. Equally sinful; equally redeemed."

Such righteousness and equality empower Christians to love, i.e., treat handicapped persons equally. "God's word has made its home in you." (JB I John 2:14) Therefore, you have the power to move out and effect change wherever you are.

As equippers of saints (RSV Eph. 4:1), leaders in the church are responsible to remind Christians of the power they possess. In addition, they can create an awareness of the injustices, be sensitive to the complexities of change and take appropriate actions to improve the situation.

Dr. Wesley Meirhenry, professor of Adult Continuing Education at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, proposed five stages in the adoption of change: (1) Awareness, (2) Interest, (3) Evaluation, (4) Trial, and (5) Adoption. Most people in the "equality" struggle are in the awareness stage. Since awareness is cultivated through communication, leaders can promote the use of mass media, speak up at meetings and conferences, write articles for newsletters, give speeches and lectures, and brainstorm for more avenues of communication.

In elaborating on the change process, Meirhenry also cautioned against using exhortations. Exhortations would be

counter-productive since most Christians probably don't intentionally treat handicapped persons unequally. Rather, large clouds seem to block their ability to see and respond to other persons' feelings and needs. Awareness will help dissipate the clouds.

Leaders also need to be sensitive to the complexities of change. Change takes time; lots of it. The more complex the change, the longer it takes. In addition to the time factor, people vary in their ability to adopt change. This principle was supported by Everett M. Rogers' research on rates of diffusion of innovations. In "Diffusion of Innovations," Rogers classified adoptors as innovators, early adapters, early majority, late majority and laggards. He concluded that in each group 2.5% are innovators, 13.5% are early adapters, 34% are early majority, 34% are late majority, and 16% are laggards. Leaders, according to Rogers, should concentrate on the early adapters, and ignore the laggards temporarily.

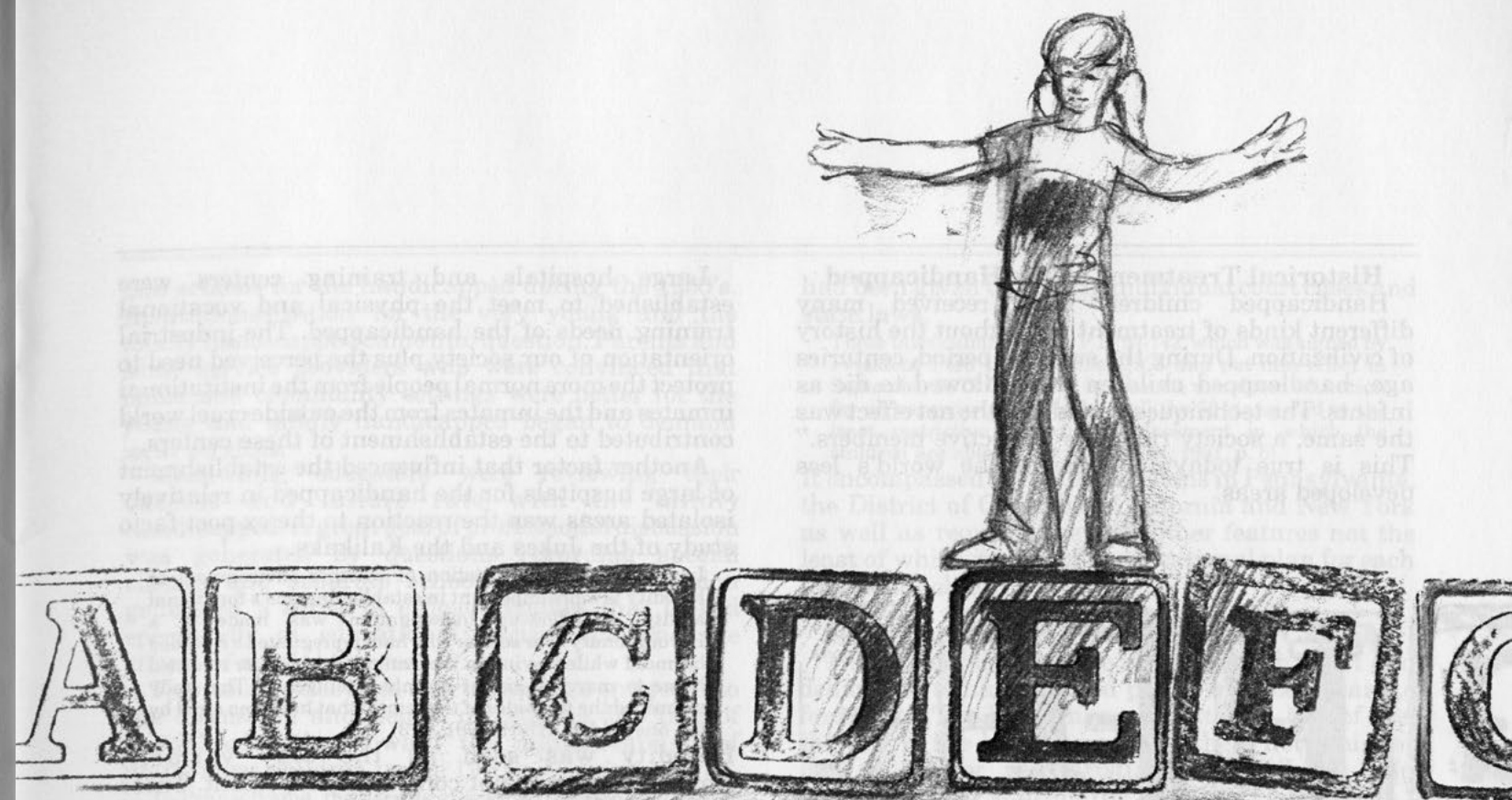
As a result of a new awareness and sensitivity to the feelings and needs of handicapped persons, Christians will respond individually and collectively with loving actions. For example, they will consider these possible options:

- ** Assume guardianship for a Down's Syndrome person in case of parents' death. (See the Summer 1983 edition of "The Star" published by LCMS's Board for Parish Services.)
- ** Bring a handicapped person to a Young Adult group, to Sunday School, to Boy Scout's or a 4-H Club.
- ** Support attempts to buy or build group homes in your community.
- ** Shorten or remove a pew in church so wheelchairs can be an integral part of the worshipping community.
- ** Speak up and out for the equality of handicapped persons.

Christians have the power to rise and make a difference in the lives of handicapped persons. Paul encourages us "never to grow tired of doing what is right." (JB II Thess. 3:13) As moves are made toward creating equality for handicapped persons, "May our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father who has given us his love, and, through his grace, such inexhaustible comfort and sure hope, comfort and strengthen you in everything good that you do and say." (JB II Thess. 2:16, 17)

Eunice Streufert

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by Judith Preuss

The Case for Mainstreaming in Lutheran Schools

The term mainstreaming has been variously defined. The definition adopted by the Thirteenth Delegate Assembly of the Council for Exceptional Children, April 1976, will be used for purposes of this discussion. It is as follows:

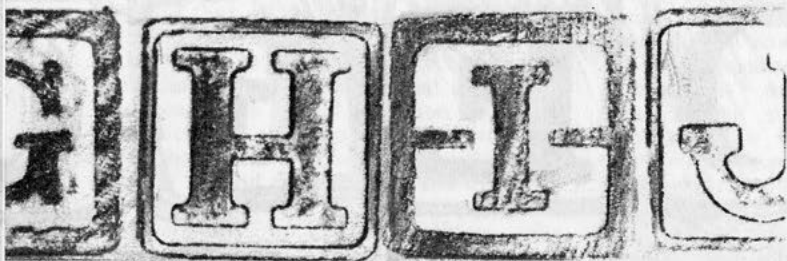
Mainstreaming is a belief which involves an educational placement procedure and process for exceptional children, based on the conviction that each such child should be educated in the least restrictive environment in which his educational and related needs can be satisfactorily provided. This concept recognizes that exceptional children have a wide range of special educational needs, varying greatly in intensity and duration; that there is a recognized continuum of educational settings which may, at a given time, be appropriate for an individual child's needs; that to the maximum extent appropriate, exceptional children should be educated with non-exceptional children; and that special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of an exceptional child from education with non-exceptional children should occur only when the intensity of the child's special education and related needs is such that they cannot be satisfied in an environment including non-exceptional children, even with the provision of supplementary aids and services. (CEC, 1976, p. 1)

A major legal development in this decade has been the extension of the principle of egalitarianism to handicapped persons. This principal — that all persons, however, unequal they may be in terms of their abilities, should be treated equally by being granted equal opportunities has been expressed in different ways. (Turnbull, 1978, p. 17)

One of these ways is the concept of mainstreaming. A brief examination of the historical antecedents of mainstreaming will provide a perspective of the concept and its place along the chronological continuum of treatments for handicapped individuals.

