

Me...a Teacher?

Kim Harrington, Teacher, Cariboo Adventist Academy, Williams Lake, BC

I never really considered teaching as a career. I was a good student throughout school and was blessed with the ability of easily understanding the sciences. When my high school graduation came with an honours diploma *and* a scholarship, it was taken for granted that I'd become a doctor or scientist. After all, people with an interest and good grades in the sciences were meant to fill such high paying, professional positions, at least according to the general expectations of society. This stereotype led me to believe that if I was not doing a PhD in one of the sciences or working in the field of medicine that I was not effectively applying myself. I limited myself to considering only these opportunities.

As I entered college I was not at all sure what I wanted to do with my life, but I assumed that taking a bachelor's degree in Biology was a logical first step. I completed that degree with the sinking feeling of "now what?" I still wasn't trained for any particular position, so I decided to try nursing. During my second year of nursing at Dalhousie University was when I first seriously considered teaching as a career option. I wasn't really enjoying my studies and doubted that this was the path that the Lord wanted for me, but what else was there? Then one day I hosted a study group at my home. Nursing Skills was a difficult course taught by a teacher who considered it her duty to fail over half the class, and several of us decided to pool our energies to try to survive. To make the studying go easier for everyone, I decided to make up some study aids. My classmates were surprised that I had done so much planning. While we were finishing our session that day, several of my friends told me that I should become a teacher. They told me that I had been able to help them understand more in one day than they had been able to figure out all semester. I was surprised at how much the suggestion of becoming a teacher excited me. I had really enjoyed creating the study aids and helping my classmates. When I later asked my husband what he thought of my becoming a teacher, he told me that he always thought I'd excel in the field. He reminded me of things I already knew about myself: I love to be creative, plan and organize activities, and I enjoyed working with school-aged children. This positive reinforcement was a key ingredient to my decision to enter the field of education and to become the teacher that I am today.

Now that I am enjoying life as a teacher, I wonder why I let myself be pulled into the careers stereotypically striven for by science-minded people. After all, most great scientists and medical professionals had good teachers who nurtured their interests and guided their discoveries. Just think of where we would be if we encouraged more of our science scholars to enter the teaching profession, and to make them aware that their abilities match other careers than only research and medicine. Every career is important. Doctors save lives; scientists develop cures; teachers help shape new generations into the people they are going to become.

I am so thankful to the Lord that he helped me realize what a blessing the teaching profession is. Every day I have the ability to interact with students who are different--some do well in my science classes and some really struggle. I feel blessed for the opportunity to teach them all as well as minister to their needs. I pray that I will listen to each of them and help them develop their future goals—ones that fit them, not the stereotypes.