

*“A Christian life is nothing other than a daily baptism, once begun and ever again entered into.”
—Martin Luther in the Large Catechism*

Stir Us

t o d e e p e r d i s c i p l e s h i p

No one is born a Christian. We become Christian. With the water of Baptism and the power of the Word, we are marked as disciples and become members of the family of God. God declares us to be God's sons and daughters and therefore, brothers and sisters in Christ. In the service of Baptism, a relationship is established connecting us with God and the church. Our journey of Christian discipleship begins.

It takes time to learn how to be a disciple--a lifetime. It takes time to learn new information, practice new skills, and develop new habits. It takes time to learn how to pray, study, worship, invite, encourage, serve, give--to practice the faith. Whether baptism happens at four days, four months or 40 years, the task of the congregation is the same: instruct and nurture candidates for baptism and to continue the lifelong process of formation. Baptism marks the beginning of a lifelong journey of faith. The journey is shaped by participation in a caring, learning, worshiping and serving congregation.

What does it mean for God to stir us?


Asking to be stirred may sound like a dangerous request; it is. But it is also a faithful one. We may be tempted to focus on things as they seem, to let nostalgia for the past replace hope for the future. The temptation is to forget God's story and promises. Baptism is God's keeping of a great promise. God says to us in baptism: You are my chosen and beloved child; nothing can ever change that. My future is your future.

One minister, after each baptism, declares to the new Christian disciple, "We have baptized you and have received you into the church. God loves you and has great plans for your life. But you will need the rest of us to tell you the story, and from time to time, to remind you who you are, and to keep you in God's family. We are going to specially appoint some of our members to guide you and watch over you as you grow in faith." (William H. Willimon, *Remember Who You Are*, The Upper Room Press, 1980)

The Christian educators in your congregation are those "some of our members" who are appointed to guide and watch over the baptized as they grow in faith. Sunday school teachers, baptismal sponsors, parents, pastors, and other congregational members tell and show the way of life God has promised and makes possible. They stir the baptized, by God's grace, to remember their baptism. As God's adopted children, Christian disciples daily seek God's power to put off the old selfish ways of living, and to put on Jesus' new way of life. Martin Luther says in the *Small Catechism*: "(Baptism) means that the old *creature* (lit. "Adam") in us should be drowned by daily sorrow and repentance, and die with all sins and evil lusts, and, in turn, a new person daily come forth and rise from death again. He will live forever before God in righteousness and purity." This remembering, or use of baptism, is a continuous, lifelong process affecting every aspect of a disciple's life.

As you prepare for another year of teaching and learning, consider responding to this question: How is God using the Christian education leaders and learning activities in your congregation to stir the baptized? What else could be done? What might deeper discipleship mean for you and your congregation?

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Introduction *continued*

MULTI-YEAR emphasis on discipleship

This year's Christian Education Planning Guide is designed to supplement and carry forward the *Call to Discipleship* and its focus on seven faith practices (pray, study, worship, invite, encourage, serve and give). It can work as an independent resource or in conjunction with the *Call to Discipleship* or *Fanning the Flames* materials (see below).

Living Faith: An ELCA Call to Discipleship (2000 theme)

The *Call to Discipleship* and its focus on seven faith practices serves as the backdrop for this year's theme for Christian education ministry. Hundreds of congregations in virtually every synod have been highlighting the *Call to Discipleship* since the fall of 2000, and have asked for more support to carry this emphasis and its clear focus on faith practice into the future.

If you have not had the opportunity to work with the original *Call to Discipleship* materials, you will discover some core resources (Bible study, assessment tools, bulletin inserts, worship resources, and more) you can use to enhance your planning for the 2002-2003 education year.

If you can't locate or don't have the original three-ring binder titled *Living Faith: an ELCA-wide Call to Discipleship Congregational Planning Guide*, an extra copy may be ordered by calling 800/328-4648, 6-0001-1822-8, \$5 plus shipping and handling. In addition, the complete guide, graphics and other resources can be accessed from the *Call to Discipleship* Web page: www.elca.org/init/teachthefait/

Fanning the Flames of Discipleship (2001 theme)

Building on the *Call to Discipleship*, the 2001-2002 *Christian Education Planning Guide*, provides resources for congregations interested in fanning the flames of discipleship. A Rally Day program outline, teacher installation rite, Bible presentation guide, teacher training workshop and more are included in the resource. The printed resource is available by calling 800/328-4648 and asking for *Fanning the Flames of Discipleship* 6-0001-3244-1. The cost is \$2.50 plus shipping and handling. The complete resource can also be accessed at www.elca.org/etteam/2001CEProgramPlanner.

The gift of both the *Call to Discipleship* and the *Fanning the Flames Christian Education Planner* materials is that they are flexible and adaptable to your congregation's needs and context. All materials can be tailored in a way that will work best in your setting. They are ready to use when you are ready to engage them. And they can be used in conjunction with this year's materials.

Stir Us to Deeper Discipleship (2002 theme)

This year's theme provides an umbrella under which you can organize all your Christian education efforts. Congregations typically use a variety of curricula and resources to meet the educational needs of the different age groups and learning styles and times in their setting. Themes for Sunday school, confirmation, small group ministry and adult learning can vary. An overarching theme like *Stir us to Deeper Discipleship* helps to hold all of these pieces together. The *Christian Education Planning Guide* is designed to work as an independent resource or in conjunction with the *Call to Discipleship* or *Fanning the Flames* materials.



- ✓ Convene a team for evaluation and planning
- ✓ Assess your needs and space requirements
- ✓ Consider special events and emphasis
- ✓ Create a planning timeline and calendar
- ✓ Recruit teachers, assistants and helpers
- ✓ Order curricula and collect supplies
- ✓ Provide teacher orientation and training
- ✓ Clean and repair equipment, furniture, restrooms
- ✓ Plan for year-long teacher support and affirmation

Getting started


Planning your 2002/03 program year

The above checklist is a quick look at basic preparations necessary to ensure an effective year in your educational ministry program. To further assist you with each step listed on the clipboard above, several online resources are available at www.elca.org/etteam/2002CEProgramPlanner.

New theme compels us all to 'go deeper'

This year's program theme compels all who plan for Christian education intentionally to "go deeper." The theme helps us move toward creating an environment that presents every child, youth and adult with opportunities to grow in a vibrant relationship with Jesus Christ and to serve and witness as Christ's disciples. The Holy Spirit invites us to immerse ourselves in the waters of Baptism, making a splash that "soaks" the entire faith community, affirming discipleship as a lifetime adventure.

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planning *continued*

As you plan for the coming year and beyond, consider the following possibilities for a deeper, fuller and transforming educational ministry,

- Make sure that prayer guides each action and decision. Make prayer the way you seek God's vision as the core for planning Christian education in your setting.
- Encourage each person in the congregation to articulate the vision for Christian education.
- Visualize the entire congregation, across generations, as a teaching and learning community.
- Seek spiritual guidance as you place careful attention on the spiritual and relational gifts of each teacher, leader and learner.
- Create an environment in which experiences and relationships form a foundation for faith development.
- Look for new ways for learning to happen.
- Enhance opportunities for each child, youth and adult to grow in faith-sharing skills and to see themselves as capable of witnessing to their faith in everyday life.
- Provide training and tools to help parents and caregivers see themselves as primary nurturers of faith.
- Expect teachers and leaders to model discipleship through prayer, study, worship, service, grace-filled problem solving and conflict resolution.
- Plan learning so that persons of various ages, backgrounds and abilities can learn together.

Litany of commitment and affirmation

Get your educational year off to a solid start by seeking God's blessings and affirming the gifts and commitment of the faith community. A litany of commitment and affirmation designed for use during worship is found on page 7.

STIR·US·TO·DEEPER
DISCIPLESHIP

Stir Us To Deeper Discipleship

"It is Jesus whom we proclaim, teaching everyone in all wisdom so that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil and struggle with all the energy that he powerfully inspires within me."
—Colossians 1: 28-29

With the waters of Baptism splashing over us and the sign of the cross made on our forehead, we are marked as disciples. Through Baptism a wondrous relationship is established, connecting us with God and with the church. Our journey of Christian discipleship begins!

The journey compels us to set our heart-compass toward Christ. Along the way, our discipleship "hiking" skills are made concrete in the practices of faith: prayer, worship, study, encouragement, inviting, serving and giving. These practices invite us to seek the same intimate relationship the first disciples shared with their friend, teacher and Lord, Jesus.

Yet, our Christian journey sometimes looks more like loitering than the active, awesome adventure we are offered as disciples. As we remember who we are in Baptism, we open ourselves to the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit invites us to boldly plunge into the fullness of life in Christ. God's Spirit rushes in and splashes us again and again with the waters of Baptism, stirring us to deeper discipleship!



Litany of Commitment and Affirmation

(The pastor may invite learners to come forward to help bless their teachers for the coming year.)

- A:** The following leaders have been called to teach in our midst this year: *(Names are read as individuals come forward).*
- P:** Today we recognize and bless those who have been called to the ministry of leading, teaching and guiding. The Apostle Paul tells us: "It is Jesus whom we proclaim, teaching everyone in all wisdom so that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil and struggle with all the energy that he powerfully inspires within me" *(Colossians 1:28-29).* *(To the teachers)* Do you accept the responsibility to use your gifts to teach the Word of God, to nurture faith and to model a Christian lifestyle?

Teachers: I accept this responsibility and ask God to help and guide me.

- P:** *(To the parents)* God has entrusted you to the care and nurture of these children. Do you promise to create a Christian environment in your home an environment marked with prayer, praise and Christian practices? Do you promise to continue your support and involvement in your child's faith development in this congregation in partnership with teachers and other staff?

Parents: We do, and ask God to help and guide us.

- P:** *(To the learners)* You have heard the promises made by teachers and parents regarding your faith nurture. Do you promise to come to Sunday school and other learning opportunities to learn and grow with others?

Learners: We do, and ask God to help and guide us.

- P:** *(To the congregation)* It is our privilege to affirm and support those who are engage in the teaching ministry of this congregation and of God's kingdom in this place. Will you commit to support them through prayer, encouragement, friendship and participation in education, worship, and service?

