

Synod Day



Curriculum & Worship Script

Thursday: God's Love Changes Everything
REVISED APRIL 2018

Synod Day - Leader Prep

Introduction

The theme for the 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering is *This Changes Everything*. The primary scripture verse is Ephesians 2:8 “*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.*”

Grace is a foundational and distinctive piece of the Lutheran faith. This gift, undeserved and freely given, changes lives and perspectives as people realize they are enough because of what Christ has done and are called into the world to serve their neighbor and share the good news.

At the ELCA Youth Gathering, each synod will come together in the afternoon on a designated day and location for Synod Day. Within the framework of worship, participants will dwell on three daily themes of the Gathering.

- Thursday: God’s Love Changes Everything
- Friday: God’s Grace Changes Everything
- Saturday: God’s Hope Changes Everything

We Belong Together

In her book “Woo: Awakening Teenagers’ Desire to Follow in the Way of Jesus,” Morgan Schmidt identifies the three central desires of teens.

All youth desire:

- Someone to become
- Somewhere to belong
- Something to do [that changes the world]

As young people desire and struggle to find someone to become, somewhere to belong and something to do, the Gathering seeks to be a ministry that helps define some of that or at least open up pathways of discovery. Ultimately, we want youth to understand the fierce love that God has for them, just as they are, and that by grace, through faith, they have been saved, which gives them hope for their life here and now. When young people (or really any age person!) truly claim this reality, it indeed changes everything.

Synod Day places an emphasis on the promise that WE BELONG TOGETHER. We will see this theme expressed through the context of worship, which provides the framework for the afternoon experience. Through the understanding that we are *Gathered, Claimed and Sent* as God’s children, it is the hope that participants will gain a deeper sense that God has, indeed, claimed them, that they matter, and they have a place to belong.

The Script

This script is written for 4 primary leaders. Please recruit as many leaders as you desire. Consider recruiting participants who will lead this session in an engaging, high energy, and passionate way. **PLEASE INVOLVE YOUTH** in these leadership roles! If possible, leaders should memorize these lines and deliver them like a storyteller. Remember, it takes high energy to engage high school students for three hours.

It is also highly encouraged that you run through the script with the stage leaders beforehand in order to help move them around on the stage smoothly. You may even want to have them mark their scripts with stage instructions and practice just transitions that morning on stage so that they don’t bump into each other and they can get used to the set-up, i.e. where the mics are, which one will be empty at that time, etc.

Volunteers

You will want to have all your volunteers to come for training the morning of you Synod Day. It is suggested that you assign them to communion stations (which are also the baptism blessing stations) during the training. Volunteers needed are:

- Greeters
- Speakers
- Musicians
- Thanksgiving for Baptism blessing - 2 people per station for every 100 people.
- Communion distribution - 3 people per station for every 100 people.
- Bags with rocks and markers - 1 person for every 25 people.
- Bags with note cards and pens - 1 person to distribute note cards/pens per 25 people.

You might find it helpful to place the bags with supplies at certain blessing stations to evenly distribute the materials more quickly and with less distraction.

Luther Explanations

There are places in which participants are invited into a litany that highlight Martin Luther's explanations to parts of the catechism. The language may seem antiquated, so we just wanted to make sure you knew the origin.

Time Markers



Please observe the time markers. If you choose to replace any parts of this curriculum, plan out the time you have available for content. **All synods NEED to be moving out of the ballrooms NO LATER than 2:45 pm.**

Schedule

- 9:00 am Synod Day Directors arrive
- 10:00 am Synod teams/musicians arrive
- 11:30 am Doors open – Music and Activities
- 12:00 pm Gathering: The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.
- Kick-off
 - Community Building
 - Thanksgiving for Baptism
- 12:55 pm Word: God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.
- Scripture
 - Sermon
 - Reflection
- 1:55 pm Meal: God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.
- Offering
 - Holy Communion
 - Prayer After Communion
- 2:30 pm Sending: God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

Music

Synods are encouraged to use live music provided by your synod, especially utilizing the gifts of your youth. However, we know this can be a challenge in some settings. Music videos will be produced and provided by for your use, as you choose. This resource will be available April 2018.

Videos

Synods are encouraged to use the videos that have been produced for this curriculum. They will be made available by April 2018. However, Synod Day Directors will know the content of these videos by February 2018.

Adult Participation

Please emphasize the desire for the Synod Day experience to be cross-generational. Adults are expected to participate fully, and not sit in the back of the room. In a hospitable way, please integrate adults as much as possible into the experience.