Historical Treatment of the Handicapped

Handicapped children have received many different kinds of treatment throughout the history of civilization. During the survival period, centuries ago, handicapped children were allowed to die as infants. The techniques varied, but the net effect was the same, a society rid of its "defective members." This is true today in some of the world's less developed areas.



When the topic of education of the severely handicapped was discussed at a recent international conference, several African delegates announced that such children didn't exist in their countries and therefore created no problem. Their concern was providing education to non-handicapped children, for development in their country was such that education in general was lacking for most segments of the population. (Hart, 1981, p. 2)

Respect for human life, spread through the Judeo-Christian philosophy, has had a great impact on handicapped individuals throughout society. As a result, genetically handicapped or individuals handicapped later in life were sheltered and protected. Asylums provided protection and safety from a cruel world. In India an example of one who protects the handicapped from otherwise certain death is Nobel Peace Prize winner, Mother Teresa.

Specific handicaps have been given unique roles in some societies. The retarded provided entertainment as court jestors. The blind became historians and were trained to commit to memory tribal events of historical significance. Unique roles assigned by society are observable today; janitorial service jobs for the retarded, answering service jobs for those crippled in the lower extremities, and printing jobs for the deaf are but a few examples. Past experience with individuals having various handicapped conditions has led to specific training in a variety of vocational skills. The expenditure of time, effort and money in this area can be justified since handicapped individuals have been found able to learn if taught appropriately.

Large hospitals and training centers were established to meet the physical and vocational training needs of the handicapped. The industrial orientation of our society plus the perceived need to protect the more normal people from the institutional inmates and the inmates from the outside cruel world contributed to the establishment of these centers.

Another factor that influenced the establishment of large hospitals for the handicapped in relatively isolated areas was the reaction to the ex-post facto study of the Jukes and the Kalikaks.

In response to the question of whether environment or heredity is more important in establishing one's functional ability, a follow-up investigation was made of a Revolutionary War soldier who had impregnated a retarded barmaid while serving in the army and who later returned home to marry a girl of normal intelligence. The study examined the two sides of the family that had been sired by the one soldier. (Hart, 1981, p. 3)

Heredity was seen as the only variable. Environment was not considered important. These findings shocked the professional and political members of society who began to feel that the only way to protect society from hereditary defects was to isolate those perceived handicapped, prevent procreation and remove any who happened to be born into some type of segregated institution. For those who might have contact with "normal society" sterilization was deemed an absolute necessity.

The mildly/moderately handicapped did have contact with the community. The large institutions were designed to be as self-supporting as possible for economic reasons. The skills necessary to keep the institution clean and operational were taught to the mildly handicapped. Men performed farming and maintenance skills while women were taught to cook, sew and care for the young or more severely handicapped. Eventually the more able handicapped were allowed to work within the community for wages. They became out-patients, working during the day and returning to the institution at night. These people were later the first to be deinstitutionalized and became working, productive members of society. "Deinstitutionalization came about after the recognition of the fact that many handicapped persons had had their civil rights violated by being committed to isolated, often barren facilities, and it resulted in a change of attitude on the part of the general populations." (Hart, 1981, p. 4)

Civil Rights Gives Mainstreaming Momentum

A great interest in the civil rights of all citizens and the demands of parents of handicapped children that their children be provided educational services within the local school district were among factors which led to a change in attitude regarding the institutionalized population and members of classes

and schools for the handicapped during the 1960's. Institutionalization for the very young and the mildly handicapped came into question. Parents and some service providers who were convinced that home and community settings were better for the young and mildly handicapped began to demand local services.

Meanwhile, educators were reviewing their success and failure rate with the mildly handicapped. A great deal of professional discussion was generated by questions regarding special classes and separate schooling. This discussion generated a series of efficacy studies that looked specifically at educational justification and the effects of special classes.

The results of several court cases also entered into the discussion and helped dictate the direction of special education toward the mainstreaming of many more children in the 1970's.

In Pennsylvania, the parents of retarded children who had been excluded from educational settings brought suit against the Commonwealth. The court decree that resulted stated that all children, no matter how retarded, were entitled to a free public education. As part of the decree, children were to be placed in the least restrictive environment in which they could function, the most desirable and least restrictive placement being the regular classroom with their normal peers. Help from an itinerant teacher who would aid the student and teacher so that the child could continue to function was the second most desirable situation listed. A resource room, where the children could spend part of the day, returning to the regular classroom for the rest, was the third least restrictive setting listed. Self-contained classes, which were the primary delivery system then used with even minimally handicapped children, were felt to be more restrictive than the resource rooms, but less than the residential schools that were also very prevalent during this period of time. There, by court action, children who were able were ordered to be returned to the regular classrooms for their education. A District of Columbia ruling broadened this decision to include all exceptional children. (Hart, 1981, p. 4)

Litigation in Alabama provided treatment for those institutionalized for emotional problems. The decision in this case was that individuals could not be institutionalized without treatment, which was a common practice of that day. The opportunity to investigate the school records of their children was offered to parents as the result of court action in New York. This had led to much of our current confidentiality and record keeping practice. A California case dictated that tests given to children for educational placement must be administered in the child's native tongue and not be culturally biased against them. The impetus for all these cases was the denial of rights of individuals, which has helped to formulate the present treatment of handicapped individuals.

Legislation passed by Congress gave to all children throughout the country the rights which

had been given to a few in individual court cases and state laws.

These laws culminated in P.L. 94-142, which was signed by President Ford in November 1975 and put into effect in September 1977. This law, in essence, mandated education for all exceptional children in all the 50 states and in the least restrictive educational placement in which the children are able to function. (Hart, 1981, p. 5)

It encompassed the court decisions in Pennsylvania, the District of Columbia, California and New York as well as requiring several other features not the least of which is a written educational plan for each individual child.

Is Mainstreaming Optional in the Church?

This legislation was the result of much effort and dedication to handicapped people and took years to formulate. The legislative mandate is a fact of life; the law is the law. However, is there not a higher law, a matter of Christian responsibility and opportunity for sharing the gospel of Christ?

Christ clearly established His intention to minister to the disabled with whom He came in contact. Throughout His Galatian ministry great crowds came to Jesus bringing with them candidates for healing (Matt. 15:30-31). Luke provides an account of concerned able bodied people who brought their handicapped friends to Jesus (Luke 5:18-19). This act and others similar to it recorded in Scripture dictate how basic a ministry to the handicapped in today's church must be.