C: We will, and ask God to help and guide us.

- P:** Let us pray. Gracious God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon all those who teach and learn. Increase our faithful prayer, study, worship and service, and help us to live and grow in your abundant love and grace. Stir us to a deeper longing for you in our lives that we may boldly bear witness to your Word in all the world. *Amen.*



Getting started

Using the learning modules

The 2002-2003 planner offers Christian educators something slightly different this year. The four event modules found on pages 10-38 provide you with complete learning experiences, if you choose to use them exactly as printed. We expect, however, that you will want to “go deeper,” to stir up your creative educational planning with careful consideration of the needs of your particular congregation and community. Use the modules as a framework. Rearrange, supplement, combine with other learning opportunities, or pull out elements to be used in a variety of situations.

Experiential learning in varied contexts

Here are some ways these event modules might be implemented in your setting:

- seasonal events marking the rhythms of the church year
- a cross-generational special event learning opportunity
- a mid-week program, spanning several weeks
- an all-school Sunday morning event
- a part of worship
- a special event to which the community is intentionally invited
- suggestions for ways families might adapt the materials for at-home devotions
- a larger congregational event or festival
- a learning event done in partnership with another congregational committees or organizations such as stewardship, evangelism or youth ministry
- an educational offering or when children have a day off from school
- an event planned and implemented with ecumenical neighbors or other Lutheran congregations

Consider pulling the elements of each module apart to be used in a variety of contexts on a particular Sunday. Use some elements in Sunday school. Other elements might enhance worship. Provide take-home suggestions for families and then invite everyone back to the church in the evening for a meal and a wrap-up of the event's activities.

Experiential learning the whole year through

The event modules suggest learning opportunities closely related to the themes, seasons and festivals of the church year, but you need not limit their use to those special times. Be imaginative as you plan other ways these learning components can fit into the total ministry of your congregation.

Baptismal Beginnings Rally Day/Baptism

Luther's Info Drive-thru Reformation

Searchlight! Epiphany

Here Comes Jesus! Lent/Discipleship

Remember that further support for these modules, including songs, craft patterns and supplementary materials, can be found online at www.elca.org/eteam/2002CEProgramPlanner or by contacting 800/638-2522, ext. 2594.

Planning for experiential learning

The planning grid on page 9 is a quick and easy reference guide to help keep the planning details in one place. The beauty of each event module is that it calls upon many people to share their gifts and interests. Involve these individuals in the planning and invite their input and ownership.

Christian Education Planning Grid

Use the following chart as a guide as you plan for any of the learning modules found on pages 10-38. Make photocopies for each module and share copies of the completed grid with other module leaders and volunteers.

Event: _____ Date: _____

Activity	Coordinator/Volunteers	Planning Notes	Items to purchase	To make/borrow
Timeline				
Learning Centers				
Celebrations				
Music				
Drama/skits				
Props				
Costumes				
Crafts				
Publicity/ Communications				

Baptismal beginnings

An intergenerational rally day program

Baptismal Beginnings is an interactive program for children, youth and adults. It is designed to stir us to deeper discipleship as we explore Baptism as the entry into discipleship. It urges us to consider Baptism as more than an “enter on cue” event, as it nurtures our sense of identity and lifelong belonging to God’s family.

Baptismal Beginnings provides a variety of large and small group activities to help people of all ages affirm their baptism every day as they move to enhance the faith habits or practices highlighted in the Call to Discipleship in their lives.

The content for this 60-90 minute program is based on the following Bible verses.

I have called you by name and you are mine (Isaiah 43:1b).

...for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ (Galatians 3:26-27).

Baptismal Beginnings is designed to be used on Rally Day to celebrate the beginning of the church school year. The content of the event, however, is appropriate for use at any time. The materials may also be divided into individual devotions or activities to nurture the concept and significance of Baptism throughout the year.

The outline for this program consists of:

- A large group presentation and celebration.
- Suggestions for craft and activity centers that will strengthen the link between Baptism and discipleship.
- “Stir Us to Deeper Discipleship at Home” reproducible sheets.

The 20-minute, large group celebration includes Scripture, songs, and a skit titled “Outta the Mouths of Babes.” These activities will be most effective if it is used at the beginning of your Rally Day event.

The learning centers or “Next Step Stations” are designed to nurture a sense of continuity between Baptism and discipleship. Each of the five crafts and activities highlight a characteristic of baptism and/or discipleship. Description sheets for the “Next Step” craft and activity stations include directions for facilitation, preparation and supplies. They are available along with other participant sheets at www.elca.org/eteam/2002CEProgramPlanner.

“Next Step” Stations

- 1 Marking the Moment
- 2 C.O.G. + C.O.G. = F.O.G.
- 3 “Wash-n-Wear” Hearts
- 4 “Making Tracks” game for Nurturing Faith Practices
- 5 “On-the-Job” Training

The "Stir Us to Deeper Discipleship at Home" reproducible sheet on page 14 is provided to give families of all shapes and sizes an additional opportunity to think about Baptism. It is designed to be a half-page "info sheet" to send home with event participants or to include in a worship bulletin when you focus on Baptism. It includes a reference to the Augsburg Fortress Online Store and highlights some of the resources they have available on this topic.

A C E L E B R A T I O N O F

Baptismal beginnings

Time: Approximately 20 minutes

Preparation and Supplies

- Piano or other form of accompaniment
- Baptismal font
- Copies of the script for "Outta the Mouths of Babes"
- Clear craft stones
- Overhead projector and transparencies
- Copies of the "Songs and Prayers" sheets (*available on-line*)
- Make a transparency of "What's Next?" on the "Baptismal Beginnings Clip Art" page which is available on-line along with other resources for this program at www.elca.org/etteam/2002CEProgramPlanner.
- Display the baptism design on an overhead projector to highlight the theme of this program. There is also clip art available on pages 41-42 to highlight the theme for 2002-2003.

Baptismal Beginnings Celebration

Opening Song:	"Step By Step" (<i>Worship & Praise</i> , page 132)
Lessons:	Isaiah 43:1b, Galatians 3:26-27
Skit:	"Outta the Mouths of Babes"
Song:	"Faith Walkin' People" ("Songs and Prayers" sheets) "Next Step" ("Songs and Prayers" sheets)
Sending:	"Step By Step" (instrumental)

Skit "Outta the Mouths of Babies"

Setting the Stage:

Gather baby costumes. (Encourage the characters to wear night gowns or shirts and a bonnet with bottles, pacifiers and/or rattles, etc.)

Position the baptismal font in the center of your stage area. Place two stools next to it where the characters will sit.

Cast: One male and one female youth or adult to portray two babies

Script:

Girl: Hi.

Boy: Hi there, what are you doing here? Do you come here often?

Girl: Well, I'm here to be baptized; it's my first time how about you?

Boy: Yup, baptized. My whole family is being baptized at the same time. My mom and dad and my big sister. The pastor said something about being washed. I just hope I don't get soap in my eyes.

Girl: Your whole family is gettin' baptized at the same time? Isn't there some sort of age limit on this baptism thing?

Boy: Nope. Pastor said that anyone can get baptized nine days, nine years or 90 years, and once is for always. You never even have to get a booster shot, 'cuz it isn't something that just happens once. It stays with you every day in your life.

Girl: Hey, that's a good deal. I hate those booster shots. But that "every day for the rest of your life thing," well...there is only one thing I do every day and I think that I just "do" it.

Boy: Ew, I think you "doed" it too! But it's not like THAT. Baptism affects how you live your life, 'cording to the pastor. Baptism means that you're part of the God family.

Girl: Not me! I'm a Johnson. Grammom even says I looks like a Johnson!

Boy: That shows how much you knows. You can be a Johnson and a part of the God family. There are lots of people in lots of families that is part of the God family. Like the Lees and the Hernandezes, and the Schwartzendrubers, they're all part of the God family. But they don't all look the same. The only way you can tell is they got a invisible cross on their forehead.

Girl: Wow, you are pretty smart about this baptism thing. I'm just a baby, I don't know all this stuff.

Boy: Well, I'm just a baby too. But I listened when they told my sister about being part of the God family. The pastor said that being a part of the God family means we all gots a job to do. Some of us will be teachers, and some of us will make the coffee or Lutheran jello, and some of us will sing in the choir or hang out in the nursery. And Pastor says my sister gets to be in something called youth group.

Girl: What's youth group?

Boy: Don't know. But that pastor seemed pretty excited about it. You know what else he/she was excited about?

Girl: What?

Boy: Study, and Serve, and Worship, and Pray, and Encourage, and Give, and Invite. We is supposed to do all these things at home and at school and at work and wherever else they take us!

Girl: Do you think we'll remember them all? They sound pretty important.

Boy: Yup, the pastor called 'em Faith Practices and he/she said that this church and our families and lots of other people in the God family help each other so that we can all grow up to be real live disciples of Jesus.

Girl: Disciples?

Boy: I think that is another name for people in the God family.

Girl: Do you think that everyone in the God family is a disciple?

Boy: I don't know!

Girl: Maybe it's just the ones who live like that invisible cross isn't invisible.

Boy: Shhh, I think that it's time now. It's going to happen.

Girl: Hey, hey, what's that guy (lady) doing? He's (she's) pouring water on my head! Hey he's (she's) doing it again and again! Oh, here comes the cross part! I can feel it. Can you see it?

Boy: I don't see it, but I know it's there. Don't worry, that's the baptism thing! Now you is a child of God! Gloria Rose, child of God that's who you are.

Girl: Yup, now he's pouring the water on your mom. Now she's part of the God family, too! What happens next, after we becomes part of the God family?

Boy: That's when the real fun begins! We gets to read Bible stories and pray and go to worship and sing and then we gets to go to Sunday school and learn about what it means that we are a part of the God family.

Girl: Look, look, they is done with your dad and your sister, now it's your turn. One, two, three splash-
es of water! Yeah! You's part of the God family too! But, hey, I have one more question.

Boy: What is it?

Girl: What's a pastor?

Boy: *(Points to the pastor)* That's the one in the white sleeper without the footies!

