



You're Not Alone

Educating Your Kids During Stay-at-Home Orders

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For our Mother and Grandmother, Barbara

“We are all playing Monopoly™ on a Catan™ board.”

“Everything is different which can bring frustration and fear to the forefront the players who are *Parents, Students, and Teachers.*”

BONNY LORENZO

FOREWARD

On April 11, 2020, my sisters, Bonny and Charie, along with my niece Rachel, Bonny's daughter, appeared with me on the Ninth Hour Prayer Meeting.

The Ninth Hour Prayer Meeting is a live-streamed prayer meeting where we pray about COVID-19 and every aspect of life. The prayer meeting offers two segments—the segment of information and a part of intercession.

We share information about how the virus affects life and ministry. We speak to letter carriers, elected officials, missionaries, pastors, your workers. We then take our petitions to the Lord.

While on the Ninth Hour Prayer Meeting, my niece and sisters, who are Christian School educators, spoke of how COVID-19 affects students and parents. They compiled a resource for parents whose children are in home-bound education.

John O'Malley, Brother and Uncle to the authors

The Guild of Baptist Writers

To watch the Ninth Hour Prayer Meeting go to [Facebook.com/johnomalley](https://www.facebook.com/johnomalley) or [YouTube.com/thejohnomalley](https://www.youtube.com/thejohnomalley)

INTRODUCTION

This resource reminds parents, students, and teachers they are all working on the same objective, a successfully educated student in their child's education together.

We divided this resource in four logical segments. Please read all sections. Each chapter or section gives a specific message. There are four sections.

- A guiding message for Students
- A calming message for Parents
- A helpful message for Teachers
- A closing message for all

At the end of this resource, the authors give their six reminders, which should be repeated each day of the week by Parents, Students, and Teachers.

In the last section, these teachers share their email addresses and their commitment to connecting with their readers.

CHAPTER 1

A GUIDING MESSAGE FOR STUDENTS

GIVE THEM A HOME SCHEDULE.

OUR YOUNG PEOPLE are on a different schedule; experiencing a different school structure; living a different social life. This is true for all types of school kids. If you don't have a written plan, time will get away from you. Set a timer.

GIVE THEM RESPONSIBILITY BEYOND THEIR SCHOOLING.

Remind them that they are a vital part of the home team. You could even put all the house chores in a jar and have kids pick what chore they get to do for the day. This makes it a game and it makes them feel like they are in control of the choice. (You can set up house rules about trading chores etc.)

- Help them to find a place of service amid the trial
- Write notes of encouragement to church members
- Create signs of encouragement to put on your front lawn (like a real estate or yard sale sign) My school

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is providing a sign that says our school is praying for everyone.

- Offer to help their teacher with something (even if they can't help, it is good for them to make the offer).
- Have them text a Bible verse to their contacts every day.
- Sweep a neighbor's driveway
- Pray for all the people working on the front lines of COVID-19.
- Brainstorm together to come up with a plan to help others.

REMEMBER THIS:

Guide your kids through their feelings and fears. Everyone deals with things differently. You need your kids to know that their feelings are valid. Your kids' feelings and reactions are the way God has designed them as an individual.

Kids need to be heard and feel like their thoughts are validated through your reaction.

Don't diminish what they feel as not a big deal.

Remind your kids that they are part of history and they should find a place of service.

CHAPTER 2

A CALMING MESSAGE FOR PARENTS

PARENTS HAVE ADDED responsibilities at home, for work, and their child's education. They also have a concern that their kids aren't getting all they need, that the level of parental provision (tech and content) is insufficient.

That's a natural fear all the time. Now it is exacerbated by the circumstances since so much is out of our control. Also, parents see academic needs and habits more closely than they are accustomed to having seen regularly.

Take a deep breath because we can do this.

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. Philippians 4:13

Don't be overwhelmed by the many job titles. Instead, embrace them with help from the Lord.

Take this chance to build a bond with your child as a student. (*seeing their strengths and weaknesses in a way that is daily rather than in a big overview.*)

Remember, your value as a parent is not measured by your child's grade or academic success.

EDUCATION IS A PROCESS.

It's more like growing a garden than building a house. Effort and materials that you put in do not always equal a visible result. It is a process, and you have to just keep at it. Education has so many variables that are never the same two days in a row. Your child is not the same student on a daily basis. That is normal. That is the process. Teachers have to have a long view with a daily effort. Parents helping in the process need to wear the parent hat, as well as the teacher hat. You can't get annoyed because your child is not understanding a lesson or remembering what you said. You can't be annoyed because your child doesn't feel like working. Honestly, this is what your child's teacher faces in the regular classroom.

