

'Walk the talk' in encouraging students



Ed Staude has encouraged dozens of students to enter church work during his 27 years as a Lutheran school teacher. He has done it by being open, listening and encouraging.

"Be honest, talk to all the kids," he comments. It means encouraging those who are interested in engineering or business as well as church careers. Then, he adds, encouragement to consider a church career is more believable, especially among high school students.

"If they come back with questions about church careers, I try to provide the best information I can," he says. At Lutheran High School of St. Charles county, where he has taught since 1990, the school has a Kingdom Workers service organization that gives students opportunities to dialog with professional church workers.

"You have to live what you preach - walk the talk," he advises teachers who want to be encouragers. "You don't complain about the administration or your salary in front of students. If you're serious about wanting them to enter church work, you have to treat it importantly."

He observes that students may think the professional worker lives a cloistered life. His students are surprised to learn that he and his wife, Claudia, also a teacher, are active in the community. He, for example, is running for the state legislature, and the couple also operates a vineyard with plans to open a small winery.

"It's important to help them see that professional workers are real people," he adds. "My calling is not just to my parish, but to my community."

One of the Staude's daughters, Gretchen, also became a teacher. As parents, he says, they were positive about their church careers, helping their children to look at the "bigger picture" and seeing that their parents find joy in their professions.

Staude advises parents to encourage their children to explore Careers to "find something they will enjoy doing and not worry about the money. The main thing is that they are using their abilities to glorify God."