Girl: Ohhh!

Stir us to deeper discipleship. . .

. . .as we embrace our baptisms and celebrate them each day

A little girl asked her mother as they were leaving church one day, "Does it ever wash off?"

She went on to describe the event in the rite of Holy Baptism when the pastor places the sign of the cross on the person's forehead.

"No, it never washes off," assured her mother. "In fact, even though you can't see it, it's our job to try to make it visible to others in the things we say and do."

"What's it all supposed to mean, anyway?"

"It means that we belong to God's family and want to live like we're glad we do!"

"Like belonging to this church because we like it?"

"Well," said the mom, "it's more about God loving us so much that God made it possible for us to know God's love and forgiveness in our hearts and lives every minute of every day!"

"Do you believe it, Mom?"

"I sure do," she said, "but I need you to help me."

"So do I!"

Just like our initial birth-days, baptism may seem like a one time event. But it has a lasting effect upon our lives!

TRY THIS!!! Keep a small bowl of water on your kitchen table to make the sign of the cross on your forehead to celebrate the meaning of your baptism each and every day!

Martin Luther wrote the *Small Catechism* to help parents teach the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer, Holy Baptism and Holy Communion. Get one and see!



Celebrate and understand baptism

Augsburg Fortress books help you celebrate your own baptism and bring new understanding about the daily walk of faith it empowers. Visit the Online Store at www.augsburgfortress.org

For remembering and celebrating baptism

Water, Come Down

Walter Wangerin, Jr.

A beautifully illustrated verse-story to read to young children, plus notes about biblical roots and symbols, and ways to celebrate baptism. 0-8066-3711-0

For telling stories, passing on the faith

That Reminds Me

Jean Brown Eittem

Creative ways to build storytelling into family life with 200 story starters to help parents and grandparents share faith and pass on history. 0-8066-3623-8

For family prayers, rituals, celebrations

All Through the Day, All Through the Year

David B. Batchelder

For daytime, night times, holidays, and seasons here are ways families can renew their baptismal vows and build a rich spiritual life. 0-8066-4039-1



...for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith.

As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ

—Galatians 3:26-27

Luther's Info Drive-thru

An intergenerational program
for nurturing Lutheran identity

Luther's Info Drive-thru is an interactive program for children, youth and adults. It is designed to stir us to deeper discipleship as we come to a clearer understanding of the fundamental teachings of the Christian faith through a Lutheran lens. It urges us to appreciate the depth of its biblical insight and celebrate the many gracious gifts of faith it gives.

Luther's Info Drive-thru provides a variety of large and small group exercises and activities to help us strengthen our understanding about what it means to be a Lutheran.

The content for this 60- 90 minute program is based on the following Bible verse.

But now God's way of putting people right with himself has been revealed...God puts people right through their faith in Jesus Christ. God does this to all who believe in Christ, because there is no difference at all: everyone has sinned and is far away from God's saving presence. But by the free gift of God's grace all are put right with him through Christ Jesus who sets them free (Romans 3:21a, 22-24).

Luther's Info Drive-thru is designed to be used on or around Reformation Sunday in October, but the content of the event is appropriate for presentation at any time. The material may also be divided into individual devotions or activities and used throughout the year. Download and review the program in its entirety at www.elca.org/eteam/2002CEProgramPlanner and adapt it according to your own purpose and intent.

The outline for this program consists of:

- A large group celebration.
- Suggestions for craft and activity centers that will strengthen our Lutheran identity within the context of Christian community.
- "Stir Us to Deeper Discipleship at Home" reproducible sheets.

The 25-30 minute, large group celebration is referred to as Luther's Drive-In Theater. It includes Scripture, a brand new "I'm a Lutheran" song, a "Prayer for Lutherans Everywhere," and a skit titled "The Big Race," featuring the Lil' Buddies from the Back Pew. A reproducible "Songs and Prayers" sheet is available on-line, along with a scripted version of the entire celebration at www.elca.org/eteam/2002CEProgramPlanner.

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L u t h e r ' s i n f o d r i v e - t h r u *continued*

The learning centers or “Info Drive-thru Centers” highlight some of the fundamental characteristics of the Lutheran faith. Description sheets for the craft and activities in the “Info Drive-thru Centers” include directions for facilitation, preparation, and supplies. They are available at www.elca.org/eteam/2002CEProgramPlanner. Participants will also have the opportunity to make souvenir key chains to collect an actual key to symbolize the learning at each center. You will find patterns for these designs on the *Luther's Info Drive-thru* pattern sheet. The “I’m A Lutheran” Info Drive-thru passport or coloring book is designed to guide participants through the crafts and activity centers. It highlights the concepts identified in the “I’m a Lutheran” song with child-friendly illustrations, and provides a place to “stamp” the passport or attach a sticker at each center. You may want to have someone portray Martin Luther to give participants a brief orientation to the Info Drive-thru Centers, the passport and collection of actual “keys” to the faith.

Info Drive-thru Centers

- 1 Cruisin’ thru the Trinity and the “I Believe” Creeds
- 2 Cruisin’ thru the Sacraments: Baptism and Communion
- 3 Cruisin’ thru the Bible
- 4 Cruisin’ with Luther
- 5 Cruisin’ thru Worship

The “Stir Us to Deeper Discipleship at Home” reproducible sheet on page 22 is provided to give people an additional opportunity to think about what it means to be a Lutheran. It is designed to be a half-page “info sheet” to send home with event participants, or to include in a worship bulletin on or around Reformation Sunday. The sheet includes a reference to the Augsburg Fortress Online Store and highlights some of the resources they have available on this topic.

A C E L E B R A T I O N O F

Luther's Drive-in Theater

Time: Approximately 25-30 minutes

Preparation and Supplies

- Piano or other form of accompaniment
- Copies of the script for "The Big Race"
- Overhead projector and transparencies
- Poster board or newsprint
- *Luther's Info Drive-thru* pattern sheet
- Copies of "Songs and Prayers" sheet, "I'm A Lutheran" song, and "I'm A Lutheran" passport/coloring book available at www.elca.org/eteam/2002CEProgramPlanner
- Set up an overhead projector. Make an overhead transparency with words to the song "I am a C," including the one and only original second verse (See *Luther's Drive-In Theater* outline). Trace the design of the Lutheran seal on *Luther's Info Drive-thru* pattern sheet onto a transparency.
- Use newsprint or poster board to make a large seal to hang or display in the center of your stage.
- Review the script, gather the necessary accessories, and invite children, youth or adults to portray the characters as you prepare to present "The Big Race."

Luther's Drive-In Theater Celebration

Opening Song: "I am a C" ("Songs and Prayers" sheets)

Lessons: Romans 10:6-10a, 11-12, Romans 3:21a, 22-24, Philippians 3:12,14

Song: "I'm a Lutheran" ("Songs and Prayers" sheets)

Prayer: A Prayer for Lutherans Everywhere

Song: "A Mighty Fortress" (instrumental) (*Lutheran Book of Worship*, page 229)

Skit "The Big Race"

featuring the Lil' Buddies from the Back Pew

Setting the Stage:

Think about the personalities and whimsical wisdom of the age-old "little rascals" as you find children, youth or adults to portray the characters in "The Big Race." The Lil' Buddies from the Back Pew are getting ready to participate in their last box car ("soap box") race of the season. An extended conversation about the importance of winning and losing highlights some keys to the Lutheran faith. Arrange a pew or stools and chairs of various heights in the center of the stage or in front of your projection of the Lutheran Seal. You may want to make some simple box cars to stand or park alongside the Lil' Buddies.

Paint or pin a copy of the Lutheran Seal design on blue T-shirts.

Gather a variety of hats or sweat bands, to enhance the characters' personalities.

Cast:

Richie (Focused on Gloria, the object of his affections)

Gloria (A woman with attitude)

Buddy (Looks up to TJ)

TJ (The leader of the Back Pew Buddies)

Jeepers (A mama's boy)

Script:

Richie: OK, team, it's our last event of the season and we have to win. If'n we don't win, we will be lost forever, or worsn' that we will be in a land between winners and losers and someone else will have to try to get us out. We don't want that, do we team? Come on, let's do our secret team sign!

TJ: Hey, uh, Richie, wait just a second, woudja? Is it really so important that we win? Why is it that we need to win so bad?

Buddy: Don't you know, TJ, that if we don't win this race, we'll never earn our way in, and we will be lost forever.

Jeepers: Uh-oh, I don't wants to be lost forever!

Richie: And if we don't win, our sponsor may not pay our way anymore, then we will never get any more of these fine designer-line shirts!

Gloria: But our sponsor is First Church of the Christian Protestant Lutherans! They don't think like that!

Richie: Oh yeah? What do they think like? If we don't earn our way, or someone else doesn't save us from loosing again, we'll never "get in."

Jeepers: What'r we so worried about gettin' into or kicked outta anyway?
(*They all stop short with a look of indignance combined with bewilderment*)

Buddy: You tell 'em TJ!

TJ: (*Takes his hat off, places it over his heart, and pauses for a moment of reverent reflection*) The hall of everlasting life and fame.

