

## **Model Resolution for ELCA Synod Assemblies on Corporal Punishment**

WHEREAS, more than fifty years of research has repeatedly shown that hitting children as a means of discipline is ineffective and increases the risk a child will be aggressive, defiant, and have impaired relationships with their parents;

WHEREAS, corporal punishment increases the risk a child will develop mental health disorders and have cognitive challenges;

WHEREAS, corporal punishment is more likely to be used when a family is experiencing stressors or when a parent has depressive symptoms;

WHEREAS, corporal punishment is associated with changes in the anatomy of the brain including a loss of gray matter, white matter, and elevated levels of cortisol;

WHEREAS, more than fifty percent of substantiated physical abuse cases result from physical discipline;

WHEREAS, Christian teachings on Biblical passages pertaining to corporal punishment have contributed to the widespread hitting of children in the United States and around the world,

WHEREAS, a number of Christian leaders and publications have urged the Christian community to address the issue of corporal punishment in the light of scripture and the growing body of research documenting the harm of hitting children as a means of discipline;

WHEREAS, Jesus instructed Christians to welcome children as we would welcome God (Mt 9:36-37) and warned us not to harm children (Mt. 18:6-9; Luke 17:1-2; Mark 9:42);

THEREFORE, be it resolved:

1. The \_\_\_\_ Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America encourages its members to adopt discipline methods that do not include the corporal punishment of their children.
2. The \_\_\_\_ Synod of the ELCA encourages its congregations to offer opportunities for dialogue and education on effective discipline of children including Bible studies on the Christian obligation to discipline children in a manner that does not hurt them.
3. The \_\_\_\_ Synod memorializes the ELCA to develop and adopt a social statement on the corporal punishment of children.

### **Sources:**

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