



A Devotion for Teachers and Leaders

Helping Others Find Belonging

by Sandra Brese Rice

Sandra was a first-year kindergarten teacher and was about to get a lifelong teaching lesson her very first week. Little Liesl was having a wonderful time at kindergarten, and when her dad came to pick her up at the end of the day, she began skipping down the hallway to meet him. Halfway to her father, she spun around and ran to her teacher with her arms out. Mrs. Rice went down on her knees to get ready for the hug, and to her surprise, Liesl kissed her right on the lips! Lesson learned; hug them, love them, but keep your head slightly turned, because what may look like a runway to a hug may be something completely different.

As teachers and leaders in our schools and churches, we encounter times when people do not always see things the way we intended. Like it or not, we have spent some time retelling a story correctly or revisiting a plan or situation. Sometimes it's tiresome; sometimes it's draining. But sometimes it's a pleasant surprise!

- Have you ever had a conflict with a parent or church member who made an assumption or saw something differently from you? If so, how did you handle the situation?
- Have you ever had something that was always seen one way turn into a pleasant surprise?

Today's Bible verse is from 1 Samuel and is when the prophet Samuel was ready to anoint a new king from the line of Jesse. Jesse's oldest and strongest sons were passed by and Samuel anointed the smallest and youngest son, David. It was definitely not something Jesse's family saw coming. David was a child and certainly not kingly at the time.

FOCUS:

But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider how handsome or tall he is. I have not chosen him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outside of a person. But the LORD looks at what is in the heart.

-1 Samuel 16:7 NIV



The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart. -1 Samuel 16:7 (NIV)

- Have you ever had a student, or do you know a youth who showed the love of Jesus? One who is maybe a bit more empathetic or kind? One who makes decisions based on their faith?
- How was that student first perceived when you first met them?
- Do you see students or youth in your church struggle with fitting in or being included?
- If so, how do you handle that situation immediately? How do you handle it long-term?
- Is there an effort made at your school or church to welcome and include people with disabilities?
- If not, why do you think that is? Do you think you could make a difference?
- Could your school or church (or both!) be the place where people with disabilities not only attend, but belong?
- How do you support families who have someone with a disability living in their home?
- Do you know where to turn for help with disability ministry? BethesdaLC.org

CLOSING PRAYER:

Dear Heavenly Father, as teachers and leaders in the church we are often immersed in the pull between what people see and think about a child and who they truly are—Your creation. Help us have classrooms and places of acceptance and learning. Help us keep open minds and open hearts that support Your children and Your people. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

© Copyright, 2020, Bethesda Lutheran Communities. All rights reserved. This content is intended for educational use only. Copies may be made to support your classroom or place of learning.

Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Reader's Version®, NIV® Copyright © 1995, 1996, 1998, 2014 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. www.zondervan.com The "NIV" and "New International Reader's Version" are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™