- Gloria:** *(Hands on her hips)* Well, boys, I can tell you've been runnin' on the wrong track!
- Richie:** Whatever are you talking about *(looking with endearing eyes at her)*, my dear?
- Gloria:** You don't even have to take one foot off the starting block to do that! I know for a fact that it's more about WHO you know than what YOU do!"
- Richie:** Really now *(He walks around with his hands behind him — as he continues to look endearingly at her)*, and WHO exactly would you be referring to?
- TJ:** The First Church of the Christian Protestant Lutherans is my church. It's where my family and me goes, and the pastor 'splained it to me like this:
- Jeepers:** Oh, boy... you already got my head racin' in circles!
- TJ:** See the cross in the middle of our "game shirts." That cross is to remind us of Jesus 'n what he did fer us and everybody else fer all time!
- Buddy:** What'd he do, TJ?
- TJ:** Jesus who died for our sins. He went ahead and he took 'em all away fer free!
- Jeepers:** Wow! Even mine? Ya mean, I don't have to go around feelin' like I'm grounded fer the rest of my life?
- Buddy:** How come the cross is so black?
- Gloria:** 'Cuz I know for a fact that sin is harder to get out than the oil stains you get when you're revvin' up your engines.
- Buddy:** Ew! My mama hates those oil stains!
- Gloria:** Well, First Church of the Christian Protestant Lutherans is the church I go to, too. And I know that the red heart is for LOVE *(Gloria makes eyes at Richie)*, but not the kind of love that girls get with the cards, candy and flowers from special boys on Valentines Day. It's a special kind of love that God has for us!
- Richie:** Wowiee! That's some kind of love! I wish I went to the First Church of the Protestant Lutherans like you do, Gloria!
- Jeepers:** What church do you go to, Richie?
- Richie:** It's just called "church" and my mama said that we is Christians, but she never said nuffin' about being Lutherans.
- Gloria:** Well, Richie, a Lutheran is a Christian, too. 'Cuz a Christian means we are connected to Christ. And, I know for a fact that Jesus is the Christ they're referring to.
- Richie:** Hey, we know about him at our church, too.
- Buddy:** So what's a Lutheran, Gloria?
- Gloria:** A Lutheran is a Christian that agrees with the very fine thoughts of Martin Luther. And he didn't even make it all up. It came di—rectly out of the New Testament of the Holy Bible.

The Big Race *continued*

- Jeepers:** Oh, yeah, I remember about him. He had a dream.
- Gloria:** No, Jeepers, that was Martin Luther KING JR! He was into civil rights in the 1960s. Martin Luther was a pastor in Germany about 500 years ago. So, boys, as you can see they practically lived in different lifetimes.
- Buddy:** A pastor? Like the one up front at our church?
- TJ:** Martin Luther didn't just stand up in front of a church. *(He stands proud as he makes his announcement)* He reformationed it!
- Jeepers:** Whoa! If I did that at my house, I'd be in really BIG trouble!
- Gloria:** Boys, boys, boys, it takes a true woman to tell you what this man did! Martin Luther used to go to a church that said you had to pay for all your sins.
- Richie:** Gosh *(pulls his empty pockets out)*, I'd be plum out of luck!
- Gloria:** But, then, one day he read a certain passage in the book of the Romans, and he realized that Jesus had already paid the price for all of them when he died on the cross for everyone for all time! And so people weren't supposed to be paying anyone for their own personal sins.
- Jeepers:** Whoa! So what did he do?
- Gloria:** So, he went and told the church about it and he DID get into lots of trouble, but he didn't care cuz he knew the Bible was telling the truth!!
- Jeepers:** Did he get creamed?
- TJ:** *(Picks up Jeepers' hat and slaps it on his head)* No dizzmo! He just kept on talkin' and doin' stuff that got so many people wanting to hang around him that they had to start building churches all over the place to fit 'em all in!
- Gloria:** He even wrote the Bible in a language regular people could read and he talked about things in a way that they could understand in a little Cataclysm. That's why he made the design that's so fashionably placed on your shirts.
- TJ:** Well now, if we aren't just about back to where we started from!!
- Jeepers:** OK. So I think I get the cross part, but if you aren't talkin' about gushy valentines, why have a heart?
- TJ:** Gloria was right about the red heart, it's about love all right! It's about God's love for us that sent Jesus right to the cross.
- Gloria:** *(Points to the seal)* I'll do the flower part, since I enjoy getting such sweet smelling ones from you-know-who! *(Gazes at Richie who turns away blushing.)* The white flower stands for the trust we have in Jesus.
- Buddy:** Just like we trust our guys behind the wheel.
- Richie:** Uh, guys, sometimes I don't think I'm the kind of guy you should be trustin'.
- TJ:** That's OK, Richie, 'cuz you're not Jesus. We can always trust in Jesus!
- Buddy:** This is all very interestin' 'n everything, but when are we gonna start rollin' down the track?

- TJ:** All we got left is the gold and the blue-n-green part!
- Gloria:** The green reminds us 'bout growth like the leaves around a pretty white flower that a boy gives a pretty girl. *(Gazes at Richie again.)*
- TJ:** *(Looks at her with indignation.)* Movin' right along! The blue field is to remind us of heaven.
- Jeebers:** Sometimes I dreams of heaven when we're playin' ball 'n I'm out in left field.
- Buddy:** Until the ball comes right down and knocks you on your noggin' and tells you were not playin' ball today.
- TJ:** The gold ring makes us think about eternal life with God and Jesus. Like a marathon — goin' around and around and around. With no beginnin' and no end!
- Richie:** That's all real nice and stuff, TJ, but what does it all have to do with winnin' today?
- Gloria:** Don't you get it, Richie?
- TJ:** We don't HAVE to win 'cuz, Jesus— he already won the all-time victory for us.
- Jeebers:** Then why are we still racin'?
- TJ:** 'Cuz God gave us the ability and creativity to make these fine box cars, and so we do the best we can as a way of thankin' God for taking the edge off our losin' streak!
- Buddy:** Do you mean that whether we win or loose, we is still on God's team?
- Gloria:** You are if you believe in Jesus!
- TJ:** Come on! It's time to do our secrit sign. *(They all spit on their pointer finger and make the sign of the cross on their own forehead.)* Now 'member *(everyone gets in a circle with their hands joined in the center)*, I say, "It's not about a win or a race, it's knowin' that yer. . .
- Everyone:** "Saved By GRACE" *(hands go up to cheer).*
- Buddy:** Hey, TJ...who's this Grace anyway?
- TJ:** She's one of the greatest legends in the history of Our Team. She's one of the Solie Sisters; you know, there's a Faith, Grace and a Scripturely Solie.
- Gloria:** Get real, TJ!
- TJ:** Hey, their dad was a Lutheran Pastor 'n when those girls played, the team was always "Saved By Grace."
- Gloria:** Yeah, right! *(They all laugh and start walking off stage.)*
- Jeebers:** I thought we weren't into girls!
- TJ:** That's another story for another day! Come on, I'll race you to the starting block!
- Buddy:** Bout time! *(They all run off stage.)*

Steer us to deeper discipleship. . .

...as we see it through a Lutheran lens of faith

A Lutheran told the following story as he shared his faith with a friend....

"Christians used to invite each other into faith conversations by tracing a fish design in the sand.

"When two people would meet in New Testament Bible times, a Christian would trace an arc or semi-circle on the ground in front of them. The other person would complete the fish design if he/she was a Christian, too.



"This was an important symbol of faith because the Greek letters for the word 'fish' formed a powerful statement of faith: Jesus Christ, God's Son, Our Savior."

The friend asked, "So how would you Lutherans identify yourselves as Christians today?"

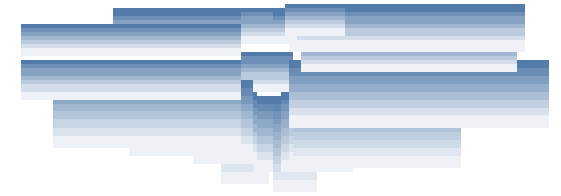
"We'd gift-wrap the symbol," he said, "and share it with our friends."

"Why would you do that?"

"Because we believe that our faith in Jesus, God's Son, our Savior is ours to keep, but given and received as an amazing gift from God."

Draw a fish symbol on a card and include the statement of faith it represents. Place it on your kitchen table in an envelope with a bow on it. Refer to it often at home, as you take this prayer to heart.

We offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us; our selves, our time and our possessions, signs of God's gracious love. Receive them for the sake of him who offered himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



Celebrate and understand Lutheran identity

Augsburg Fortress materials to introduce you to Martin Luther and help you understand what it means to be a Lutheran Christian. Visit the Online Store at www.augsburgfortress.org.

For a classic film of Luther's life

Martin Luther Video

From Martin Luther's days as a guilt-burdened monk through his monumental break with the Roman Church a video to watch and discuss with family or church groups. 6-0000-1133-4

For prayers to study, prayers to pray

Luther's Prayers

Herbert Brokering, Editor

Prayer was vital to Luther's faith. His prayers cover all aspects of life parents, children, employers, teachers, newlyweds, soldiers, sick persons and teach us about the man and his faith, and our own faith. 0-8066-2755-7

For richly imagined dialogue with the reformer

My Conversations with Martin Luther

Timothy F. Lull

To better understand Martin Luther and what it means to be Lutheran, read alone or in "conversation" with a friend these imaginary conversations with Luther and learn his views on family, roles of men and women, enemies and friends, politics and much more. 0-8066-3898-2

Searchlight

An intergenerational program for Epiphany

Searchlight is an interactive program for children, youth and adults. It is designed to stir us to deeper discipleship as we encounter the depth and creativity of God's love as revealed in the birth of God's own Son. The story of the Wise Men is used as an entry point for considering the power of God's active presence with us and the significance of following God's lead.

Searchlight gives people of all ages an opportunity to "join the journey" as Ali, the camel invites them to discover the key points in the story of the Wise Men and invites them to interpret its meaning for their own lives. This program includes music, drama, crafts and activities.

The content for this 60- 90 minute program is based on the following Bible story:

The Story of the Wise Men
Matthew 2:1-11

"Your light must so shine before people, so that they will see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

Searchlight is designed to be used at the beginning of the Epiphany season or as a New Year celebration. It may also be divided into individual devotions or activities to complement Advent or Christmas programs or events.

The outline for this program consists of:

- Two large group presentations.
- Suggestions for craft and activity centers to explore the meaning of the star and God's intent for those who strive to follow him.
- "Stir Us to Deeper Discipleship at Home" reproducible sheets.