The ministry of the church may be viewed as it works in continuing Christ's activity in the World. As he came not to "be served but to serve" (Mark 10:45), so also the ministry of the church is its service. "I am also among you as one who serves" (Luke 22:27), Jesus declared to his disciples, and the foot washing episode of the Gospels (John 13:1-11) exhibits his command that they should do like wise. (Govig, 1980, p. 11)

The church has at times in history taken a leadership role to aid the handicapped. Mother Teresa is an example of such service. Yet in Western civilization "the circumstance of the disabled has changed. It is reflected in one of the reports (Section II) accepted at the 1975 Fifth Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Nairobi, entitled, "The Handicapped and the Wholeness of the Family of God." In part, this report states:

The church's unity includes both the "disabled" and the "able". Yet able bodied church members, both by their attitudes and by their emphasis upon activism, marginalize and often exclude those with mental and physical disabilities. The disabled are treated as the weak to be served, rather than as fully committed, integral members of the body of Christ. (Govig, 1980, p. 11)

There is a deepened concern for the handicapped within the United States as evidenced by recent litigation and legislation culminating in the passage of P.L. 94-142. More recent evidence

includes the declaration by the United Nations of 1983-1992 as the "Decade of Disabled Persons." The church is not alone in its support of the handicapped. The church is challenged to implement "the leadership of secular authorities — it is also challenged to review and rethink its dedication to the ministry of its Lord who proclaimed 'good news to the poor — release of the captives and recovering of sight to the blind — (Luke 4:18.)' (Govig, 1980, p. 12)

A theology of ministry must wrestle with such difficult problems as the inclusion of handicapped persons within the worship and sacramental life of the congregation, enrollment of handicapped students in the Christian school and the preparation of Christian teachers to effectively deal with handicapped children in their classrooms. In the resolution of these questions the congregation "must learn better to understand that its mission is no longer 'to' persons with (handicaps), but rather 'with' them in a common mission to the church and to the world. But condescension and patronage must be dismissed; the handicapped wish to be taken seriously as equals." (Govig, 1980, p. 13)

Govig also maintains that a "hidden curriculum" regarding the handicapped has been in force for many years. This is not a planned curriculum but rather an incidental curriculum which teaches that disability involves what is unpleasant and what makes most of us anxious; therefore silence is the motif.

The place to begin to undo this "hidden curriculum" is to design a Christian education which emphasizes the uniqueness of the individual within the congregation and "plans for the interaction of able bodied and disabled Christians which will, by the power of God's spirit, result in a more authentic experience of the 'communion of saints.'" (Govig, 1980, p. 14) This "communion of saints" must be challenged to "a new style of Christian living, which — accepts the solidarity of each person in the body of Christ so that (handicaps) will not be divisive." (Govig, 1980, p. 15)

Earlier in our discussion several difficult questions to be answered by a theology of ministry with the handicapped were asked. It is important to note that there is no room to question if ministry to the handicapped is a Christian and/or civil responsibility. The evidence is overwhelming — from the example of Christ Himself to governmental legislation. The question is not to mainstream or not to mainstream, but rather how to mainstream effectively in Christian schools.

A Christian education provided by a caring congregation can result in "(1) a theological framework for the child's definition of self, (2) an accepting atmosphere for the child's nature in faith,

(3) an opportunity for service — like all members of the family of God, handicapped individuals have unique gifts to offer others, and (4) a congregational awareness of the handicapped child's problems." (Cherne, 1983, pp. 11-12) The four characteristics identified by Cherne are essential elements in an effective educational experience for all students.

Mainstreaming is beneficial to the handicapped and to the non-handicapped. "The social and educational benefits of children learning that our similarities as (Christian) human beings are more important than our differences may be difficult to measure but may be one of the most important contributions that mainstreaming can make to the human condition." (Jordan, 1976, p. 10) Mainstreaming offers an opportunity to expand the exceptional child's view of the breadth and depth of humanness. It offers the opportunity for them to acquire skills, attitudes and knowledge necessary to participate in our democratic society. It is of equal benefit to normal and even precocious children to have contact with those who are handicapped. Research evidence indicates that mildly/moderately handicapped students progress as well or better in the regular classroom than they do in a special class. The regular classroom provides a greater motivation and opportunity for learning. (Hasazi, 1979, p. 9) Advantages of mainstreaming for handicapped children listed by the Council for Exceptional Children, 1976 include:

*Increased probabilities of being educated in neighborhood schools.

*An educational setting that is in accordance with ordinary situations in community life.

*A combination of regular and special education.

*A learning program under the regular teacher's direction with support from specialists, aides and pupils.

*A written individualized education program based on decisions and value judgments of more than one person.

*A data based program planned according to individual needs and skill deficits, not hypothetical constructs developed about children in abstract categories.

*A full range of curriculum possibilities.

*Broadened social contacts.

*A sense of the future. (CEC, 1976, p. 1)

A goal of the mainstreaming movement is to provide maximum individual freedom while maintaining optimal social and educational opportunities. This has implications for the training of teachers at the pre-service and inservice levels.

Mainstreaming in Teacher Education

Major changes that mainstreaming requires in the area of pre-service education include: (1) faculty orientation, (2) curriculum modification, (3) preparing university students in consultation skills, (4) preparing "change agents," and (5) research. (Turnbull, 1978, p. 161) It is necessary to reorganize the curriculum required of regular elementary and

secondary teacher training students so that knowledge related to the teaching of handicapped students becomes an integral and interwoven part of the skills development necessary to teach all students. This curriculum infusion model helps to remove some of the mystique of special education.

Concordia Teachers College at Seward has for the past three years (1981-1983) been part of a Dean's Grant Consortium Project in Nebraska. During the project, a paradigm for course integration for mainstream curriculum has been developed. Ten content areas were identified as essential information for all elementary and secondary teacher training students. These content areas were then integrated into the existing required course sequence. The content areas are: (1) Awareness and attitudes, (2) Historical, philosophical and social perspectives, (3) Litigation and legislation, (4) Service delivery systems and program approaches, (5) Characteristics of children with handicapping conditions, (6) Communication skills, role relationships and coordination or resources, (7) Assessment in the classroom, (8) Adaptation of curriculum, materials and selection of instructional strategies, (9) Classroom and student behavior management, and (10) Development and implementation of the individual educational program. These content areas are treated at three levels: introduction, application and synthesis. The goal of the teacher education curriculum revision at Concordia, Seward is to prepare elementary and secondary teachers who have the skills and knowledge to contribute positively to the total development — social, emotional and academic of all children. Another aspect of teacher training relates to in-service for those teachers already in the classroom.

As Lutheran teachers are provided the opportunity to teach mainstreamed handicapped students they can become anxious about their knowledge and skills in this area. This anxiety can be a positive force motivating learning and skill acquisition. However, it can also be a negative force when no new knowledge is provided and the task appears overwhelming. The Lutheran school system must capture the positive aspect of this anxiety by providing appropriate in-service training for its teachers in attitudes, knowledge and skills for teaching the mildly/moderately mainstreamed handicapped child. The ten content areas identified earlier can function as an organizational framework for in-service programs. Another excellent source of information is the Special Education Series printed as a result of the S.E.R.V.I.C.E. project within LCMS several years ago. These materials are available from the Board for Parish Services in St. Louis.

In Conclusion

Mainstreaming viewed as a continuum of services has a sound basis in Lutheran theology. II Corinthians 5:17 states, "Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away; behold, the new has come." The "old" includes prejudice, ignorance, separation and the conflict which results from putting people aside. We must share and discuss as Christians "abled" and "disabled" but all "enabled" to learn the true meaning of this passage.

A theology of ministry with handicapped persons stems from the freedom of the Gospel which enables us to abandon ourselves to change — not because we are forced or shamed into a new series of regulations, but rather because we want to do God's will. (Govig, 1980, p. 16) Mainstreaming in Lutheran schools is an enactment of this theology of ministry with and for the handicapped. Lutheran schools have much to offer mildly/moderately handicapped children not the least of which is knowledge of their Savior, Jesus Christ and His redemptive love.

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Teaching Exceptional Learners at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

by Margaret Bauer and Elaine Payne

The Gospel clearly indicates that *all* God's children are to grow in Christian faith and life. Jesus teaches us to have compassion for all human beings, and has dynamically commanded us to: "Go! Make disciples! Baptize! Teach!"

The church's program of Christian education must have religious instruction and Bible classes for those who require special nurturing and sustaining in Christian attitudes and behavior.

The special learner needs to know he has redemption, and that the message of God's love for sinful man, through the gift of His only Son to redeem mankind, is meant for him also.

Nowhere is there an earthly mandate for churches to have special religion classes for special learners as Public Law 94-142, known as the Mandatory Special Education Act, commands the public schools to provide in secular subjects. However, we have God's mandate, through Christ's love and the power of the Holy Spirit, to provide for the special learner's needs.