Write a plan the night before for the next day. When something is planned, even if you do not accomplish everything, you will feel more prepared to embrace the day. This will set the tone for the home.

Class time needs to be broken up - do not have your child sit down for four hours. Instead, break it up in chunks, as this will allow you and your child not to feel overwhelmed.

Mix it up

Let your child teach you for the day. The work will still get done, but they feel like they're in control.

Have kids share their best thing that happened, and the worst thing that happened over the day/week. (This helps give an insight into what they are thinking and/or what is bothering them.)

Classroom chairs- Set a timer, and when it goes off, the kids have to trade seats.

Picnic classroom - Set out blankets and have school on the floor.

Family show and tell- find an item in the house and have the kids describe why it is essential to them.

Variety in the "classroom" will make it easier to complete the daily necessities/task and break up the quarantine monotony.

Remember that you and your child's teacher are on the same team. You are both working together toward the same goal. Keep in mind that your child's teacher is putting in countless hours behind the scenes to get your child's work together, their lessons taught, and their finished work graded. Remember to exercise grace in your communications with the teacher. This situation is new for them too.

Pray

Be an example of service to others in a time where we are thinking of our survival.

Be an example of perseverance when things are not simple or easy or familiar.

Remember that kids often adopt the feelings/attitudes of the adults in their lives.

Children are the best lie detectors. Your children watch you, and while your words may be reassuring if your actions are that of fear, frustration, or irritation, your kids will know and will follow your lead. If you complain about their teacher, their school, or their work, they will start to feel that way too.

Be an example of grace in a time of struggle. If you set the standard, they will follow.

CHAPTER 3

A HELPFUL MESSAGE FOR TEACHERS

WE ARE CONCERNED about providing the right amount of academic rigor, the right kind of assessments, the right kind of learning experiences for your child within the confines of the quarantine.

Teachers have an added workload, and they are working extended hours beyond belief. They have added responsibilities, especially as it relates to excellent communication while sharing the very same concerns that parents have.

Many of our colleagues have children at home, and so they are fulfilling the classroom duties for their students while meeting the parent's responsibilities of education with their children.

Deep breath. Twice. :)

PRACTICAL ADVICE

Start the day rooted in God's Word and stay planted there.

Read your Bible before starting your day.

Pray - for your students, for your school parents, and yourself. Everyone is feeling pressure on many fronts - we all need peace, strength, and, most of all, wisdom! (James 1:5)

Listen to a sermon or some good Gospel singing throughout the day and remind yourself that God is in control.

Set guidelines for your day.

Decide a start and end time for the day. Your regular school day had a start and end time. Your digital school day should too. Determine what time you'll stop answering emails and turn off your computer. (Then, really abide by those times!)

Take a lunch break. Your eyes need a break from the computer, and your mind needs a break from your to-do list. Take time off to eat lunch with your family and determine not to discuss work until the meal is done.

If possible, set up an area that is designated for you to do your schoolwork. This preparation helps to make it seem like you really "went to work" even though you may have only walked from the kitchen to the living room. It also helps to keep home feeling more like home and less like an extension of your classroom.

Dress up for the workday. You don't have to wear a ballgown and a tiara, but you also shouldn't sit in your pj's all day. Start the day off by choosing an outfit that you wouldn't mind being seen in if you were able to leave the house. It will help you to feel more productive and will stave off some of the cabin fever.

Go outside and get fresh air. Even though businesses and public parks are closed, the outdoors are still open for busi-

ness. Step outside your house and get some fresh air and sunshine - it'll make you feel better.

Don't let the tech intimidate you.

Google how to do anything! Many tech things are free to teachers right now, and they can really help you and your students succeed. Don't let a lack of experience with a particular technology slow you down. You can do it, and if you can't, you know someone who will be glad to show you.

SHAKE IT UP!

Each of us has been doing something to generate fun in our "classrooms."

Thursday, **Bonny** sat in her front yard for the Google Meet. They had "Outdoor Thursday," and invited anyone who could (with the tech available) to sit outside for class. It was fun for them. Note: Windy days are not optimal if you are using your teacher guide. :) Don't ask. But, you know they loved it because they asked if they were doing it next week. We have had guest stars (just have a stuffed animal going by the screen.) And, yes, even when you teach high school. And, yes, they roll their eyes, and yes, they love it.

Rachel likes to do dress-up days with her students. She has even had a silly hat day (because any time you can wear Minnie Mouse ears on a weekday, you should take that opportunity). Keep a variety of fun things that are unexpected and not schoolwork.