The two occasions for large group participation include a 10-minute introduction to the theme titled "Come 'n Join the Journey" and a 20-minute "Searchlight" Celebration. They include Scripture, songs and a two-part skit titled "Ali, the Camel's Adventure." The Searchlight celebration includes a special edition of a homemade Bingo game titled "The Big Picture Party," a revised version of the song "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star," and "A Blessing for Those who Search." The skit, along with a brief outline for these two presentations, is printed in this resource. The Blessing, the Song and directions for the Bingo game are available at www.elca.org/etteam/2002CEProgramPlanner.

searchlight *continued*

The learning centers titled, "Adventure Centers," include crafts and activities to enrich your adventures with Ali, as they inspire a deeper commitment and desire to follow God's lead in our own lives. Description sheets for the crafts and activities at each Adventure Center include directions for facilitation and preparation, and supplies. They are available at www.elca.org/eteam/2002CEProgramPlanner. Souvenir snapshots of the Wise Men's journey are designed to be distributed at each center and collected in "Sights-to-See" picture albums, which will become individual game boards for the "Picture Party" Bingo game during the "Searchlight" celebration. The reproducible "Sights-to-See" album and snapshot sheets are also available at www.elca.org/eteam/2002CEProgramPlanner.

Adventure Centers

- 1 A Crown Fit for a King
- 2 Camel Crunchies
- 3 Mini-Planetarium
- 4 Mapping Your Journey
- 5 Star Guides
- 6 "Looking for Jesus" Puzzle Plaques
- 7 "Let Your Light Shine" Frames

The "Stir Us to Deeper Discipleship at Home" reproducible sheet on page 30 is provided to give people an additional opportunity to consider God's presence and activity in their own lives. It is designed to be a half-page "info-sheet" to send home with event participants, include in a worship bulletin during the Epiphany season, or the beginning of a new calendar year. It includes a reference to the Augsburg Fortress Online Store and highlights some of the resources they have available on this topic.

'Come 'n Join the Journey' Introduction

Preparations and Supplies

- Several copies of the Lutheran Book of Worship
- Piano or other form of accompaniment
- Searchlight pattern sheet available at www.elca.org/eteam/2002CEProgramPlanner
- Yellow and white poster board and construction paper
- Scissors
- Markers
- Overhead projector and transparency
- The script for "Ali, the Camel's Adventure, Part 1."

Trace the star design from the pattern sheet onto an overhead transparency. Make at least one large white star to hang or display in the center of your room. Other smaller stars may be made out of yellow or white paper to define a stage area or decorate the room. Make copies of the Song and Blessing sheet for each participant. Review the script, gather the accessories and invite someone to play the role of the camel as you prepare to present the skit, "Ali, the Camel's Adventure, Part 1."

Come 'n Join the Journey

Opening Song: "We Three Kings" (*With One Voice*, p. 646)

Scripture: Matthew 2:1-11

Skit: "Ali, the Camel 's Adventure," Part 1

Introduction to Adventure Centers

Song: "We Three Kings" (instrumental)

T H E



Searchlight celebration

Preparations and Supplies

- Copies of the "Songs and Prayers" reproducible sheet (available on-line)
- Several copies of the Lutheran Book of Worship
- Piano or other form of accompaniment
- Manger and baby
- Several bathrobes or costumes for nativity characters
- The script for "Ali, the Camel's Adventure, Part 2"
- Activity description sheet for "The Big Picture Party" available at www.elca.org/etteam/2002CEProgramPlanner
- Locate the song, "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" and "This Little Light of Mine."
- Review the script and gather the necessary people and accessories to present the skit, "Ali, the Camel's Adventure, Part 2."
- Lay out costumes and prepare to invite people to portray stable scene characters as you celebrate Jesus, the Searchlight in our lives.

Searchlight Celebration

Gathering Song: "Twinkle, Twinkle, Jesus Star" ("Songs and Prayers" sheets)

Skit: Ali, the Camel 's Adventure, Part 2 and the Big Picture Party

A Blessing for Those Who Search

Closing Song: "This Little Light of Mine" (*LifeSongs*, page 32)

Skit Ali, the Camel's Adventure

PART 1: Grab Your Crown 'n Come On Along!

(Designed to be used during the Come 'n Join the Journey presentation)

Setting the Stage:

Design a simple camel costume for one or two people. Gather a few brown blankets or dye an old sheet. The profile of a camel head is available on the "Searchlight" pattern sheet for you to trace on a transparency and project for use in making a camel headdress. The intent of this costume design is to use the blankets to cover the bodies of one or more people to represent the body and hump of the camel. The camel head may be held up in front of them to finish the costume.

Script:

Camel: Hi, everyone, I would like to introduce myself; I'm Ali, the camel. I journeyed with three Wise Men as we followed the star from the East to Bethlehem. I'll let the kings tell you the story later. Except, I just have to tell you that these three guys weren't really kings; in fact, we don't even know for sure that there were three of them. But I can tell you one thing I know for a fact: they were all scholars. Yup, they were some really smart guys all right, and they were really into studying the stars. Stars were really important in those days, they were kinda like the Triple A travel service today. The star studiers would give people directions for living based on where they were placed in the star sky. And they gave people all kinds of other information, like when seasons of the year would most likely start and stop and things like that. Well, these guys found out that there was a special star in the sky 'n they knew right away that it wasn't like anything they'd ever seen before. They checked around and found out that it identified the birth of a special king. These guys got so excited when they saw this star that they decided they couldn't just look at the star, they had to go and try to find the King! In fact, that's where they are right now! They've gone ahead of us to Bethlehem. They may even be sleeping right now as they get ready for the next part of their big journey. We're going to join their journey and have some fun and adventures of our own. We'll go through several adventure centers as we try to catch up with them. We'll do some crafts and activities and collect a snapshot or two to put in your "Sights-to-See" picture album. Now your leader will give you your actual travel itinerary, but I can tell you that you can put those snapshots in any order you want. It'll make it more fun when we get 'em when we get to Bethlehem 'cuz we're gonna use those albums as game boards for the Bingo game at our homecoming celebration. It doesn't matter what order you put them in because we will use them as part of a game as we close our time together. Ohhhhhh, dear, I'm getting sidetracked already; I hope I don't get lost. You've just got to meet these guys; they have a really exciting story to tell. At least it was exciting for them. But between you and me—I just gotta tell you—it was a whole lot of work for me luggin' all those guys and their luggage around. Even so, this journey was like no other one that I've ever been on. I learned a lot about this very special baby King that was born in Bethlehem. In fact, I think he grew up to be a very important person for all of you and everyone else that has ever lived. Oh, no, I'm sorry, I'm getting ahead of myself again. Are you all ready for the journey? Did you make your crown and crunchies? Well, then grab your camel and let's begin our very own adventure! *(Saunters off the stage)*

PART 2: Three Wise Guys and a Very Tired Camel

Setting the Stage:

Gather the characters and props for the nativity scene a little off from the center of the stage. Arrange for the skit characters to stand close to the star you displayed in the Join the Journey celebration.

Cast:

Wise Guy 1, Wise Guy 2, Wise Guy 3, Ali, the Camel

Script:

Ali: *(Aside)* Hi, remember me? I'm Ali, the camel. Hey! In case you haven't noticed we made it all the way to Bethlehem. And there they are — over there. The three wise guys! They're the ones who had me carry stuff all the way to Bethlehem. *(Yawns)* Now you can see why I'm still trying to recover from the journey.

Let me introduce you to these guys. Then they can tell you all about their journey to Bethlehem. In fact, you can follow along because you've collected many snapshots from their journey on your "Sights-to-See" album. In fact, why don't we just have a picture party and play Bingo while we're at it? Does everybody have their "Sights-to-See" albums? Then have your leader give you some sticky stars so that you can put one on a snapshot when you hear one of the wise guys talk about it. Listen carefully and when you have a star in each of the squares going across or down, you can shout "Searchlight" and we'll all respond by clapping for you and saying "Yes! Jesus is our Searchlight!" Before we go any further, let's practice that. Now if I get stars all the way down or across, I'll say, "Searchlight!" and what will you say? *(Optional: Should I give you a hint?)* "Yes! Jesus is our Searchlight!"

OK! I think we're ready! Let's head on over to hear some of the adventures of those wise guys *(walks toward the wise guys)*. Look, they're already busy talking. *(Aside)* They think they're so smart and they don't even realize that we've been having a little conversation of our own over here!

Wise Guy 1: Hither look, we must take our rest so that on the morrow we can endeavor to follow the star to its noble conclusion.

Ali: *(Aside)* Oh, oh, here we go again with the smart-talk.

Wise Guy 2: OK, we know how smart you are!

All Wise Guys: That's why they call us wise men.

Wise Guy 3: It's almost daybreak, let's get the tents out and get set up so that we don't have to travel in the heat of the day. We can start out again at sunset.

Ali: *(Aside)* You know, it's kind of hard to travel during the day since we're following a star like — in the sky available only at night. Have you found the snapshots of the WISE MEN, the CAMEL and the STAR? Listen and learn.

Wise Guy 2: Let's take out our star charts and see where we have been.

Wise Guy 1: OK, now, we started here in the East and we have been following the brightest star in the sky.

Ali: *(Aside)* Find the snapshot of the brightest star!

S k i t *continued*

Wise Guy 3: You know guys, you are pretty smart.

All Wise Guys: That's why they call us wise men!

Wise Guy 3: Like I said, I am having a rotten time following the star charts. It all looks like a great big huge puzzle up there.

Wise Guy 2: Well, we started in the East, took a right at Cassiopeia, and kept following the bright star so we can find this baby that has been born to be King of the Jews.

Ali: *(Aside)* All this travel to see a baby? I know these guys are supposed to be wise, but don't you think they could have just sent a gift by Federal Express? I'm getting very tired of traveling. Oh, by the way, did you find the snapshot with a BABY?

Wise Guy 1: You know, according to my calculations, we are in the vicinity of Jerusalem. We could stop there and talk to Herod; he must know something about this baby.

Wise Guy 2: Good idea, and even if he doesn't know, there should be other astronomers in Jerusalem that might know something about this star.

Wise Guy 3: We need to get these gifts to the baby and see what is so special about him that a star would lead us all the way here to see him.

Wise Guy 1: Speaking of gifts, are they still packed on the camel?

Ali: *(Aside)* They sure are! Hey, did you hear that? They said CAMEL. That's me. Did you get the snapshot of me? And if those guys don't get a move on, the wrapping paper will get all crumpled.

Wise Guy 2: Yes, my gift of gold is the best thing I could give. It is a gift of respect that will mean a whole lot to a king. It glitters and shines, and he can store it and count his wealth whenever he wants.