The benefits are many for the special learner whose church provides a program of Christian education for him. First, it helps him grow in his knowledge of God as his heavenly Father and Jesus as his Redeemer and Savior. Second, the program helps him identify himself as a special person who is loved by the members of a special church. Finally, it gives this child of God a chance to develop friendships and learn acceptable behavior with others as he furthers his personal and spiritual growth.

As the Bible tells us, God has a very special concern for people who are handicapped, whether deaf (Matt. 11:5), blind (Matt. 20:30-34), speech-

impaired (Mark 7:32-35), or paralyzed (Luke 5:18-20); therefore, a handicap of any kind is no reason to deny anyone participation in a worship service or a Bible class. We know that God loves and values the special person as He does all people.

How Our Redeemer's Program Began

We are fully aware that exceptional learners are God's children and that they need a Savior; therefore, we have provided a spiritual community service for them for over eighteen years. We, at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, North Platte, Nebraska, believe it is our special privilege to provide the necessary leadership to serve a Bible class for forty exceptional people ranging in ages from seven to fifty-seven. The program was started by a concerned mother of two adopted special children, encouraged by a loving pastor and joined by another mother of a special child plus volunteer church women who served as helpers and teachers.

Some may ask, "What difference does one life make?" We Christians know the answer. This God-loving woman left a legacy, a special Bible class for special people, which through the grace of God and the dedication of many teachers and helpers has perpetuated her memory.

Realizing it was a special opportunity to witness to the community, Our Redeemer Lutheran Church provided the initial funding for this beginning class of five. In addition, gifts from the Lutheran Women's Missionary League, memorials and the voluntary contributions of other concerned church members provide a continuous source of funds.

Active Support from Community Helps

The class is held each Monday from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. The younger students come directly from the Educational Service Unit where they attend school. The older ones come from their sheltered workshop. They are transported by their teachers or their house parents and are picked up by parents, house parents or our volunteers who deliver them to their homes.

Over the years, a unique arrangement has been worked out with the teachers at the special school. From time to time they will send information indicating that a child is ready for the Bible class. They are, of course, familiar with the program and make the initial contact with the parents. They believe that the class provides an opportunity for the child to expand his environment, to meet new people, to engage in new learning situations, to interact with his peers and to develop his moral and spiritual potential.

We are truly grateful for their interest and concern, and realize that the program has been blessed in many ways by their participation. The older class members have been good recruiters too. They bring new friends who have entered their group home or started work at the sheltered workshop.

To attend the Bible class requires some members who are employed to leave work earlier than their regular dismissal time. This means that they must give up some of their salary. They are paid by the total number of items they produce in a work day. We teachers are constantly amazed that they continue to do this over the years and ask ourselves, "Would we do the same?"

Few of the students are members of the Lutheran church; however, we have provided baptismal services and we have had two families join our congregation after their child started to attend the Bible class.

The students come to us with different handicaps. Some are deaf or have difficulty hearing, some are non-verbal or have speech that is difficult to understand, and some have the additional burden of being in wheelchairs or on crutches. But in spite of the handicap, the individual is made to realize that he is an important, worthwhile person whom God very dearly loves. All the teachers and helpers know that we have some students with us for only a short time and some, due to their difficulties, have only a short time on this earth. Perhaps that is why the twelve teachers and helpers have such an intense dedication to this class and these people.

Description of a Typical Class Period

A half-hour before class time, the first van from the school arrives. The teachers must be there to supervise activities. In good weather the students are

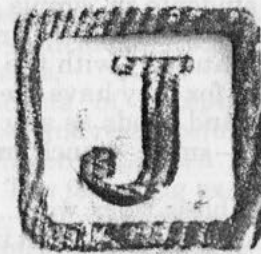
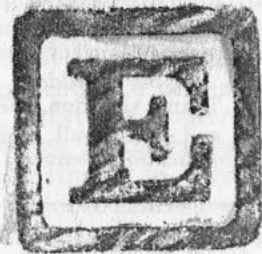
taken for a walk or are taken to play on the school playground. If they have to stay indoors, they use games, puzzles, sewing cards, soft balls or bean bags. The puzzles are big Bible story pictures, pasted on cardboard and cut into a few pieces.

A huge roll card is used for recording attendance. Each student puts a colorful seal on it to indicate his or her presence. The name of Jesus heads the roll, and there is a seal that was placed on the card for Him because He is present at each session.

By 3:30 everyone has arrived. The opening for the total class consists of singing — lots of singing! The Lord's Prayer is said together and special prayers are given as needed. Birthdays are acknowledged and "God's Blessings to You" is sung by the group to the tune of "Happy Birthday" for the birthday persons. This is a time for the honored ones to be specially singled out, and do they beam!

Following the opening is the time for devotions and object lessons. The Christian day school teachers take turns giving one devotion a month. Regular teachers of this class alternate for the other Mondays, and pastors willingly fill in when needed. At this time we also do the special learning for the day such as the Twenty-third Psalm, or the Ten Commandments. The opening session is concluded with singing "Onward Christian Soldiers" and marching to the eight individual classes.

During the second half hour the students, five or so in a class, are with their individual teacher and a helper. At this time the students hear the Bible story for the day and have their story leaflet before them; they finish this time with a handicraft that pertains to the lesson. Each session students receive one or two items that go home with them that they can share with others. For the older ones this is a good place to use tracts that they can share. The American Bible Society has tracts for special learners.



They need a Savior from sin; they can believe in a Savior; they all have an important place in God's eternal purpose!

An Approach to Recruiting Helpers and Teachers

It is gratifying to see the students from the parochial school volunteer to attend class sessions. The Blue Bird group, the King's Kids, which is a singing group, and various young people "help" in any way they wish by singing, story telling, guitar playing or teaching. These enlightened young people have been a joy to watch as they develop compassion skills through working with special learners. They benefit from this relationship by realizing that "there, but for the grace of God, go I." God blesses them as they learn to see beyond the handicap and realize these are truly special people whom God loves.

How is such a program started? The obvious answer is — with prayer! There is a need for nurturing exceptional learners in the Word. So, pray to convince others; pray for teachers and volunteers; pray for a place and time; pray for materials and funding. God will answer those prayers and shower all involved with His special blessings.

The pastor and lay people must work together to find the students; then someone must find the teachers and helpers, using possibly one teacher for each three to five students. Look for former elementary school teachers, parents of handicapped children, former Sunday school teachers and high school students whose exuberance and love of life is contagious. Recruit people as helpers first before asking them to be teachers. This allows them some time to gain confidence in their ability to teach. Find and use anyone who has a great capacity to love ALL God's children.

It is perhaps wisest to invite a few students at a time and gradually add others, or, ideally, friends will bring friends and the class will grow at a regulated pace. In this way teachers are cognizant of each individual's strengths and weaknesses. Some students will tend to get upset easily and will give up quickly. Some assume they can't do anything or learn anything and they may refuse to try anything new.

Many will have problems with abstract thinking, a limited attention span, retention difficulties, hyperactivity, or, due to medication, extreme passivity. Other learning problems in greater or lesser degree will be found, but none is insurmountable. Teachers should be able to help students to approach a learning situation with pleasure, anticipation, and the expectation that they will succeed.

Instructional Materials

Regular Sunday School and Vacation Bible School materials geared to their abilities are used, along with "Breakthrough." This is a publication from Bethesda Lutheran Home in Watertown, Wisconsin. It contains ideas, resources, and news for teachers who are bringing retarded persons to the Lord. We obtain many items from a Christian bookstore — flannelgraph stories, big pictures to teach the Commandments or the Lord's Prayer, coloring books, and lessons. The Board for Parish Services for The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, St. Louis, (formerly the Board of Parish Education) has been active in the production of lesson materials for special students since 1955. (See listing of sources of materials at the end of this article and in Book Reviews section.)

