Children with Brooms

Our school provides a teacher-directed, curriculum-based, learning experience. Our culture dictates that education should be student-directed and experience-based. Wisdom “resides in the child, and therefore the child should instruct the teacher” as to the appropriate time for enlightenment—of the teacher, not the student! We, however, expect our students to work, and to work hard in every area.

I just walked by a pair of fifth and sixth-grade boys who were completely immersed in the task of sweeping the foyer of the school. We have two, twelfth-grade boys who have earned the Crew-Chief title. They coordinate about 20-25 of our students in the various after-school cleaning responsibilities. We pay the workers, of course. They fill out an I-9, submit a SS card, get a W-2 at the end of the year, learn to deposit a paycheck, pay and file taxes, and earn 1 dollar for each grade they have obtained. Most importantly, they receive the praise from our staff as we walk by and celebrate their hard work.

There is no credit to me for this program. Twenty years ago, I was ready to scrap student workers altogether (it really is a great hassle), but at a retreat we attended, the speaker asked our students where they were in leadership. No one said a word. After too many minutes of silence, one boy lifted his arm high, puffed out his chest, and stated, “I am the crew-chief of the cleaning crew at Bethany Christian School.” One after the other students added, “I am on the cleaning crew at Bethany Christian School!” At the back of the crowd, I bowed my head in worship and submitted my will to the Lord.

Our culture leads us to laziness. Work 4 days a week. Retire early. Hard work will kill you. But doesn’t Scripture teach us, “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might…” Ecclesiastes 9:10? That is one of Solomon’s keys to enjoying life. Lord, help us to never belittle the small child working a broom.