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We're in the Kid Business

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We're in the Kid Business

Abstract

"It's our deep desire to train children in the way they should go, to help them to seek out God's will for their life, to help them use their talents and gifts, and to draw them closer to God by learning about His world and His Word."

Posting about Christian education from *In All Things* - an online hub committed to the claim that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has implications for the entire world.

<http://inallthings.org/were-in-the-kid-business/>

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Comments

In All Things is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service at Dordt College](#).

We're in the Kid Business

 [all in allthings.org/were-in-the-kid-business/](https://allthings.org/were-in-the-kid-business/)

Josh Bowar

“Why did you choose to update your library/media center this summer?”

An easy question, right? No room for error or misunderstandings. Some would even consider it a “softball” question to get the interview started. Not quite.

At Sioux Center Christian School, we're just completing construction on a building expansion to house our lower elementary grades, music program, and office complex. In an effort to upgrade parts of our current campus, we also decided to refresh the library/media center to make it more inviting and engaging for today's learners and also to make it a space that better meets the needs of our inclusive education program as well as the new roles that our media specialist fulfills.

We decided to go with a crowdfunding campaign, just to see how it would go as our first toe dip in the water of online fundraising. We were blown away by the positive response, and we received national attention from [GoFundMe](#), the company we used for our campaign. They contacted us to set up an interview with a regional TV network and wanted to interview the school faculty involved in the project.

This just-starting-his-third-year assistant principal had never been interviewed on TV and was, admittedly, pretty nervous. No one wants to look like a complete fool on TV, so I did some thinking through quotes in my mind so I might look like just a half fool.

Back to the softball question. During the interview, I was asked, “Why did you choose to update your library/media center this summer?” I was so ready for this one and started sharing about how we want to encourage and train disciples to use today's tools to investigate, explore, and share with others in order to advance God's kingdom. As I'm sharing, the camera man/reporter (one in the same – sending a “news crew” means one person with a camera) started making faces, rolling his eyes, and looking annoyed.

Cue interior monologue: “Did I say something offensive? Am I babbling? Is he really doing this?”

Needless to say, my interview was short, and none of my quotes showed up in the story, which didn't surprise me. What did surprise me was how thrown off I was that someone would respond negatively to the message of Christ. My wife and I lived in Florida for two years and came across this reaction all the time. Now having been in Sioux Center for eight years, had I become soft to it? I think so, and the interview was a good reminder.

At SCCS, our mission is to disciple God's children by equipping them with a knowledge and understanding of Christ and His creation so that they can obediently serve God and others as they work and play. In today's world, that means helping students serve God and others in a global society—thinking beyond themselves, concerned about issues that affect others, and understanding how they can help, serve, and witness. We seek to prepare and equip citizens for the Kingdom of God, disciples who share the gospel.

We take seriously the responsibility to develop minds, but we also seek to develop hearts – hearts for God, cultivating a worldview in which God has His rightful place and in which we look to the Bible for answers to life's questions.

So how do we do that in a TK-8th grade Christian school? We love rhyming words at the elementary level,

so here we go.

1. KNOW: Three things to know: who your students are, what's happening in their world and the world, and what they can handle in age-appropriate ways. In my completely unbiased opinion (of course), I believe our teachers are masters at knowing their students. They know their interests, talents, needs, and personalities. Teachers use this information to match students with what's happening in the world. Of course, this kind of matching needs to take place if teachers actually know what's happening in the world. Teachers at SCCS do an excellent job of staying up to date with current events. They bring those events into the classroom, filtering if needed, depending on the age and readiness of the student.

2. SHOW: We need to show students what's happening in the world. Today's society is all about the visual. The more we can share pictures and video clips, the better, because students respond to those images. We need to show what's happening, apply those events to parallel instances in the Bible, and discuss with students how to respond to the events, ways to help, etc. The more we appropriately and deliberately expose our students to current and world events, the less likely they'll be to think that God only lives in Sioux Center (or your neck of the woods). Students need to know and understand that our God is huge. He lives everywhere. And he wants us to get out of our bubble to see creation for the big world that it is. Why? So we can have compassion and unity in the body of Christ.

3. GROW: Students often need a push. What better place is there to nudge or push students to learn more, understand the hard things, and grapple with what's happening than in a Christian school that supports the same worldview as the church and the home? We need not be afraid to tackle tough issues if we are doing so with grace, truth, and a gentle touch. As our mission statement states, we want God's kids to be disciplined and equipped. I know for myself that the times when I've been most disciplined and equipped have been when I've been pushed out of my comfort zone. Our students need the same. They need to get actual experiences practicing discipleship, with the school being a true training ground — kind of a boot camp— for the world in which they live. They need to gain tools and understanding so they are equipped to be effective followers of Christ and servers of others, both now and in the future.

It's our deep desire to train children in the way they should go, to help them to seek out God's will for their life, to help them use their talents and gifts, and to draw them closer to God by learning about His world and His Word. We're in the kid business, the business of training and discipling fellow disciples. If we, as a Christian school, are to fulfill our mission to equip disciples to serve others in today's world, we need to make sure that students know, grow, and show. We need to encourage them and provide opportunities for them to understand what's happening in the world, how to respond to it, and what it means for the Kingdom of God.

Then, when they're interviewed someday about what they're doing in their corner of God's Kingdom, an eye roll or a pulled face won't throw them off. But, more importantly, they'll understand Christ, their calling, and the world — and how those three fit together in a way that gently invites and boldly claims our big God as creator and ruler of all.