

Lessons
from the
Lunchroom

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Cynthia Einselen
Showhill Books

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Thank you to my hubby
for suggestions.

Dedicated to the Maconaquah
lunch ladies –

Here's a little of what I've
learned in the lunchroom.
Thanks for the lessons and
may God bless you!

Cindy E.

Persevering

"Count it all joy, my brothers,
when you meet trials
of various kinds,
for you know that the testing
of your faith
produces steadfastness.
And let steadfastness have
its full effect,
that you may be perfect and
complete,
lacking in nothing."

James 1:2-4

Pounds of ravioli on the floor and the morning had just started!

Mopping, she threatened to quit, but she didn't.

Then it was a large cup of ice cold water in her shoe.

More mopping, and she threatened to quit, but she didn't.

Instead she laughed and said there might be no need to mop at the end of the day if things kept up at this rate.

Lesson: Some days take more perseverance than others; laugh, and go on.

Helping

"He has told you, O man,
what is good;
and what does the LORD
require of you
but to do justice, and
to love kindness,
and to walk humbly
with your God?"

Micah 6:8

What was that man in a dress shirt doing in the dish room washing dishes?

And what was that man in the dress shirt doing serving oven steak to sixth graders?

Well, he liked to help where he could. And he wanted to get those new sixth graders through the line faster so they'd have more time to eat.

That's what that man in the dress shirt — the principal — said.

Lesson: Helping doesn't have to be in the job description, it shows caring.

Caring

"And walk in love,
as Christ loved us and
gave himself up for us,
a fragrant offering and
sacrifice to God."

Ephesians 5:2

"Are you living with your mom now?"
She asked across the serving counter.

"Do you like that?"
She asked because she cared.

Maybe his dad didn't want him but to her
he was important.

Caring over the racket of the lunch room.

Caring over the racket of his life.

Lesson: Always make time to
care.

Kindness

"Whoever pursues
righteousness and kindness
will find life,
righteousness, and honor."

Proverbs 21:21

Just back from summer break and...

a hesitant hug right in the middle of
cafeteria action,

a surprise hug, this one from the side,

another hug of recognition and happiness.

What if no one was afraid to reach out
even in busy-ness,
even unexpectedly, and
especially to friends?

How heart warming is kindness!

Lesson: Be kind, no matter what.

Priorities

"...let us also lay aside every weight,
and sin which clings so closely, and
let us run with endurance the race
that is set before us..."

Hebrews 12:1

The dishwasher wasn't working well and everything was coming out covered with water, water that wasn't evaporating. So on to plan B. But soon towel after towel was soaked through. The pile of dry towels was shrinking alarmingly. Would there be enough?

Enter the more experienced co-worker. She took her soaked micro-fiber towel, wrung out the excess water, and it worked again! Once more doing its job.

Does life, too, get soaked and no longer useful? Full of distracting activities, unnecessary drama, and hopeless unforgiveness?

Lesson: Squeeze out the extra stuff and life becomes useful again.

Encouragement

"Therefore encourage one another
and build one another up,
just as you are doing."

1 Thessalonians 5:11

There's a gizmo in the kitchen that seals bags of veggies and cuts off the tops of the bags very neatly...when it's properly done. When it's not, the bags stretch or don't seal.

Two years of trying had not resulted in a proper job. Once again someone said, "Just pull it." Once again, it was "just pulled," only with one hand instead of both.

Surprise! It worked!

That next bit of encouragement to try again may just bring success.

Lesson: Listen to encouragement and don't quit trying.

Forgiveness

"And whenever you stand praying,
forgive, if you have anything
against anyone,
so that your Father also
who is in heaven
may forgive you your trespasses."

Mark 11:25

She was in second grade and her hand was up in the cafeteria. Maybe she needed a spoon, maybe she'd forgotten a condiment, maybe she had something to tell.

"What do you need?"

"She bullied me in kindergarten!"

A one-time offense, but still being rehearsed, two years later.

"Have you forgiven her?" No.

"Why don't you forgive her and let it go?"
A shake of the head.

Lesson: Unforgiveness crowds out happiness.

Cooperation

"Love is patient and kind..."

1 Corinthians 13:4a

He was in the wrong seat. His two classmates were determined to correct this offense. But he was sure this particular wrong seat would too, after all, and for this fact, work.

Was there a reason he could not move to the correct seat? He lowered his head murmuring yes.

What was the reason? A dramatic pause...

Was this going to be a showdown?

Then he raised his head, said, "Just joking!" and promptly and cheerfully moved to the correct seat.

Inward sigh of relief.

Lesson: Be patient, cooperation may take time.

Appreciation

"Therefore encourage
one another and
build one another up,
just as you are doing."

1 Thessalonians 5:11

"Thank you, have a nice day."

So simple, so cheering.

And some days so unexpected.

In the midst of counting five chicken pieces per tray and keeping an eye on the baked beans, head down, mind on the task; it's like a poof of fresh air.

Lesson: Take three seconds to make a change in someone's day, express appreciation.

Gentleness

“...walk in a manner worthy
of the calling to which
you have been called,
with all humility and gentleness,
with patience, bearing with one
another in love...”

Ephesians 4:1,2

They came out of the box frozen together in a single, tough sheet. They had to be knocked apart, then carefully arranged in rows, seven across and nine down.

Then they began to thaw. And thaw.

And grow. And grow.

And then they were popped into the oven to become amazing, fluffy yeast rolls!

Some people are like that, hard and cold. But given some space and some warmth, who knows what they could become?

Lesson: Like rolls, give people space and warmth and time to grow.

Cheerfulness

"...the cheerful of heart has
a continual feast."

Proverbs 15:15b

Heard in the lunchroom:

Do you like being a grown-up?

She wants my hair.

Is Santa Claus dead?

Look, my friend and I have
matching shoes!

Do you know her? She's my aunt!

Lesson: Enjoy the moments,
count the blessings, feed a
cheerful heart.

Eternal Perspective

"Set your minds on things
that are above,
not on things that are on earth."

Colossians 3:2

Aching knees and hips and backs,
delivery problems,
expired milks,
noisy students,
misunderstandings...

If this world is all we care about, the
paycheck may be the only motivator.

But when there is life with God beyond
death,

then...

the aches are a reminder of
heavenly health,

delivery problems are a reminder
God always delivers,

expiration dates are a reminder
there is new life in Christ,

noisy students are a reminder to
use words to please God,

misunderstandings are a
reminder that only part of the
picture is visible here, but one
day God will be in full view!

School lunchrooms are for fixing food and doing dishes and managing lines of students...and for learning.

Students learn:

not to toss milk cartons,

being served broccoli is not the end of the world, and

it takes longer to get through the line if the name tag is left at home.

What about those intrepid lunchroom workers?

Are there lessons in the lunchroom for them, too?