Charie likes to do games like Tuesday trivia, or Would You Rather? Sometimes, she'll start with a funny meme and encourage children to journal/draw everyday. Anything to

create that spirit of community will help the class morale. Work to make it excellent for the kids because that may be their only regular hour for the day.

Bonny starts every class on campus with a song. She is doing the same though, at home. She plays the song they were doing before spring break and this event. Every class starts with the song and prayer. Right now, they are singing "Lily of the Valley." When praying, she will often reference a phrase from the song. How appropriate is the line, "In sorrow, He's my comfort, in trouble, He's my stay. He tells me every care of Him to roll?" The students can be seen singing along or clapping. Some of the kids have said that their parents have sung along, too. We can make a difference in the homes because we are being invited in the home in a way which we never have been invited before.

WE ALSO INVITE A "SHARE TIME."

The 7 minutes spent on the "warm-up" are better than any "hook" to a lesson. This gives a sense of community to the class. For some kids, this is the most social interaction they will have all day - many don't want to leave the live chat when class is over! You can help to start the conversation by asking one question of all and giving them a chance to respond.

Kids will help each other with tech. Although we are attending conferences every year that state these kids are digital natives, they are not digital experts, and surprisingly lack digital savvy in new platforms. They need help. You can provide tutorials. We share our screens and show them how to do things all the time. (Google Meet allows that capability, but they are not the only platform with that capability.)

REMEMBER THAT YOU AND YOUR STUDENT'S PARENTS ARE ON THE SAME TEAM.

You are both working together toward the same goal. Keep in mind that your student's parent is in a whole new world. Helping with assignments and providing instructional guidance is something they're learning to do as they go. They are often juggling work and home responsibilities while making sure their student is doing the work you assigned. Remember how much effort it takes to keep your students on task in the classroom? Their parents are now experiencing that for the first time. Be gracious when a parent emails you ten times in a day, asking for help. They are trying their best.

This is a time to teach your students more than just your subjects. This is your opportunity to show your students how a Christian responds when things are difficult. You never know - your actions during this time may be what draws your students and their families to Christ. (Matthew 5:16)

KEEP IN TOUCH WITH OTHER TEACHERS

Remember:

Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken. *Ecclesiastes 4:9-12*

During these times, we need to support each other more than ever. Ask for help if you need it. If you have a fantastic resource that you've found helpful, pass it along to others. Encourage a friend who's struggling. Social distancing doesn't mean you need to stop being a blessing to others!

Reach out to us; we can help. You may contact us via email for tech support, teaching ideas, content support, or a listening ear.

We will do our best to help you and your family. We have listed our subjects, but we are not limited to our subjects or grades for support for your family.

We love the Lord and would count it a privilege to provide help to you as you navigate this time.

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CHAPTER 4

A CLOSING MESSAGE FOR ALL

FOCUS ON THIS TRUTH:

God is on the throne. He is not limited by quarantine.

The Education Goals for Students, Parents and Teachers are the same as they were before COVID-19. The goals will be the same during and after the Pandemic.

We want students to learn and succeed.

This season is a learning time for all of us. Ask God to help you to learn the lessons that He has planned for you during this

There are many blessings to be found during this time if you'll take a moment to look. We all have the opportunity for more time with family. We are still employed. We're able to serve others. Take time to find the things for which you can be thankful.

Gains can be gotten if we model for kids how to make things work when times are tough.

Grit can be built in your child if you will help them persevere rather than provide an immediate answer to every difficulty. This God-given moment is a great chance to develop grit and self-reliance in your child.

This is a time of Service: Serve in times of sorrow. Serve in times of joy. Bring glory to God in everything. If that is what your children take away from this experience, then COVID 19 was a blessing in disguise.

We can lead the way.

CHAPTER 5

RESOURCES

LINKS TO FOLLOW

Page of links with resources from Florida DOE

Quick and easy video response tool. Get your kids collaborating.

Free online drawing program.

Digital Mindmaps. Easy to learn, great tool while we are digital.

Check out ScreenCastify

When you want to make short videos answering questions that you receive by email, or when you want to deliver small chunks of recorded instruction, we use screencastify. They are not the only platform. Bonny made a tutorial about screencastify for our colleagues at school, and it can be provided to you if you want to see it in action. It's 5 minutes that can be a game changer for you teaching online. If you use the free version, you can record 5 minutes at a time. You can use your webcam and you can show your screen while you narrate.

Library

Don't forget your local library. Most have great online services.

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