

“The Wonder of Washed Hands”

“The Wonder of Hands” is a devotional series for Iowa District West preschool and early childhood ministries. The devotional series continues the theme from the District’s August conference. Directors are invited to use the devotion personally, share during a staff devotional time, or make copies to share with associates for their personal devotional time. The devotions might also be used for Board meetings or other gatherings of ministry leaders and partners. Please feel free to make copies and share. God-willing a new devotional theme will be shared the beginning of each month during this school year.



November 2013

Celebrating God’s Washing of Hands

“Wash your hands!” Those directions are spoken frequently in an early childhood classroom. “Wash your hands,” after the finger painting activity, after going to the restroom, before snacks, etc. Have you ever counted how many times during the day the children and staff wash their hands?

“Wash your hands (and your heart) King David!” The Old Testament King had dirtied his hands in adultery and murder (2 Samuel, Chapter 11). God confronted David with his sin and the penitent sinner replied in the words of Psalm 51, “*Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin*” (vs. 2). “*Wash me; and I will be whiter than snow*” (vs. 7). Trusting in the Promised Messiah that would be born through the family of the King, David was washed. David responded by faithfully serving His God.

Physical washing is easy—soap, water, scrubbing. Washing away of sins is more difficult. Only God can wash away sin. God washed away our sin with the blood of Jesus. The blessing of Jesus’ washing is made ours through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. The ceremony is simple—a few drops of water “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”—and God washes away our sins. The blessings are life-changing and eternally significant.

Excellent early childhood centers make sure that physical hand washings take place routinely. Missional early childhood centers emphasize that God has an even more important washing available for all His children. Baptism is never routine. It is God’s action. It is God’s way of sharing the blessings of forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation even with the littlest children.

Lutheran early childhood centers are unique in that they not only celebrate that children are special physical creations of God, but that children are re-creations of God as they are born again in baptism. Lutheran early childhood centers always respect the faith traditions of the families who are not Lutheran. Our theological foundation can never be imposed on children. However, Lutheran centers never hide the truths of Scripture and the blessings that God has for all His children. We celebrate that we are baptismal places—places where hands and hearts are washed by Jesus.

Hand in Hand—Reflections and Discussion

- + What are the joys and blessings of your baptismal washing?
- + How do you share the blessings of baptism in a classroom without confusing or excluding the children who may not have been baptized?
- + How do you involve the pastor and other partners in sharing baptismal blessings and opportunities with un-churched families?
- + How has your center/classroom been God's instrument to welcome a child into God's family through baptism?

Holding God's Hand in Prayer

“In the water, in the Word; In His promise, be assured;
Those who are baptized and believe shall be born again.
Father welcomes all His children to His family through His Son
Father giving His salvation, Life forever has been won.” LSB #605, vs. 2

Thank You Jesus for washing me! Wash the hearts and hands of all Your children. Amen.

Authored by Rev. Bob Riggert, Iowa District West Early Childhood Cabinet