Special Services

The Christmas and Easter services are the highlights of our teaching year. The students invite their relatives, teachers, house-parents, friends and co-workers. Pastor dons his robes and gives a special sermonette for them. They in turn learn something special for Jesus. Perhaps they learn a new song, "sign" a Bible verse, tell the Christmas story with the large creche figures or use the Chrismons in some way.

After the church service all are invited to have refreshments provided by a church circle complete with favors and table decorations. For many years a very talented and special lady has made a personal gift for each of them. That means around eighty items are crocheted each year by her nimble fingers and are given from a loving heart.

How to Succeed with Exceptional Learners

People who work with the special student should have certain characteristics. Above all there should be an interest in and an enthusiasm for working with special learners. How the teacher speaks, the facial expression, the tone of voice and the skill in communicating with the students in simple terms show them how they are to respond to our Lord and His Word. One should act naturally with the class, accepting them as they are, for they have the same hopes, fears, joys, sorrows and needs as any of us. One should show them love — smile — touch and hug them.

Have patience; God will bless your work. Have hope; don't be discouraged. Have faith. Trust in God for His blessings upon your work. And pray! Pray often for guidance and success with the program. Pray with them. That is important because it is their opportunity to speak directly to God. Remember!

Methods for Teaching Exceptional Students

We have been so proud of our students! The number of items may be few, but at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church the Lord's Prayer, Twenty-Third Psalm, Ten Commandments and over thirty songs have been taught and learned!

Exceptional students want, need, and thrive on simple repetition. It is very important; it is a valuable teaching technique. So, go over it again and again. There will come a time when they will react in a positive manner to the familiarity and regard you with attentiveness and smiles. Then, use praise generously even if you cannot understand everything; all of us blossom with love and praise.

Stress that Jesus loves them and wants them to be His children both here and in Heaven. Perhaps they can't comprehend the concept of faith in Jesus. That doesn't matter. They know what it means to love and to be loved. Speak often of how Jesus showed His love for us when He died on the cross to save us. Speak often of the Father in Heaven, for it is necessary for them to feel secure in the wonderful love of God.

Above all, show them love. They'll love back; they'll double your investment! Smile, be happy and laugh, for Christian people are happy people. God will bless what you do. Little by little they will learn. Be patient. Progress slowly.

It is necessary to gear the lessons to the various learning levels and to the abilities of each child. They learn at a slower pace and need more exposure to each idea. It is best to break down everything into small steps. Adapt, create, use new ideas, then pull it all together. Remember the three R's — repeat, and repeat, and repeat!

Keep the Bible lessons simple. Christian doctrine should not be changed, but it needs to be presented in its simplest terms. Express Bible concepts in popular language and restate what is difficult. Paraphrasing is of greater or lesser practical value, depending on how well the teacher uses it. Have the student take part in interpreting the material so it becomes more meaningful to him.

It is better to concentrate on the New Testament because these students can identify with Jesus quite readily. Incidents from His life are some of the most teachable.

Teachers of exceptional learners have to be creative and resourceful. With a familiar object and a little ingenuity, a ten minute object lesson can be built. The following examples may be useful.

Use blue ribbons (such as are used with Special Olympics) with a picture of Jesus and First Place on it. Talk about winning ribbons for first place. The ribbon reminds us that Jesus has first place in our hearts and lives.

On Valentine's Day use a heart with Jesus on it.

Use the concept that Jesus is in our hearts and with us everywhere at all times so that we can talk to Him at anytime. Use a telephone to expand the idea that Jesus never "hangs up" His end of the line.

Use a radio — we can listen but not see the speaker. So it is with God. We can't see Him but can "listen" in our hearts.

Use an apple for the Trinity. The whole apple — one God; the peel — protects, as does the Father; the flesh is the goodness which is Jesus; the core and seeds represent the Holy Spirit.

Use seeds at Easter time — plant and watch the new life emerge.

Use church banners to teach the church symbols or use Chrismons at Christmas time. Make a special banner just for the class, or have them make their own Chrismons for their home tree.

Make a lapel decoration using a small mirror with the words, "God Loves You." Have them wear it at school, home or work. Students with verbal skills will delight in showing others.

Make a stand-up table reminder that says, "Pray Always," and shows a family praying at meal time for the students to take home and put on their tables.

Use an umbrella to provide protection from a thrown sponge ball. Jesus is our protection from sin as the umbrella is from the ball. Let them participate — they enjoy it!

Make a class scrapbook of people and things for which we can pray. Use it during the class sessions or make one for each to take home and use.

Use three gift-wrapped boxes. Each has a word inside: FORGIVENESS, LIFE, and SALVATION. Let students unwrap the boxes to find the free gifts from God.

Have all students add to a big list of the good things they have failed to do and a list of bad things they have done. Burn the list of bad things to show how God forgives our sins. They are gone forever.

Use an opened bottle of perfume. We cannot see the lovely smell. So it is with God's angels. We cannot see them but they are here watching over us and keeping us safe. Use the Bible stories of God sending His angels to Zechariah, Mary, the shepherds and Jesus.

Use left-over Sunday school materials; ask other churches to save their excess; get materials from Christian book stores, from Concordia Publishing House or Bethesda Home in Watertown, Wisconsin.

Use filmstrips from Vacation Bible School materials but simplify the stories. Use your own words to fit the film.

The Important Role of Music

Music is a necessary part of our instruction and we have found that highly rhythmic music suits our group best. Simple, lively Christian melodies have a

special appeal. Action songs delight them. With lots of repetition, they eventually learn most lively tunes. You can purchase the music, tapes and records through Sunday school material suppliers and Christian book stores. Tape your own church school children so your class can sing along, or invite the children to come and perform, or teach them a song. Tape their performance to be used at another time. Invite some teenagers in your church to sing, preferably with a guitar.

Teacher can't carry a tune? No matter — "a joyful noise" — is all that is necessary. What if they can't sing? Have them follow the actions or "sign" the words, but get them involved! Music can be a door opener to communication; it can give a sense of belonging. Music can revitalize and energize; it can calm and soothe; it has meaning for all people regardless of their physical capabilities.

In our opening session we find that music helps hold attention. It is an aid for setting the learning pace for the class if you introduce pertinent songs at key points. It also helps to cover material given in the devotions or to reinforce a lesson, e.g., using the song, "Zacchaeus," after the Bible story.

Songs with the person's name inserted can be effective many times over. Some love to lead a particularly favorite song, or use sticks to beat out the rhythm, or "sign" the most loved song of all, "Jesus Loves Me."

Action songs such as "Fishers of Men," "Down in My Heart," or "The Butterfly Song" delight them immensely. Our older group repeatedly asks for "Amazing Grace," "The Old Rugged Cross" and "Just As I Am." They love the Christmas songs and will ask to start singing them in early November!

Developing Christian Conduct in the Class

We realize that children need a guided life that is structured within a framework of wisely administered discipline. From the moment they first step through the doors, we teach them that they are in God's House and there are actions that are not tolerated. No running, yelling, screaming, tantrums or foul language are allowed.

We believe that a child does not have inner controls; those controls must be set up by the teachers. We teach them it is a privilege to attend worship in the Lord's House. We do not make excuses or pity them in any way because they are handicapped; therefore, we do not excuse unacceptable behavior. They live in and interact with the real world. We have found that peer pressure is as great here as in any school situation. The new ones learn quickly what is expected of them.

We strive, with the help of the Holy Spirit, for "growth in faith" and "growth in the fruits of faith."

Such growth is vitally important in the Christian education of special learners.

Under "growth in faith" we strive to develop their trust in God for forgiveness and a trust in Jesus as their Savior through whom they have the assurance of being eternally saved. We strive to develop a sense of the joy and happiness that comes with being a child of God so that they can grow in their Christian life.

Under "growth in the fruits of faith" we teach them to pray, which is their time to talk to God; we teach them to praise, which is their time to thank God. We help them to show love to others, and we teach them to have patience and a readiness to forgive others. We teach them an obedience to parents and teachers with emphasis on controlling their tongue and temper.