Wise Guy 2: The gift of frankincense is the best thing I could bring; it is a costly perfume. Kings LOVE expensive perfume. I know this King will love my gift.

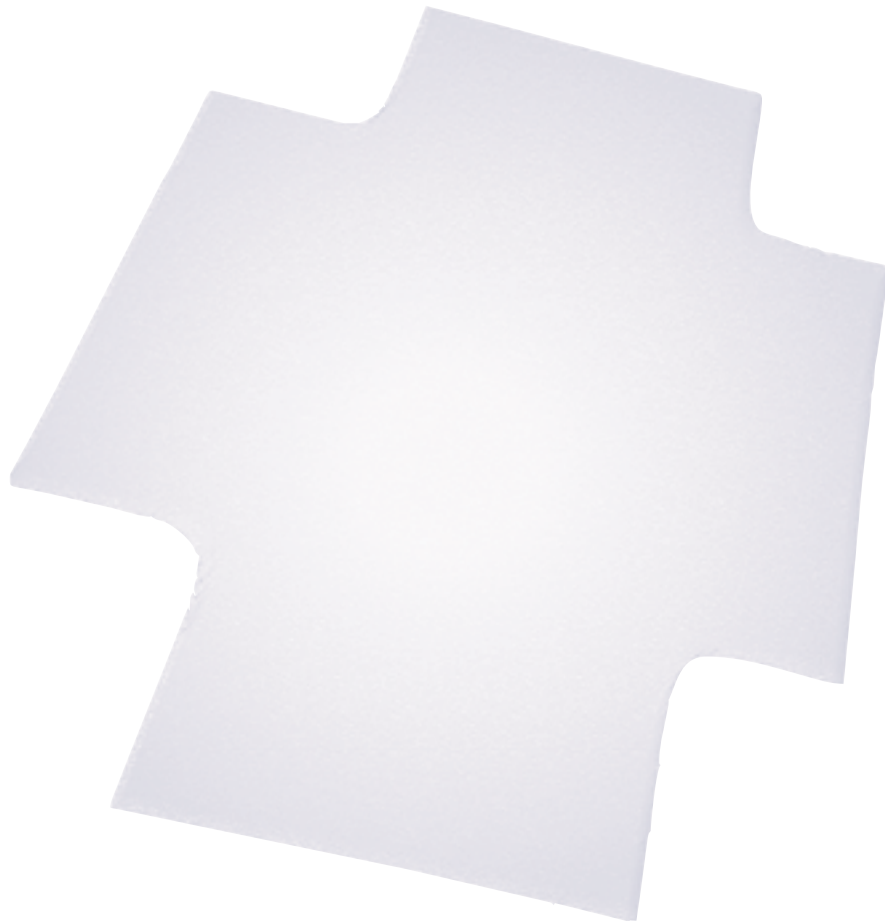
Wise Guy 3: The gift of myrrh—a burial spice—may seem very odd, but it is expensive and only the wealthiest of kings can afford it. It isn't something the King can use now, but it is a gift that shows great respect.

Ali: *(Aside)* Wow! Those sound like expensive gifts. Gold, frankincense and myrrh. Have you found the snapshots of these GIFTS? One thing I know, this baby that was born in Bethlehem. . . There's another one! Do you see a snapshot of BETHLEHEM? He didn't grow up to be the kind of king that was impressed with expensive gifts or splendid surroundings. He was the kind of person that was more impressed with who a person was and how a person lived their life and what was in their heart than what kind of "stuff" they owned or if he received an expensive present from them.

Wise Guy 2: I believe that this King, born in Bethlehem, may not be a "crown" sort of king, but a King of something bigger.

Wise Guy 3: Hey, let's go look and see. Over there! The star is shining over a stable. (*Walks over to the stable/manger scene*) Look, in the manger! It's a baby! Let's go over and see if it's the King so we can worship him. Let's continue on this journey. I am excited to find this child and go home a different way to tell people the story of how we followed the star to find the greatest King of all.

Ali: Did you hear that? Another adventure. After this one, we'll be going a different way to tell our story. Do you see a snapshot of that road sign and the stable? Hey! And we know that this story isn't just a story. It's part of God's story and it is recorded in Matthew 2:2. There's another one. Do you have a snapshot of Matthew 2:2? The Wise Men followed a light in the sky—a star. We have our own light; we have Jesus. Jesus is a light for our lives, a light to find our way in a world that is filled with uncertainty. Jesus is our star! He still shines for us today!



Stir us to deeper discipleship. . .

. . .as we journey through Epiphany

We're all on a journey through life and every choice we make shapes the paths we take.

A couple of Sundays after Christmas, a pastor highlighted the story of the Wise Men (Matthew 2: 1-11) in her sermon. She concluded her thoughts for the day with the following statement.

Just as the Wise Men, we, too, must prayerfully choose our "Bethlehem stars" and journey in faith.

Just as the Wise Men chose a star to lead them, we identify people and points of reference to influence the decisions we make and the directions we take. Take a moment to list a few of yours.

The word epiphany marks a season of light, revealing Jesus Christ as the "light of the world." It gives occasion for the star that led the Wise Men to Bethlehem and the inspiration God's Word provides for our lives today.

Make stars on adhesive notes and display the following verses in highly visible places to remind you of God's promise to love, lead, guide and walk beside you!

Psalm 8

Hebrews 12:1-2a

Proverbs 3:5-6

Hebrews 13:5b

Proverbs 16:9



Celebrate and understand Epiphany

Augsburg Fortress books bring light to your Epiphany observance and inspiration for your life journey. Visit the Online Store at www.augsburgfortress.org.

For answers to "What's my place in God's plan?"

Your Call is Waiting

Terry-Anne Preston

Questions, charts, lists and contemplation of biblical examples of calling will help individuals or groups discern their own call from God.

0-8066-4160-6

For a treasure chest of family fun and togetherness

Before and After Christmas

Debbie Trafton O'Neal

Here are fascinating facts, activities, projects, Bible readings, stories and devotions Advent through Epiphany (ages 7-10). 0-8066-4156-8

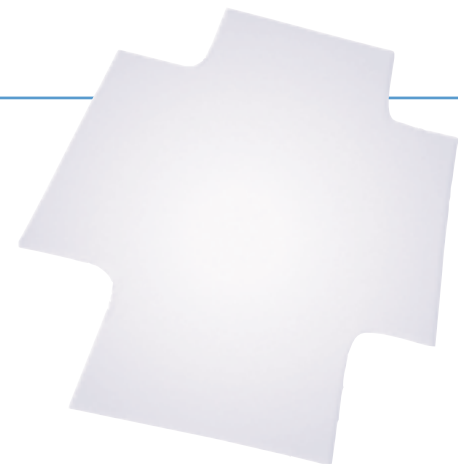
For a read-aloud story to bring light and faith

Brother Gabriel and the Secret of Christmas

Bob Hartman

Join Brother Gabriel on a journey into light and love 10 breathtaking chapters for families to read together and talk about (ages 7-10).

0-8066-3887-7





Here comes Jesus!

An intergenerational program and Backstage Workshop for Lent

Here Comes Jesus! is a cross between a variety show and a Sunday school Christmas program. It is designed to be a multi-sensory presentation highlighting the characteristics of discipleship modeled in the life and ministry of Jesus. It provides a backstage workshop for children, youth and adults to nurture their own understanding of and commitment to discipleship as they prepare to present this program. *Here Comes Jesus!* was designed to be featured during the season of Lent, but the content is appropriate for presentation at any time of the year.

Here Comes Jesus! "At-A Glance" (page 32), scans the flow and content for a 45-60 minute program. The outline interweaves a collection of vignettes, songs, narrations and small group presentations that highlight some of the key events in the life of Christ, from his birth through his death and resurrection. A scripted outline of the program is provided on page 34 of this resource. This version includes a brief reference to the key components of the program. It is available for you to download and adapt at www.elca.org/etteam/2002CEProgramPlanner along with a *Here Comes Jesus! "Backstage Guide"* that provides a complete description of each program offering. As you scan the resource in its entirety, you will find that most of the recommended props and supplies are easy to obtain. The majority of the songs are taken from the *Worship & Praise Songbook* published by Augsburg Fortress, 0-8066-3850-8.

The "Stir Us to Deeper Discipleship" reproducible sheet (page 38), is designed to give families of all shapes and sizes an additional opportunity to think of Jesus during Lent. It is intended to be a half-page "info-sheet" to insert in your *Here Comes Jesus!* program guide or a worship bulletin during the season of Lent. It includes a reference to the Augsburg Fortress Online Store and highlights some of the resources they have available on this topic.

Before You Begin

As you preview this program, you will want to think through how it will fit into your context.

1. Consider your pool of potential participants.

It is a tradition in many congregations to present Sunday school programs, but very few have provided occasions for children, youth and adults to prepare major presentations together. What is the feasibility of actually gathering such a group together in your congregation?

You may wish to have people pre-register for participation so you can assess how the group will work together. Discovering the number of children, youth, adults and families interested in attending can be helpful as you plan a version of the program that will honor their level of understanding and ability to share the various components.

2. Assess your needs for leadership and coordination.

Outlining your needs for leadership and assistance is only part of the preparation necessary when you recruit volunteers. Identifying the gifts of the youth and adults in your congregation is also

continued

Here comes Jesus! *continued*

important. Giving people opportunities to do the things they have a passion or gift to do will turn the task into a privilege. Gathering a planning team will give you a sense of partnership and support as you delegate the various tasks involved.

3. Maximize your potential for preparation.

Design a model for your program preparation that will make maximum use of the participants attending. You might do an initial Backstage Workshop to introduce the theme and content of the program and begin the small group work necessary to prepare for each program. An outline for a Backstage Workshop is provided on page 33. It is also available at www.elca.org/eteam/2002CEProgramPlanner to download and adapt. Additional rehearsals may be necessary for the music and drama groups. You may also wish to schedule a dress rehearsal prior to your program.

