

Telling What We Know -- A Witnessing Bible Study

Leader Guide

THE GOAL IS TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO BE WILLING TO ACT ON WHAT IS BEING TAUGHT.

Optional Opening Hymn – LSB 646 Church of God, Elect and Glorious, or LSB 580 The Gospel Shows the Father's Grace or another suitable hymn.

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, we bless and praise You that You have called us into Your Kingdom through the Gospel of Jesus, Your Son. By Your Holy Spirit, help us to respond to Your love by sharing that Good News by what we do and say in daily living. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Opening Activity

Note: This version is from the Lutheran Confessions.

YOU MAY WISH TO USE THE CURRENT TRANSLATION FROM THE CATECHISM.

When you think about witnessing, what comes to mind? What concerns come to mind?

IT IS HELPFUL TO LIST THE CONCERNS PEOPLE MIGHT HAVE. ONE CAN THEN REMIND PEOPLE OF GOD'S GRACE THAT WORKS IN AND THROUGH US...

Think about what we know... **READ THROUGH THE APOSTLES' CREED AND THE MEANING.**

"I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth."

² What does this mean?

Answer: I believe that God has created me and all that exists; that he has given me and still sustains my body and soul, all my limbs and senses, my reason and all the faculties of my mind, together with food and clothing, house and home, family and property; that he provides me daily and abundantly with all the necessities of life, protects me from all danger, and preserves me from all evil. All this he does out of his pure, fatherly, and divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness on my part. For all of this I am bound to thank, praise, serve, and obey him. This is most certainly true.¹

THE SECOND ARTICLE: REDEMPTION

"And in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord: who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried: he descended into hell, the third day he rose from the dead, he ascended into heaven, and is seated on the right hand of God, the Father almighty, whence he shall come to judge the living and the dead."

⁴ What does this mean?

Answer: I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, delivered me and freed me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with silver

¹ *The Book of Concord the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. 1959 (T. G. Tappert, Ed.) (344–345). Philadelphia: Mühlenberg Press.

and gold but with his holy and precious blood and with his innocent sufferings and death, in order that I may be his, live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, even as he is risen from the dead and lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.²

THE THIRD ARTICLE: SANCTIFICATION

"I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen."

⁶ What does this mean?

Answer: I believe that by my own reason or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him. But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in true faith, just as he calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth and preserves it in union with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In this Christian church he daily and abundantly forgives all my sins, and the sins of all believers, and on the last day he will raise me and all the dead and will grant eternal life to me and to all who believe in Christ. This is most certainly true³

HAVE SOMEONE READ THE BIBLE VERSE. ASK: "HOW CAN WE TELL WHAT WE HAVE SEEN AND HEARD?"

Acts 4:18 So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹ But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, ²⁰ for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard."⁴

What if we simply told what we know...what we confess each week...as we have opportunity?

HELP PARTICIPANTS SEE HOW THIS CONNECTS TO THE CREED. FEEL FREE TO ADD YOUR OWN ANSWERS. THESE ARE EXAMPLES.

Examples:

Question or comment in conversation: "Hasn't science shown that evolution accounts for everything?" A: I believe that God created everything, even me. I believe there is evidence of that in how God meets my daily needs such as....[personal example].

Question or comment in conversation: "I can't believe how bad stuff on TV has gotten." A: It is disturbing. Seems right and wrong are being ignored more and more. If I'm honest I do wrong too. I am so thankful that my sins are forgiven daily.

² *The Book of Concord the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. 1959 (T. G. Tappert, Ed.) (345). Philadelphia: Mühlenberg Press.

³ *The Book of Concord the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. 1959 (T. G. Tappert, Ed.) (345). Philadelphia: Mühlenberg Press.

⁴ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. 2001 (Ac 4:18–20). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

Can you identify the segments of the Apostles' Creed or its meaning in the answers?

FIRST ARTICLE AND THIRD ARTICLE.

YOU MAY WISH TO POINT OUT THAT WE NORMALLY DON'T TALK THIS WAY. PERHAPS IT WOULD BE GOOD TO BEGIN DOING SO. YOU MAY WISH TO REFER TO COLOSSIANS 4:5-6.

⁵ Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. ⁶ Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person. ⁵

LEAD PEOPLE IN THE EXERCISE BELOW...REMIND PEOPLE THAT ANY NEW SKILL TAKES TIME TO DEVELOP.

HELPFUL GUIDELINES:

KEEP IT AS SIMPLE AS POSSIBLE.

TEACH PARTICIPANTS: "I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT. THIS IS WHAT I DO KNOW. I WOULD BE GLAD TO HELP YOU FIND OUT ABOUT THAT."

USING THE WORDS WE HAVE AND USE ON SUNDAY AND THE CATECHISM WORDS AND DEMONSTRATE WAYS THAT THESE WORDS CAN BE VERY PRACTICAL IN DAILY LIVING.

SET UP SCENARIOS -- MODELING DIALOGUE -- COMMON QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.....