Marjorie Lehman, principal of Education Service Unit 16, commends this program as giving students another nurturing experience to broaden their sometimes quite narrow and confining lives. She has noticed that for the students who attend the Bible Class there is the ability to accept the death of a friend. They have comforting knowledge that the friend is with Jesus in a home of many mansions. It is traumatic to lose a friend, and over the years they have lost many. The ones who attend the class have a greater ability to accept death than others. They seem to have grasped the assurance of being eternally saved.

In Conclusion

The teachers know that they are not called to teach intricate theology but simply the love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ. They know that they are a part of the parent's support system at a difficult time in a family's life, especially when the child is young. The family sees that the teachers have a genuine love for their child, and that they truly want that child to know of Jesus' love. The family knows their child is having one of his basic needs met. The teachers know that Jesus is using THEIR arms to enroll and to help those who have a special burden.

The teachers at Our Redeemer know their students are a part of America's six and one-half million mentally retarded. They see their students as people and do not emphasize their handicaps. They see only their loving hearts, not their slower intellects. The teachers are well aware that figures show that out of every 100 persons, three will be mentally retarded, but they have NEVER seen a retarded SOUL. The teachers remember that they are children of God who are redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ; they are by grace the children and friends of God and heirs of eternal glory.

Sources of Resources

- Forty-five Object Talks for Children.* Evert and Odor, Standard Publishing Company, Cincinnati, OH.
- Visual Talks for Children.* Hutchcroft, Standard Publishing Company, Cincinnati, OH.
- Thirteen Bible Story Narratives.* Rev. Walter Baumann. Includes suggestions for using flannelgraph presentations. Contact Bethesda Lutheran Home, C/O "Breakthrough," 700 Hoffmann Dr., Watertown, WI 53094.
- Leading the Mentally Retarded in Worship.* Welborn and Williams. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO 63118.
- Expanding Worlds.* A curriculum for the young retarded adult — particularly those living in group homes. The lessons address some of their life situations. The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122.
- Breakthrough.* Ideas, resources and news for teachers bringing retarded persons to our Lord. Also bulletins available that are helpful for teachers. Bethesda Lutheran Home, Watertown, WI 53094.
- Training programs for teachers, parents, pastors and church professionals, free from Bethesda Lutheran Home, 700 Hoffmann Dr., Watertown, WI 63094.
- Full Participation — A Handbook for Congregations.* (Films, too.) Association for Retarded Children in Wisconsin, 5522 University Ave., Madison, WI 53705.
- A Sunday School for Mentally Retarded.* Filmstrip with cassette from Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO 63118.
- Helping the Retarded to Know God: A Guide For Christian Teachers of the Mentally Handicapped.* Concordia Leadership Training Series. Hahn and Raasch. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO 63118.
- Wonder-Fall.* M. Albright. An in-service teacher training guide for children just being introduced to the Christian faith. (Very simple.) Milwaukee County Association for Retarded Children, 1426 W. State St., Milwaukee, WI.
- Adventures in Christian Living and Learning.* A series of curriculum resources for the severely or moderately retarded, published for The Cooperative Publication Assoc., Abingdon Press.
- Concordia Primary Catechism Series.* Walter Wangerin, (ed.). For use with educables, ages 10-15. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO 63118.
- Series II, III of *Bible Lessons for Special Classes.* Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO 63118.
- Special Education Series I & II (19) Bible Stories.* Easy vocabulary, large print, strong visual appeal. American Bible Society, P.O. Box 5656, Grand Central Station, N.Y. 10163.
- Song Time for Special Ones.* Everett. Cardinal Stritch College Book Store, 6801 No. Yates Rd., Milwaukee, WI 53217.
- Hymns for Now; The Children's Hymnal; Joyful Sounds; Little Children Sing to God.* Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO 63118.
- Singspiration Vol. I; Action Songs for Boys and Girls Vol. II Renewal 1972.* From: Singspiration Music, Zondervan Corp., Grand Rapids, MI 49506.
- The Now Hymnal, Folk Encounter.* Hope Publishing Co., 380 So. Main Place, Carol Stream, IL 60187.
- Salvation Songs for Children.* (4 volumes) Overholtzer. Child Evangelism Fellowship Press, Grand Rapids, MI 49501.

even
then in
wonder

for
Walter Uffelman, Bill Kamrath,
Neil Hill*

these eyes, these hands,
these voices
beside the rushing waters
of my dreams
held me for a time

even then in wonder
even then in mystery

like lighted windows in the dark
or bright flowers in woods
or fire from mica struck
they held me

and now these autumn skies
throw long shadows across the ground
and waters deep
and swift
run darkly away
yet
there is music pouring
and in the leaves falling
a sense of something
deeper

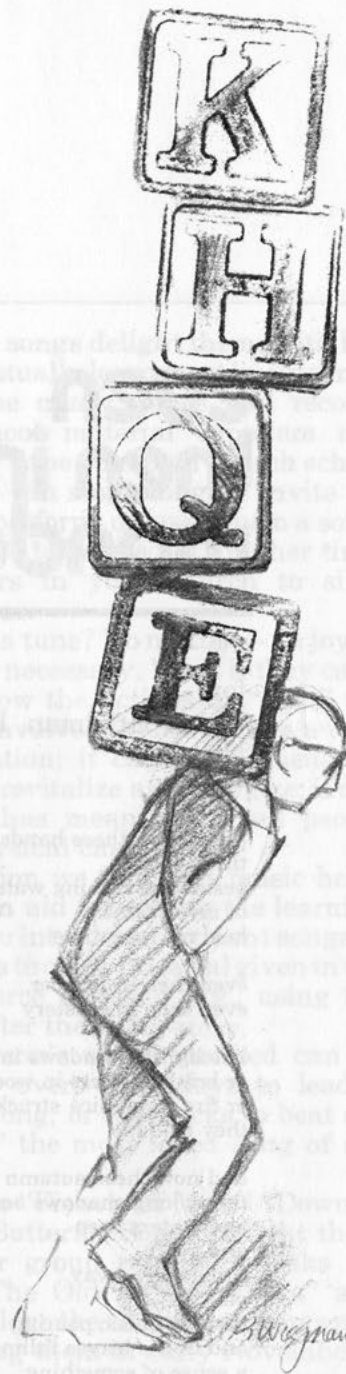
and when at night
I pull my dreams about me
and hear the dry rustle of leaves
on the hill
or the sweet litany of rain
through these sycamores
the spirit groans

even now in wonder
even now in mystery
they hold me

*A tribute to three very special teachers in
my life

J.T. Ledbetter

by George Kovtun



"What do you mean by bringing a special education student into my classroom? Why should we worry about the special student with learning problems? We already have a multi-grade classroom that has too many students." One hears such questions and comments from the educators who are uninformed, afraid of the unknown, or scared from previous experiences. They have worked in situations where there had been little training, disinterested administrators or failure because only immediate success had been a norm established by said educators.

"There isn't enough time in one day to be working out special programs for students with special problems. I have all my lesson plans to write, coaching after school, a Board of Education meeting, a Sunday School Teachers meeting, a Parent Teachers meeting." The list of obstacles multiplies.

The Price of

"In addition, we now have to teach sex education, concentrate on the socio-affective domain of the classroom, practice for the Christmas program, collect money for the 'Let's buy wood chips for the playground committee,' maintain a new check list for cognitive disabilities, and prepare a new self help skill developmental criterion; and by the way, don't forget about the new social studies curriculum study committee that must be implemented immediately so new textbooks will arrive on time." The list seems endless.

Increased Expectations of Teachers

The expectations of teachers working within a Christian day school are greater than those of our counterparts in public education. The members of the parish setting expect more. Mainstreaming; we ask ourselves, "Now what do we have to do? Are we to confront mainstreaming by bringing a child into the classroom to provide an education in a setting that is the least restrictive and most appropriate?"

We acknowledge the needs of these special children; we feel sorry but when the confrontation becomes real in the sense of happening within our own classroom, the lines are drawn, and it is easier to avoid a situation that would be threatening, fearsome, or more time consuming.