4. Design your program to fit the most appropriate presentation time.

When are special programs usually presented in your congregation? During a Sunday or mid-week worship service? On a Sunday afternoon or evening? The program outlined in this resource will take approximately 45-60 minutes to present. Feel free to adapt it accordingly.

Here Come Jesus!

"At-A-Glance"

Prelude		Presentation #6:	Parable
Opening Dialogue		Presentation #7:	Prayer
Pantomime #1	Birth	Song:	"Lord, Listen to Your Children"
Song:	"Shine, Jesus Shine!"		
Pantomime #2	Blessing	Presentation #8:	Palm Sunday
Presentation #1	Jesus Was A Little Boy	Song:	"King of Kings"
Pantomime #3	Baptism "Now & Then"	Pantomime #4	The Last Supper
Presentation #2	Baptized Children of God	Song:	"Here is Bread"
Presentation #3	Disciple = Follower I	Pantomime #5	Communion Today
Song:	"Step By Step"	Presentation #9	Cross Processional
Presentation #4	Disciple = Follower II	Song:	"Were You There?" (Instrumental)
Song:	"Faith Walkin' People"		
Presentation #5:	Jesus' Hands and Feet	Pantomime #6	Easter Morning
Song:	"Make Me a Servant"	Song:	"Go Tell"

Planning A Backstage Workshop

A Backstage Workshop provides an occasion for you to introduce “Here Comes Jesus!” and jump-start the variety of preparations necessary to present it. Set aside about two hours for this event. The proposed schedule includes craft and music sessions for everyone and recommends specific tracks for preschool, music, drama and intergenerational offerings. Be sure to consider youth involvement in the music and drama tracks.

As individuals and families arrive for the workshop, you may want to give them a “Backstage Pass” that reflects their area of interest and expertise. (See sample “Backstage Pass” on-line.) Be sure to invite both youth and adults to help coordinate the activities in each track.

Backstage Workshop Schedule

15 minutes	Large group introduction to <i>Here Comes Jesus!</i>
30 minutes	Track Time
30 minutes	Prop Construction/Refreshment Break
30 minutes	Track Time
15 minutes	Music Time

Backstage Workshop Tracks

Preschool/Parent Track

- Backstage Pass #1: Jesus Was a Little Boy
- Backstage Pass #2: Baptized Children of God

Drama Track

- Backstage Pass #1: Pantomimes
- Backstage Pass #2: A Parable (“Jesus Hands and Feet” Vignette)

Music Track

- Backstage Pass #1 & 2: Special Music

Intergenerational Track (Elementary to Adult)

- Backstage Pass #1: Disciple = Follower 1 and 2
- Backstage Pass #2: Prayer

Note: The Palm Sunday and cross processions will be addressed during the Prop Construction time.

Here comes Jesus! Program Outline

- Prelude:** "Step By Step" (*Worship & Praise*, page 132) (*instrumental variations*)
- Narrator A:** Stories! Stories! Stories! True stories! Love stories! Stories of history, adventure and mystery. The Bible tells God's story about God's people, their lives and faith journeys, their accomplishments and mistakes. It talks about God's understanding love, the coming of God's Son.
- Narrator B:** Jesus came as a babe, the boy in the temple—a carpenter's son, a teacher, a healer, God's only Son. He is our Savior, the long-expected one, the one through whom salvation would come.
- Narrator A:** "The Lord himself will give you a sign," said the prophet Isaiah 700 years before Christmas time. A young woman will have a son and everyone will call him Emmanuel.
- Narrator B:** Emmanuel?
- Narrator A:** Yes! It means God is with us through the coming of His Son.
(*Pantomime #1: Mary and Joseph are positioned next to a manger. Joseph lifts the baby out of the manger and gives him to Mary to hold.*)
- Narrator B:** Though people were reminded in the Old testament to prepare, many really didn't seem to care. That's why Jesus came with God's grace and love to share.
- Narrator A:** Yes! After all, He is God's Son! Arise! Let's shine! For our light has come!
- Congregational Song** "Shine, Jesus Shine!" (*Worship & Praise*, page 123)
(*Program participants may process during this time.*)
- Narrator B:** And just as many of us were baptized as babes, Jesus was blessed by a man named Simeon.
(*Pantomime #2: Simeon stands center stage as Mary and Joseph bring Jesus to him for a blessing. Simeon upholds him with his arms outstretched.*)
- Jesus even went to the temple to learn about God's people and God's story, just like children do today in Sunday school. And as he grew, he probably dreamed of being a carpenter, too. Look! Here come some people with tools. What do you think they are up to?
- Presentation #1** Jesus Was a Little Boy
Young children and their dads/parents will present a little rhyme (and sing the following song) about Jesus and his father doing carpentry. Go on-line to find a complete description of this presentation in the Here Comes Jesus! Backstage Guide.
- Song:** "Jesus Worked in Many Ways" (*available on-line*)
- Narrator A:** And when it was time for Jesus to begin his work and ministry, he was baptized in the Jordan River by his cousin, John the Baptist.
(*Pantomime #3a: (Optional) An adult Jesus kneels next to John as he scoops water in his hands and pour it over Jesus.*)
- Narrator B:** Do you know when you were baptized? Was it outside, in a river, like Jesus or in a font at church, like the one over there?

(Pantomime #3b: A parent and an older child stand around the baptismal font as a pastor splashes water on the children, marks the sign of the cross on their foreheads and gives the parents a baptismal candle or blanket, or whatever your congregation does.)

Where did it take place (name of your congregation)? Who do you think was there? And what do you think they saw? Do you think they saw the pastor splashing you and marking the sign of the cross on your forehead (*gesture this activity*), sealing you as loved, forgiven and welcomed to be a part of God's loving family? I see some pom poms; I think it's time for a cheer. Shout it loud, so we can hear!

Presentation #2 Baptized Children of God

Young children and their parents will do a cheer about being a child in God's family and sing the following song. Go on line to find a complete description of this presentation in the Here Comes Jesus! Backstage Guide.

Song: "Kids of the Kingdom" (*LifeSongs*, page 132)

Narrator A: I have a riddle for you! Who followed Jesus without fussin'? If you count them - there's a dozen. Need a cue? The next group will portray these men. They were the disciples. Remember them? They were the first people Jesus asked to follow him.

Presentation #3 Disciple = Follower I

A group of older children, youth and adults portray themselves to be Jesus' first disciples. Go on-line to find a complete description of this presentation in the Here Comes Jesus! Backstage Guide.

Congregational Song "Step By Step" (*Worship & Praise*, page 132)

Song

Narrator B: Not all the disciples were fishermen. Matthew was a tax collector before he decided to follow Jesus, and Simon was a military man. Today, we have lots of job responsibilities that can become super ministries.

Narrator A: Ministries? What's a ministry?

Narrator B: It's a commitment to follow Jesus and help others along the way. Here's a few disciples you might recognize today. They're dressed to show you what they do.

Presentation #4 Disciple = Follower II

A group of children, youth and adults portray characters with different occupations and identify themselves to be examples of followers of Jesus today. Go on-line to find a complete description of this presentation in the Here Comes Jesus! Backstage Guide.

Song: "Faith Walkin' People" (*available on-line*)

Narrator A: For three years, Jesus and his disciples were busy doing special ministries. Jesus healed many people. He made the blind to see, the crippled to walk, and the sad or lonely to be happy. He surprised people with many miracles. He fed 5,000 people with five fish and a few loaves of bread. He loved people no one seemed to love before. Lots of people's lives were changed, more and more each day.

We have the opportunity to be Jesus' disciples today. We are his hands and feet to help those in need and his voice for sharing words of hope, love and encouragement. Let's take a look at some modern day examples of Jesus' ministry.

Program outline *continued*

Presentation #5: "Jesus Hands and Feet" Vignette

(A skit presented by a group of children, youth and adults. It features an interview with various parts of the body of Christ. Go on line to find a complete description of this presentation in the Here Comes Jesus! Backstage Guide.)

Song: "Make Me a Servant" (*Worship & Praise*, page 96)

Narrator B: Jesus was a teacher, too. Many times he would tell stories and refer to things that were familiar to people, like seeds and growing things.

Narrator A: He said that faith was like a mustard seed because it often starts small and grows to become an amazingly big plant. He also talked about soil and farming. He said our hearts need to be like good soil, not rocky with attitudes that won't let the Word sink in and take root, or full of weeds with obstacles and other temptations that can choke the life out of it. We are called to be good listeners and willing followers as we understand God's plan for us.

Narrator B: In Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus illustrates a lesson he wants to teach people by referring to a shepherd separating the sheep from the goats. (*Read verses 31-40 as a lead-in to this contemporary interpretation.*) Here's a version of a parable Jesus might have told today.

Presentation #6: The Visitor

(A mini-play that includes a mother, father, two children and three visitors. Go on line to find a complete description of this presentation in the Here Comes Jesus! Backstage Guide.)

Narrator A: Conversations are really important; in fact, we can say up to 40,000 words a day. Jesus talked to people about lots of things and he often took time to talk to God. Thank God, Jesus taught us how to pray.

Congregational Song: "Lord, Listen to Your Children" (*Worship & Praise*, page 91)

Presentation #7: Prayer

(With an initial reference to the first disciples' request for Jesus to teach them how to pray, a group of children, youth and adults may share some prayers of thanks and praise, repentance and requests.)

Narrator B: Jesus traveled many miles, down many roads and through lots of towns. He didn't go by plane or train. He'd walk the dusty roads or sail in a boat across the Sea of Galilee. And on one very special day, Jesus rode through the city of Jerusalem on a donkey. As He rode along, people waved palms and sang psalms. It was almost like a parade. Let's join in the celebration!


Presentation #8: Palm Sunday

(Children, youth and adults process around the room as they wave palm branches and sing the following song. The congregation may be asked to sing along.)

Congregational Song: "King of Kings" (*Worship & Praise*, page 80)

Narrator A: A king riding on a donkey?! Why not in a chariot or on a marquee? Many people just don't seem to understand. They wanted a king who was mighty and grand. Crucify him! That was their plan. They wanted a different kind of man.

Narration B: But that's all to come. First, let's join Jesus and those 12 special men as they go to the Upper Room to begin the meal to remembered for all time.



