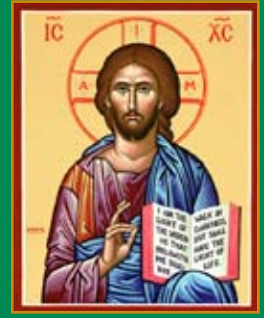


# ELEMENTARY DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

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NATIONAL  
CATHOLIC  
EDUCATIONAL  
ASSOCIATION



## NEWS

### 2009 NCEA CATHOLIC SCHOOL PRINCIPALS FORUM

This year, the Principals Forum will be held from 12-14 November 2009 at the Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront (Jacksonville FL). The special conference rate is: \$145.00/night (single or double occupancy).



The registration fee is:  
\$285.00 (member)  
\$500.00 (non-member)

For more information or to download the brochure, please go to: <http://www.ncea.org/departments/elementary/EleventhAnnualCatholicSchoolPrincipalsForum.asp>.

### 2010 NCEA SPECIAL NEEDS CONFERENCE

The **2010 NCEA Special Needs Conference** will be held Special 17-19 January 2010 at the Hyatt Regency Orange County (Anaheim CA).

The registration fee is:  
\$475 for members  
\$500 for non-members

For more information or to download the registration form, please go to:  
[http://www.ncea.org/UserFiles/File/Elem/Brochure\\_for\\_web.doc](http://www.ncea.org/UserFiles/File/Elem/Brochure_for_web.doc).

### CATHOLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS EXCEL IN MATHEMATICS

The results of *The Nation's Report Card: Mathematics 2009* indicate that Catholic school students in grades 4 and 8 outperformed their public school counterparts. The average standard score for Catholic school students in grade 4 was **245** compared to 239 for public school students. In eighth grade, the difference was even greater. While the average standard score for public school students was 282, the average standard score for eighth graders in Catholic schools was **297**.

We thank all of those Catholic schools who participated in the *National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)* and congratulate them on their outstanding performance.



*Year of Africa*  
2009-2010



*"Throughout the turmoil of the sorrowful events that afflict Africa, all can agree with the words of His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI, namely, that Africa 'is the great hope of the Church.'"*

*—The Church in Africa in Service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace, #6*

## BUILDING A BEHAVIOR BRIDGE

This summer, I had the pleasure of hearing Dr. David Osher speak at Harvard University. He presented his latest research which asked the question: “*What are the odds that the top 18% of students with behavior problems in 1<sup>st</sup> grade will still be the top 18% of students with behavior problems in 7<sup>th</sup> grade?*” Dr. Osher’s data revealed that if the first-grade teacher does not have behavior management skills, 58.7% of the first-grade students with behavior problems will still be top students with behavior problems in the seventh grade. If the first-grade teacher utilizes behavior management skills, that 58.7% of students fall to 2.7% of students. In other words, that first-grade teacher changes the destiny of 56% of the students with the most challenging behavior issues.

At this point, if you are anything like me, you are asking: “*What behavior management techniques should I use?*” One model I have found to be successful is the *Building a Behavior Bridge Management Model*.

### Building a Behavior Bridge Management Model\*

Feed the Brain  
 Feel the Pain  
 Begin Again

*\*Created by Dr. Ellen M.E. Wedemeyer*

#### 1. Feed the Brain

Engage the student in learning. When a student is engaged, negative behaviors decrease. Many student files cross my desk as behavior problems, and more often than not, I can trace the behavior problem back to a time when the student had a learning challenge that was not addressed. That child became frustrated and started acting out. As these behaviors were ignored, they escalated. I have found that a student, who displays attention-seeking behavior, does so because he ...**NEEDS ATTENTION!** Give it to him! Find a way to engage a student in learning and the behavior problems begin to disappear or better yet, *they never start.*



#### 2. Feel the Pain

Respect Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. Ask yourself: “*Which of these student’s needs are not being met?*” There is a story of a flight attendant who praised a child in first class for his good behavior. His mother said to the flight attendant: “*Oh sure, now he’s well behaved. You just finished bringing him everything he asked for.*” It is easy to behave appropriately when all of our needs are being met. It is quite another story to behave well when we are over-tired, or haven’t eaten, or we are living in a house without heat, or living in a home without love.

#### 3. Begin Again

There is a joke in my family that the tag attached to the mattress cannot be removed because it is against the law. Just to be safe, I would suggest that you leave your mattress alone, but I highly recommend that you cut the tag, also known as the label, that is attached to a student. Children with behavior problems are often labeled for life. They are discussed openly and negatively in the faculty room. The reality is this: every teacher who has complained about this student has also failed this student. *Be the one who gives this student a clean slate.*

**Shouting punishments across the divide, tossing failing grades into the mix, even bringing in professionals to measure the problem, does not do anything to shorten the distance between the student and access to his education.** The only way to do this is to build a bridge that you can use to reach the student on his side and then successfully lead him back to a place where his future is waiting for him.