We have to ask ourselves where we are at this point in time relative to mainstreaming. Are we expecting too much from a professional staff that is already stretched too thin because of their dedication to Christian education? Should we expect a teacher who is working in a parish setting to be able to anticipate the needs of children with exceptionalities? If that were the case we would expect the teacher to identify or at least recognize problems of the exceptional child. We must remember, though, that at this point we are not considering the possibilities of services provided by the public sector of education.

Having identified a problem, the next step is assessment by working with specialists and the child's parents. A program must be written with goals and objectives tailored to the student's individual needs. At the same time you will be expected to provide an education of equal opportunity for all your students. Being a firm believer in special education will not in itself get the job done. Mainstreaming will increase the challenge experience within the regular classroom. Are we ready for mainstreaming?

Classroom Adjustments

Meeting the needs of a third and fourth grade classroom is a time consuming process that is without end. Each so called regular student must

Mainstreaming in the Parish

have his needs met and should be given as much individual attention as possible. Teaching is a constant challenge to develop the skills and enhance the learning process of every child. Mainstreaming an exceptional child into the regular classroom necessitates the need for change. Classroom adjustments have to be made. Unique lessons designed for the exceptional child must be developed and different teaching techniques must be used to reach the needs of individual students. At the same time you have to make sure the class as a whole recognizes the different needs of exceptional children, accepts them for what they are, and does not just tolerate them as being different.

We often forget what James tells us, "Be patient ..." (James 5, 7). Patience is a big factor in teaching. Working with exceptional children further emphasizes the need for patience and when we further stretch the classroom to accommodate the exceptional child we must really draw upon those words of James. By mainstreaming we are expecting regular classroom teachers to be able to identify the strengths and weaknesses, recognize the learning style of individual students and make appropriate adjustments to classroom materials and classroom presentations.

We should also expect the teacher to be able to evaluate and determine if objectives are being met. This in itself may cause problems. Determining the appropriate method to test objectives may cause a problem. Evaluation may cause consternation because it may be different from the rest of the class. It may not be realistic to expect evaluation by means of a written test. An oral exam might be the best method. The type of changes that must be made never ends and you must be ready to make adjustments.

Consideration must also be given to the appropriateness of the classroom setting. One of the first changes that may have to be made is the classroom decor. A child may be overwhelmed by the hanging mobiles and colorful bulletin boards. The room itself may be too distracting and thereby place a stumbling block before the child at the onset of the educational process. Change and adjustments have to be made in a regular classroom. Would we be expecting too much from a regular classroom teacher by mainstreaming?

Total Staff Commitment

The types of changes and adjustments that need to be made are not only found within the confines of the classroom. Adjustments need to be made by all educators and administrators. There has to be support for those who advocate the teaching of the exceptional child. It is too easy to say that it really

doesn't matter what other educators say. It does because you need their total support and not just passive indifference and accommodation. It is like being part of a 440 relay team. You want to run your best and know that success depends on an equal effort from the rest of the team.

Effective mainstreaming has to be a concentrated effort by an entire staff. Depending on the type of exceptionality you are dealing with, you will need your fellow teachers as resources and sounding boards when problems arise. You also need their understanding of the needs of the special students you are working with. It is imperative that they realize that these children have the right to learn even though their style may be different or their needs greater than those who are quite often referred to as normal students. If we were to start eliminating children from the classroom that were different, it wouldn't be long before the room would be empty. They are all different, but some have greater needs.

There is another important reason for the entire staff to be cognizant of the special child within your class. If you are going to work to meet a child's special needs, you need to feel confident that the child will have someplace to go once he has outgrown the need for your classroom. They may seem inconsequential, but if you were to pass on a child with exceptional needs to a classroom that would not accommodate those needs, you would feel like your efforts were to no avail. For this reason a staff must recognize the need to accept each child as an individual and be willing to work together to meet the needs of all students.

Quite often the enthusiasm of an individual is looked upon as suspect and at times construed as a threat by another person. This often happens among fellow educators. To suggest that there may be a better way to meet the needs created by a particular student's problems may not be readily accepted. This happens at times, no matter how gingerly you offer services to help meet needs or problems. Likewise, you may evoke the same feelings when advice was sought by a fellow educator and the results obtained by following it were inconsequential. An educational process is the only way we will be able to overcome these feelings amongst fellow educators.

How we go about establishing the feeling of harmonious working relations within a small parish is a responsibility first and foremost of the principal. The educational process must be recognized and promoted from the top and extended to all parameters of the educational process. The principal has to recognize the needs of the staff and the classrooms they represent. If parishes are to make any strides forward in the advocacy of mainstreaming, it must be foremost in our

educational outreach to develop the necessary understanding among administrators concerning what we are trying to accomplish.

The key to effective change is the support shown and voiced by administrators. The International Reading Association in an issue of its newsletter for administrators stated that one of the key factors in an effective reading program is the principal. His visible support is a catalyst for motivating the staff to excel and meet its objectives. A unified approach and a leader to provide an ongoing spark is a must.

Having an administrator who recognizes the problems of mainstreaming will help to eliminate many of the frustrations experienced by educators in the parochial setting. His understanding of the additional demands will help to eliminate some of the burdens often placed upon an educator who tries mainstreaming in the parish setting. A positive understanding and active support by the parish administrators in the end will help to eliminate burnout and can lead to the development of a program that will be looked on with respect and admiration by parish members and people from the community.

Cultivating Understanding Parishioners

Before we move too fast to implement the educating of the handicapped, we should recognize that many of the people we must work with in the parish have a handicap that we must help to overcome. Their handicap, being misinformed or uninformed, must be attended to at the very beginning. The many burdens and pressures placed upon Christian education is partly due to the fact that most individuals have many misconceptions about education, especially special education, and have not been educated to see what is involved. An educational program concerning mainstreaming for parishioners will also help to overcome the resistance to change one quite often experiences. It will also make it easier to talk about cost, if this is a factor. The development of a program that keeps everybody informed will lead to acceptance, a lower level of frustration and an atmosphere that leads to positive growth. James says we should have patience (Chapter 5:7) and it is probably the key factor when advocating change. The implementation of mainstreaming can be a slow process but one that needs to take place.

The implementation of special education within the parish depends on the provision of an effective educational program. It has been noted earlier that the services of such a program are needed for the staff of the school, principal and administrators, and the parish as a whole. It is for this reason that we

need to support the program to train Lutheran teachers so they can go out and provide the services needed within the school setting. Concordia Teachers College — Seward, for example, has a program which leads to certification in special education. These teachers, when properly equipped, can serve as resource teachers, offer their services as consultants to the school, and help to educate the parish to the needs that abound. However, the educational system as we know it must overcome its resistance and recognize the needs that can be satisfied and the benefits that can be gained through mainstreaming before special education teachers can serve special students very effectively.

Christian Responsibility

As Lutheran educators we must realize that we were special educators before the passage of Public Law 94-142. We not only have the responsibility to stretch the mind of a student, no matter what his gifts may be, but we have the additional responsibility to nurture his faith in Jesus Christ. We as Lutheran educators have been blessed with the unique responsibility of bringing Christ to many children. Long before Public Law 94-142 was passed Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me . . ." (Matthew 19:42) and He also told us to "Teach all nations . . ." (Matthew 28:18).

Who are we to ignore those commands when it comes to effective mainstreaming within our parishes? There are more than eight million handicapped children in the United States and more than half of them do not receive the least restrictive or most appropriate education. We have to ask ourselves what we are doing to reach out to these children to provide them educational services, and most of all, nurturing them in the love of our Savior Jesus Christ.