Song: "Here is Bread" (*Worship & Praise*, page 58)

(Pantomime #4: Several disciples are sitting around Jesus. Jesus lifts up a loaf of bread toward the heavens, breaks it and gives it to his disciples. Then, he takes a goblet with grape juice, lifts it toward the heavens and shares it with his disciples.)

Immediately followed by:

(Pantomime #5: Four to six people of all ages come and stand around a modern-day pastor as he or she blesses the bread and wine and shares it with them in a way that is familiar to the people in your congregation.)

Narrator A: It was all a part of God's promise, a part of God's plan. In John 3:16 it says that God loved the people of the world so much that God sent God's only Son to die for us so that anyone who believes and is baptized can be saved.

Narrator B: Criminals are not crucified anymore. In Jesus' day, it was a pretty common way for criminals to die. Jesus challenged the people of his day with his love and faithful ways. He wasn't just like anyone else who had come along. He actually did no wrong. The leaders were just too afraid that he'd become too popular and strong. It was beyond their ability to believe that Jesus had truly come to pay the price for everyone's sin. They could not accept that it was God's love that sent God's Son for our salvation. Let's pause for a moment and reflect upon the power and wonder of the cross as we view crosses that symbolize God's love and grace today.

Song: "Were You There?" (instrumental) (*Lutheran Book of Worship*, page 92)
(A group of children, youth and adults or families, process with a variety of crosses while the song is played. They remain in front of the congregation with their crosses uplifted until the song is over. Then they leave in silence.)

Narrator A: And very early on the first day of the week they went to the tomb when the sun had risen. And they were saying to one another, 'Who will roll away the stone?' And, looking up, they saw the stone was rolled back. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe and they were amazed! And they said to them:

(Pantomime #6: A light shines from within a cardboard tomb. Two women come up to the tomb, and an angel comes up to them and gestures to them that Jesus is no longer in the tomb.)

Narrator B: Do not be afraid! You seek Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified? He is not here! He is risen! Go! Tell the disciples!

Narrator A: The women ran to tell the disciples the Good News on that first Easter Day and that's what started the ol' ball rolling! Jesus later expanded the command. In Matthew 28:19-20, he said, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples; baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all that I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age."

Narrator B: And, that's exactly what people who live on this side of the resurrection have been doing ever since! As the Holy Spirit continues to flow through the words, deeds and hearts of God's people, we can be assured of God's amazing love and many blessings as we go into all the world and ask others to follow him. Ready? Let's go!

Congregational

Sending Song: "Go! Make Disciples" (*Worship & Praise*, page 47)

“Jesus went all over Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, preaching the Good News about the Kingdom, and healing people who had all kinds of disease and sickness”

—Matthew 4:23



Stir us to deeper discipleship. . .

. . .as we walk through the season of Lent

“It’s Spring!” That’s what the word “lent” means! In fact, long ago the word was used to identify the time of the year when the light of day begins to lengthen.

The season of Lent in our church year marks a time when we lengthen or increase our knowledge and understanding about God and the depth of God’s love through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

Even though Jesus was 100% God, he was also 100% man. He experienced many of the same things we do!

Read some of the following Bible stories and take a moment to comment on their similarities and differences.

<i>Birth</i>	<i>Luke 2:1-20</i>
<i>Baptism</i>	<i>Matthew 3:13-17</i>
<i>Church School</i>	<i>Luke 2: 41-47</i>
<i>Temptation</i>	<i>Matthew 4:1-11</i>
<i>Helping Others</i>	<i>John 13:2-5, 12-15</i>
<i>Prayer Time</i>	<i>Luke 11:1-4</i>
<i>Loving Others</i>	<i>John 15:12</i>
<i>Sharing Faith with Friends and Family</i>	<i>Mark 10:13-16</i>

Get to know his story and you’ll discover that many of the things that Jesus did are the same ones he asks his disciples “then and now” to do!



Focus on this design. What do you see? Can you identify the letters J-E-S-U-S? Once you do, it’s something you can’t help but see! Clip it for display in a highly visible place to prompt you to place Jesus in the center of all you say and do!

Celebrate and understand Jesus!

Augsburg Fortress provides books to guide your walk through Lent and bring you new understandings about Jesus and the depth of his love for you. Visit the Online Store at www.augsburgfortress.org.

For a daily guide to Lent and to Matthew
Journeying Through Lent With Matthew

Andrew Rogness

Gospel readings light the way through Lent for individuals or groups with reflection questions and prayers. 0-8066-4266-1

For an illustrated biography by kids
Jesus, This is Your Life

Jeff Kunkel, Editor

Get to know Jesus through the fresh insights and images of kids Gospel stories retold for adults and children alike. Then create your own “Jesus biography.” 0-8066-4165-7

For family activities during Lent
Family Countdown to Easter

Debbie Trafton O’Neal

A daily activity book to help families mark each day of Lent with activities, recipes, fascinating facts, crafts and stickers (ages 6-9). 0-8066-3827-3

Planning calendar

Use these pages to plan and schedule you congregation's activities and offerings in Christian education and discipleship. Use the left side of the planning sheet to highlight emphases, thematic planning and special events. The right side of the sheet is a place for reminders, notes and connections to other areas of congregational life. Complete the calendar before distributing to teachers, staff and other congregational leaders.

SEPTEMBER 2002

Notes, reminders and connections

1	_____	_____
8	_____	_____
15	_____	_____
	<small>14-Holy Cross Day</small>	
22	_____	_____
29	_____	_____

OCTOBER 2002

Notes, reminders and connections

6	_____	_____
13	_____	_____
20	_____	_____
27	_____	_____
	<small>Reformation Sunday</small>	

NOVEMBER 2002

Notes, reminders and connections

3	_____	_____
	<small>All Saints Sunday</small>	
10	_____	_____
	<small>Martin Luther's Birthday</small>	
17	_____	_____
24	_____	_____
	<small>Christ the King</small>	

DECEMBER 2002

Notes, reminders and connections

1	_____	_____
	<small>1st Sunday in Advent</small>	
8	_____	_____
15	_____	_____
22	_____	_____
29	_____	_____

JANUARY 2003

Notes, reminders and connections

5	_____	_____
	<small>6-The Epiphany of Our Lord</small>	
12	_____	_____
	<small>The Baptism of Our Lord</small>	
19	_____	_____
26	_____	_____

FEBRUARY 2003

2 _____
9 _____ *The Presentation of Our Lord* _____
16 _____
23 _____

Notes, reminders and connections

MARCH 2003

2 _____
9 _____ *5-Ash Wednesday* _____
16 _____ *First Sunday in Lent* _____
23 _____
30 _____ *25-The Annunciation of our Lord* _____

Notes, reminders and connections

APRIL 2003

6 _____
13 _____ *Palm Sunday* _____
20 _____ *Easter Sunday; The Resurrection of our Lord* _____
27 _____

Notes, reminders and connections

MAY 2003

4 _____
11 _____
18 _____
25 _____ *The Ascension of our Lord* _____

Notes, reminders and connections

JUNE 2003

1 _____
8 _____ *The Day of Pentecost* _____
15 _____ *Holy Trinity* _____
22 _____
29 _____

Notes, reminders and connections

JULY 2003

6 _____
13 _____
20 _____
27 _____

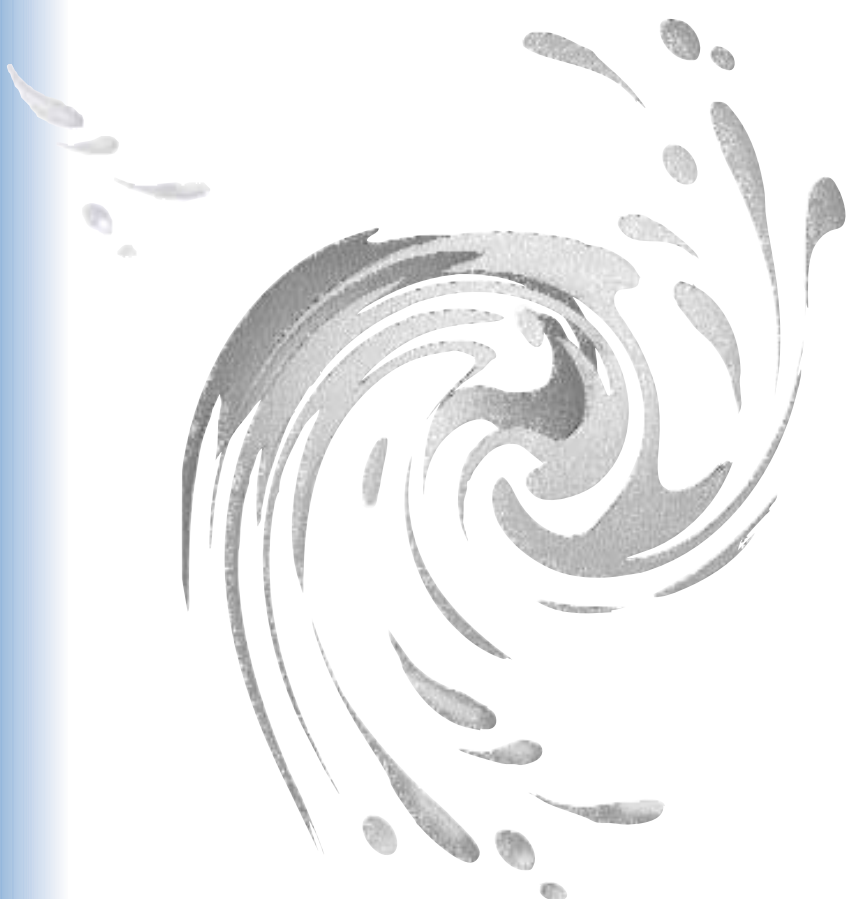
Notes, reminders and connections

AUGUST 2003

3 _____
10 _____
17 _____
24 _____
31 _____

Notes, reminders and connections





faith Practices



PRAY



STUDY



WORSHIP



INVITE



ENCOURAGE



SERVE



GIVE



LIVING FAITH • ELCA-wide Call to Discipleship