This year, make a list of students who are currently behavior problems in your class and cross each name off the list as you build that bridge. How can you be expected to do this

with a class of thirty students? One brick at a time, one student at a time, you hold the power to alter a student’s destiny.



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### THE YEAR OF AFRICA

The second synod for Africa began on 4 October 2009, with a Mass in St. Peter's Basilica and will run from 4-25 October 2009. Preparations for this synod were more than three years in the making, culminating in the publication of a working paper in 2006: *The Church in Africa in Service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace* ([www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/synod/documents/rc\\_synod\\_doc\\_20060627\\_ii-assembly-africa\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20060627_ii-assembly-africa_en.html)).

Along with Latin America, Catholicism is experiencing great growth in Africa. As the Synod document states:

*“According to the 2004 statistics, the Faithful now total 148,817,000, with 630 bishops and 31,259 priests, of whom 20,358 are diocesan and 10,901 religious. Moreover, there are 7,791 lay brothers, 57,475 consecrated women and 379,656 catechists.”*

Even more important than sheer numbers is the attitude of the African faithful: their profound sense of and respect for God, which, unlike many sectors of the West, permeates all of society. As Pope Benedict said in his homily at the opening Mass: *“When Africa's treasures are mentioned one immediately thinks of the abundant riches of the territory which*



*have unfortunately become and continue to be a cause of exploitation, conflict and corruption. The Word of God, instead, makes us look at another patrimony: the spiritual and cultural heritage, which humanity needs even more than raw materials. ‘For what does it profit a man,’ Jesus was to say, ‘to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?’ (Mk 8: 36). From this viewpoint Africa constitutes an immense spiritual ‘lung’ for a humanity that appears to be in a crisis of faith and hope”* ([http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/homilies/2009/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_hom\\_20091004\\_sinodo-africa\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/homilies/2009/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20091004_sinodo-africa_en.html)).

Of course, there are both positive and negative developments for the continent as a whole: the growing appreciation and respect for the dignity of women, the increase of indigenous Catholic clergy and consecrated persons, a growing desire for peace after decades of enervating war, and a progressive opposition to governmental corruption. On the negative side of the ledger are the toll taken by AIDS, arms trafficking, international debt, poverty, lack of ready access to even the most basic of resources, such as water, and the situation of refugees and displaced persons.

One situation that is not always considered is the variety of cultures, languages, and religions that co-exist on the continent and which overlay all of the other positive and negative features. One begins in Muslim North Africa, with its struggling Christian populations and ancient patriarchates, and progresses South to sub-Saharan Africa, where the





African Bishops Entering St. Peter's Basilica for Mass  
Opening the Synod

First Working Session of the Synod

Catholic faith is much more recent and the intercultural dynamic more fluid.

Another is the co-existence of African traditional religion alongside Islam and Catholicism. The Synod document characterizes African traditional religion as: *“As a religion that embraces the totality of life, it is often the basic source of inspiration in understanding and translating the concepts of reconciliation, peace and justice. As such, it can serve as a initial opening for Christians and Muslims in their search for understanding and collaboration”* (#25).

There is also the presence of evangelical and pentecostal groups, which promote an aggressive form of proselytism, which involves evangelizing even those whose form of Christianity goes back to antiquity. In this context, Pope Benedict said: *“Without discussing the genesis of such sickness of the spirit, it is nevertheless indisputable that the so-called ‘first’ world has sometimes exported and is exporting toxic spiritual refuse which contaminates the peoples of other continents, including in particular the population of Africa. In this sense, colonialism finished at a political level has never really ended. But, precisely in this perspective, a second ‘virus’ should be pointed out that could strike Africa too, that is, religious fundamentalism, combined with political and economic interests. Groups that relate to various religious affiliations are spreading on the African continent; they do so in the name of God*



*but according to a logic opposed to divine logic, in other words, not by teaching and practicing love and respect for freedom but rather by intolerance and violence”* ([http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/homilies/2009/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_hom\\_20091004\\_sinodo-africa\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/homilies/2009/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20091004_sinodo-africa_en.html)).

The Catholic Church, on the other hand, is the: “. . . Family of God. She is the place of fellowship; she receives the fullness of life from Christ, our Older Brother, the First-Born among the Dead; she lives because of the Living Word of the Everlasting Father. As a Mother who generates us in Baptism to new life in God, she must be the preeminent place of life, not death. Jesus Christ, through the Blood which flowed from his side on the Cross, made us brothers and sisters united by the bond of his Blood, which, from the Eucharist, flows in our veins” (#39).