

Telling What We Know -- A Witnessing Bible Study

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

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

Think about what we know...

Note: This version is from the Lutheran Confessions.

"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 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

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

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

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?

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.

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

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.

Practice! Time to try this.

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

Answer:

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.

Answer:

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

Answer:

What questions or comments have you heard?

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.

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.