



Seasons of Teaching

By Beula Postlewait, Communications Representative

Perhaps you have experienced weather changes and other seasonal changes as you transition from summer to fall, then fall to winter. In the Midwest region of the United States, we experience all the seasons with their unique beauty and changes in weather. There are also seasons of life, and we experience them personally and with other members of our family.

If you pause to think about it, teachers also experience seasons in their career. There is the joy, fear, and excitement of the first few years of teaching. There can be the “settling in” years with more confidence and experience followed by the more reflective years as we think about what we have accomplished and realize

there is no time to set aside. We want to strive for excellence until the day we retire.

Life experiences also affect our teaching. When I began my first teaching assignment, I was single. I felt the students I taught were like my own children. I didn't mind working long hours because I was doing it for "my kids." After I married Jim, I then had many other things at home to occupy my mind. Husbands normally don't want their wives to stay up late working on lesson plans and grading papers. I had some adjustments to make. I had to learn to work smarter—not longer. When children come along, this really requires some juggling of schedules and careful planning.

Seasons of teaching include the following:

Early Career

The first years of teaching require lots of time and energy. Taking the time to relax and realize the accomplishments of the students helps to keep the enthusiasm alive. If you are a new teacher, do not hesitate to ask for help from other teachers. Many veteran teachers are willing to mentor and advise new teachers. They want you to succeed and are willing to help if you ask. Not every lesson you plan will be successful; however, you can learn from each experience and adapt your lesson plans to match the students' needs in each class.

Mid-Career

Now you have a better idea of what is required and what works best for you and your students. You may be ready to be more creative and try different approaches. This may be a time to try some new methods or styles. By this time, you can quickly ascertain what will work with your class. You have built your confidence and have a few tricks up your sleeve. You know who to turn to when you need help. Don't forget that teachers are lifelong learners. Professional development, either through your school or local colleges and universities, can help you with classes or resources to keep you up to date with current trends.

Experienced Teacher

By this time, you have discovered the aspects of teaching that you love the most. Incorporate those aspects into your teaching as much as possible. Students notice when a teacher is passionate about the subject or topic they are teaching.

By now, teachers have encountered many different students and parents. We never forget some students because of the trauma they have created in the class. We never forget those students who love to learn and make our time in the classroom so memorable. Remember the good students and forgive the troublesome ones.

Many children come to school with psychological and emotional problems that cause teachers to feel they do nothing but correct student behavior. “This is not what I signed up for!” they may say. God may place you in that position to be the one positive person in a child’s life. With your experience, you may be the one person who can help to turn that child’s life in a positive direction. If God has placed you in that position and you have changed the direction of a child’s life, please contact me and tell me your story at bpostlewait@kc.rr.com.

In whatever season of teaching you are, let me remind you that God is there with you.

“The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace” (Psalm 29:11, NIV).

“May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word” (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17, NIV).

“I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being” (Ephesians 3:16, NIV).

Teaching is much more difficult in today’s culture. Much has changed in the last 10 years. However, there is one constant that does not change — God is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Pray silently as the students enter your room. Pray for the student who annoys you the most. Pray for the student who

overcomes great hurdles to complete the work well. Pray for yourself to be an example of a Christlike life to all the students and staff.

If you ask for his help, he can walk through the doors of your school with you and into your classroom. His Spirit will be with you there throughout the day.

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