A Christian education is the most appropriate education for a handicapped child when it is the least restrictive. We must look forward and not fall back because of the many roadblocks. In Proverbs 9:10 (Living Bible) we find direction to help us understand the needs of the handicapped: "For the reverence and fear of God are basic to all wisdom. Knowing God results in every other kind of understanding." It is up to us to bring our God to those handicapped students and at the same time provide them an atmosphere to expand their educational horizons. How often is it that we look to ourselves instead of looking at the Lord's work. Remember, "In Everything you do put God first and He will direct you and crown your efforts with success." (Proverbs 3:6 LB) Are you reaching out to all so that you can put God first? No matter what the roadblocks, mainstreaming is imperative. ■



book reviews

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod's Board for Parish Services conducted a special project acronymed SERVICE (Special Education Research for Viable Institutional Community Experiences). Phase I began August 1, 1979 and terminated July 31, 1980. This first study found (a) that there were special education needs in our congregations and (b) that most school and parish personnel lacked the skills to design and implement strategies to meet the challenges posed by special students and their families.

Phase II, which ran from October 1, 1980 to March 31, 1982 was devoted to the production of eighteen booklets which are reviewed here. The specific objectives of SERVICE Phase II are listed as follows in the committee's April 1982 report:

1. To train Lutheran school and church workers for the development of new special education programs.
2. To strengthen and extend existing Lutheran special education programs.
3. To study and evaluate the effectiveness of the new and extended special education programs.
4. To provide ongoing technical assistance to Lutheran school and church workers for extending special education programs.
5. To evaluate the effectiveness of the technical assistance provided for the development or extension of Lutheran special education.
6. To share findings and recommendations, new materials and methodologies with trainers of professional church workers and related agencies."

Dr. Jan Curtis Case was the project director and Mrs. Susan Madden the assistant project director. Both did an outstanding job of leadership, facilitation and editing in the production of these fine succinct bulletins "to convey knowledge . . . develop awareness . . . nurture positive attitudes toward individuals with disabilities, and to aid in the development of new partnership skills." (Bulletin Foreward)

These materials were written, field tested and revised as needed. The writers were: Dr. Marion Baden, Dr. Mary Ann Evans, Ms. Brenda Fey, Mrs. Kathy Gramlich, Mr. Lloyd Haertling, Ms. Judi Klingsick, Dr. Glenn Kraft, and Dr. Judy Preuss. The five Districts that were used for piloting the bulletins were: Eastern, English, Mid-

South, Northwest and South Wisconsin. Aid Association for Lutherans provided "a generous fraternal benevolence grant" which made the project possible.

Feedback from students and teachers about these booklets that the author received in response to a request for comments follows. Each of the eighteen booklets are reacted to very briefly. All are available from the Board for Parish Services of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

SE1 Let's Start Here
Bulletin No. 83182

The purpose of this module is to whet the appetite regarding special children and to provide guidance from God's Word. It is an excellent personal or small group introduction to special education for pastors and teachers. Excellent Scripture studies are given. It could make a fine Bible class segment.

SE2 Assessing Your Needs
Bulletin No. 83282

An outline for a four-meeting process for determining the needs of your congregation. It suggests ways of prioritizing and setting goals strategically. Other bulletins are referred to for implementation. (See *SE3 Resource Supports*, *SE17 Program Evaluation* and *SE18 Keeping Those New Programs Alive and Well*.)

SE3 Resource Supports
Bulletin No. 83382

The objective is to help schools and congregations identify resource needs and potential supportive resource sources. Four types of deviations are listed. Identification tasks for leadership, needs, resources, local personnel, local services and agencies, and other helpful people are identified. Sample situations are presented.

SE4 Called to Consult
Bulletin No. 83482

A brief overview of some of the do's and

don'ts of advice-giving when you are working with a congregation. Why some consulting efforts fail and ways to improve your consulting effectiveness and troubleshooting skills are presented. Three excellent appendixes are provided as a form of assessment of "What Kind of Leader am I?" "Possible Situations," and "My Consultant Skills Profile."

SE5 Strategies for Developing Awareness and Commitment
Bulletin No. 83582

Strategies for generating awareness of and sensitivity to exceptional people are given. Strategies for informing, simulating, and contact or exposure to the handicapped are provided. Excellent resource addresses are given also.

SE6 "I Don't Have Any Students Like that in My Class . . . Do I?"
Bulletin No. 83682

This particular booklet in the Special Education Series is very beneficial to the teacher concerned with students who have learning problems. It raises the question concerning what exactly is a learning problem and then answers in a clear accurate manner. Ways to work with the student, the parents, and to respond to learning problems are given. Although the booklet does not offer treatment, it is an excellent "survival" guide to the teacher who must start dealing with students who have learning problems.

SE7 Individualizing Instruction
Bulletin No. 83782

This booklet could be used for teachers of regular classrooms for in-service. Many activities and games are provided which can be used with the entire class which would enable the teacher to see pupils' individual needs more accurately.

SE8 Special Education Models
Bulletin No. 83882

Various ways of doing special education are outlined. Public Law 94-142 is discussed

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with emphasis on the Lutheran educator's responsibilities. Eleven questions help you develop your own model for your situation. Appendix A shows a "Continuum of Educational Services of Students with 'Disabilities.'" **Book Reviews**

SE9 Getting Programs Started in the School
Bulletin No. 83982

A step by step approach to organizing and maintaining a special education program. All you need to know from the Federal Guidelines to the Individual Educational Plan.

SE10 The Gifted and Talented
Bulletin No. 84082

This bulletin provides the reader with rewarding insight for identifying and guiding the gifted, special children of God who need to be recognized. Sample scales for rating gifted children, what Lutheran schools can offer, and helpful agencies, publications, and organizations are also given.

SE11 Staff Development
Bulletin No. 84182

A splendid resource for anyone wanting to lead or develop an effective teacher training in-service session. Clearly defined steps are presented for constructing a relevant in-service experience. Outlines for possible in-service programs relating to handicapped children and their special educational needs are provided.

SE12 Our Parish Partnership
Bulletin No. 84282

Worshipping, teaching and learning, witnessing, serving and fellowshiping are

the five areas of mutual ministry in the body of Christ covered in this bulletin. Easy to follow steps are laid out with checklists to follow, and many resources are provided.

SE13 Parenting the Special Child
Bulletin No. 84382

The author conveys an appreciation for the unique dimensions of parenting an exceptional child in this introductory booklet. From birth to death, reactions of people play a handicapping or productive role in the person's development. Sources of assistance are provided.

SE14 A Supplement to Family Worship
Bulletin No. 84482

Family Worship is one of twelve booklets available in the Concordia Publishing House CHRISTIAN PARENT SERIES (1981). This booklet expands on the discussions and activities presented in *Family Worship* which are designed to give specific help to families that have a person with a disability or handicap in them. A special "Our Family Worship Profile" is given. Additional resources are also provided in this booklet.

SE15 Person to Person
Bulletin No. 84582

The purpose of this bulletin is to link the reader to real persons called to faith in Christ. Excerpts from the booklet could be used in church newsletters and bulletins. This booklet is not intended to create feelings of sympathy, sorrow or guilt. Instead it shares a message of acceptance and potential opportunities with the reader. Discussion items and suggestions on where to go from here are given.

SE16 Communication
Bulletin No. 84682

Communication is the key to success in any endeavor. Ways to be effective and problems and basic skills of communication are presented. Good communication between professionals parents and children will ultimately facilitate improved service for the exceptional person. Activities are outlined that can form the basis of a workshop for parents, teachers or any interested group.

SE17 Program Evaluation
Bulletin No. 84782

Evaluation is presented in a realistic, even humorous manner. The on-going process is outlined and reasons why we evaluate are given. Finally, evaluation as it pertains to Special Education is stressed.

SE18 Keeping Those New Programs Alive and Well
Bulletin No. 84882

A very helpful guide for staff involved in special education ministry. By being aware of the symptoms of program burnout, individuals can prevent the death of a new program. Survival principles are given which will insure program maintenance. A well and healthy program, like a well and healthy human body, needs care and effort for wellness and even aliveness.

In summary, these booklets are well done and are available from the Board for Parish Services at a minimal cost of \$1 each or \$12.00 for the entire series. The address is:
Board for Parish Services LCMS
1333 So. Kirkwood Road
St. Louis, MO 63122

Glenn Kraft