PRACTICE

****EMPHASIZE FOR PARTICIPANTS:**

- 1. BEING PERSONALLY ENGAGED IN SCRIPTURE THROUGH CORPORATE WORSHIP AND PERSONAL DEVOTIONAL READING IS VITAL.**
- 2. THE CORNERSTONE OF THIS APPROACH IS TO KNOW THE CREED BY HEART.**
- 3. THE MORE OF THE CATECHISM ONE KNOWS BY HEART, THE MORE ONE IS ABLE TO ENGAGE IN THEOLOGICAL CONVERSATION.**
- 4. MOST ISSUES, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS [9 OUT OF 10] CAN BE ANSWERED OUT OF THE CATECHISM.**
- 5. WE GROW IN HOW TO APPLY THIS IN DAILY LIVING AS WE REVIEW THE CATECHISM AND LIVE THIS OUT IN DAILY PRACTICE.**

Practice! Time to try this.

Question or comment in conversation: I just found out my mother has cancer.

Answer:

POSSIBLE DIRECTIONS..."SORRY TO HEAR THAT." LISTEN. DEPENDING ON CONVERSATION...MAY GO TO 1ST ARTICLE...A LOVING FATHER WHO PROVIDES FOR US EVEN IN DESPERATE TIMES...OR...2ND ARTICLE...JESUS DIED FOR US AND HAS CONQUERED SICKNESS AND DEATH SO WE CAN LIVE ETERNALLY...OR....3RD ARTICLE..."I AM GLAD I HAVE ETERNAL LIFE AS A GIFT."

Question or comment in conversation: Sunday is my only day off, I haven't convinced my spouse to come to church. I would really like to go but I just can't seem to find the time to go.

⁵ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. 2001 (Col 4:5–6). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

Answer:

POSSIBLE DIRECTIONS...."I KNOW FOR SOME, WORSHIP CAN SEEM LIKE AN ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY. FOR ME, IT IS LIFE BECAUSE: 1ST ARTICLE...GOD MADE ME AND LOVES ME...OR...2ND ARTICLE...JESUS GIVES ME ETERNAL LIFE. HE HAS RESCUED ME FROM REBELLION AGAINST GOD [SIN], DYING FOREVER [DEATH], AND SUFFERING FOREVER FOR MY REBELLION AGAINST GOD [HELL].

Question or comment in conversation: If God is a good and gracious God, why do evil things happen in this world?

Answer:

POSSIBLE DIRECTIONS..."EVIL IS REBELLION AGAINST GOD. GOD DESIRES ALL TO BE SAVED AND HAS MADE A WAY FOR THAT SALVATION IN JESUS CHRIST, HIS SON" [2ND ARTICLE].

What questions or comments have you heard?

RECORD THESE FOR POTENTIAL FOLLOW-UP SESSIONS.

CLOSE WITH THESE CONCLUDING THOUGHTS....

Concluding thoughts....

- ❖ Like any new skill, practice brings improvement. Try this even if it is awkward at first.
- ❖ A personal connection to God's Word in corporate worship and personal devotional life is vital. We cannot pass on what we have not first received.
- ❖ Knowing the Creed and its meaning by heart well enough to apply it to daily situations is a key. Other sections of the Catechism are equally useful, not only for us, but for witnessing as well.
- ❖ We live in the grace of God. As we respond to God's grace by sharing His Word, we trust our loving Father to provide what is needed to follow Jesus.

NOTE: IF YOU MEET REGULARLY WITH PEOPLE, ONGOING CONVERSATION CAN TAKE PLACE. HAVE YOU HAD OPPORTUNITIES THIS WEEK TO 'TELL WHAT YOU KNOW?' OR PRACTICE WITH MORE EXAMPLES....

ONE POSSIBILITY IS TO REVISIT THE QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS PEOPLE HAVE HEARD AND BEGIN TO FORMULATE RESPONSES.

ANOTHER POSSIBILITY IS TO USE THIS SESSION AS AN INTRODUCTION, THEN SPEND 1 OR MORE WEEKS ON EACH ARTICLE CONSIDERING HOW WE MIGHT RESPOND TO THE CULTURE AROUND US.

Closing Prayer:

Heavenly Father, we praise You and bless You for every good gift You have given us in Christ Jesus. Bless us as we share Your Word each Sunday. By Your Holy Spirit, open our eyes to opportunities to share the Gospel in daily encounters. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

DEAR PASTOR OR BIBLE STUDY LEADER,

WOULD YOU PLEASE HELP US? IF YOU USED THIS PIECE, PLEASE LET US KNOW. PLEASE PASS ALONG ANY SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE THIS PIECE OR OTHERS LIKE IT WE MAY DEVELOP IN THE FUTURE.

**WOULD IT BE VALUABLE TO YOU TO HAVE PIECES LIKE THIS FOCUSED ON OTHER PARTS OF THE CATECHISM?
PLEASE PASS YOUR COMMENTS ON THE INDIANA DISTRICT EVANGELISM TASK FORCE BY EMAILING OR
CALLING DCE PAUL WENDT, TASK FORCE CHAIR AT FAITHTEACHER@AMERITECH.NET , 219-663-1578 OR REV.
GEOFF ROBINSON AT GEOFF.ROBINSON@IN.LCMS.ORG , 800-837-1145.**

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