Ballroom Spaces

Each synod will be assigned a ballroom space. There will be staging, projection and audio set up in each space. Participants will be seated on the floor in order to maximize the space for movement. There will be a small percentage of chairs available for those who need them.

Synod Day Script Key

Plain text	spoken aloud by the leader
Bold	spoken aloud by the assembly
<i>Italics</i>	stage direction
Grey highlight	A/V instruction (slide and video)

WE BELONG TOGETHER



11:30 am - 12:00 pm

Play music (live or recorded) as people gather.

Slide: Logo

Video: "When the Saints" or "When the Saints" Lyrics Only

Video: "This Little Light of Mine" or "The Little Light of Mine" Lyrics Only

Video: "Make A Difference" or "Make A Difference" Lyrics Only



Consider songs used from synodical events, or songs that connect with the theme of We Belong Together.

Trained adults and/or youth are encouraged to lead easy floor games with groups as they gather. These leaders will be stationed throughout the floor space.

Countdown



12:00-12:02 PM

Video: Countdown (2 Minute)



12:02 -12:15 PM

GATHERING

Song Suggestion: "Bind Us Together"
(Includes Synod Day Welcome)

Video: "Bind Us Together" or "Bind Us Together" Lyrics Only

Slide: "The Lord Be With You"

Leader One

The Lord be with you!
And also with you.

Louder

The Lord be with you!
And also with you.

Louder

The Lord be with you!
And also with you.

Use this prayer or one of your own.

Let us pray.

Good and Gracious God, you made your love known to us in Jesus, who changes everything. Thank you for this time together this afternoon, and for calling us together in Houston. Bless our time with the power and presence of your Holy Spirit. And all of God's people say,
Amen.

Slide: Synod Name

Hello, (name of synod)!

I am (name of leader), and I am from (name of congregation and city). I am thrilled to be one of several people who serve as your hosts this afternoon. We are all excited to welcome you to this special time together.

Leader Two

Hey, Everybody. I am (name of leader), and I am from (name of congregation and city). So what is Synod Day about? Well, we all are part of the (name of synod). At this Gathering, we...

Video interrupts Leader Two: "We interrupt this program with a Special Report."

Video: Special Report #1

The video ends with, "Stay tuned right here. We will return with updates as this story unfolds. Back to your regularly scheduled program".

Slide: Logo

Leader Two

So, as I was saying, this Gathering has a theme, right?

Say it with me...THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING. (*Point to and look at the screen*)

We are going to be using the Gathering theme a lot throughout our time here together, so let's chant it together again.

THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING.
THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING.
THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING.

One of the things that changes everything, is knowing that we are part of something... that we belong. Everyone in this room arrived as individuals, with our unique story, our own background. But whether we are aware of it or not, we are all seeking to be part of something. Sometimes, we know where we belong. And other times, we can feel really lonely and disconnected.

Slide: We Belong Together

Leader One

Know this. No matter where you are in your life, you matter. You are enough. This synod needs you. This church needs you. This Gathering is not complete without you. You belong here. We belong together.

Leader Two

One of the ways we are connected is being part of the (Name of the synod). It is my honor to introduce to you the bishop of our synod, Bishop (Name).

Slide: Bishop's Name

Bishop

*The bishop gives a greeting. Emphasize “We belong together” theme. This greeting lasts no longer than 5 minutes. **Note:** A resource for the bishop is available at the end of this script. Your bishop may or may not choose to use this, but you might make it available to them.*

Youth Testimony

The bishop may introduce a youth who shares a story of when they felt like they belonged. If you consider this option, remember to be mindful of added time.

Slide: Logo

Building Community



12:15-12:25 PM

Leader Three

Thank you, Bishop.

Hi, I am (name of leader), and I am from (name of congregation and city).

Part of knowing we belong, is actually getting to know the people and community we belong to. So, I get to be the one who gets us up and moving – and have some fun getting to know each other.



You may use the following mixer for getting the group moving, interacting, and laughing. You may choose one of the other options located at the end of the curriculum. Or, you may have a game of your own synod's preference, depending on the size of your group and the "culture" of your synod, etc. The point is to get the group interacting, moving and having a fun break from sitting!

Slide: Evolution Rules

Leader Three:

We're going to play a game called "Evolution." Each of you will pair up with someone else to play a round of the game "Rock, Paper, Scissors". In this game, you count to three while pounding your fist on the palm of your other hand each time you say a number like this: (*show how to pound your fist on your palm while counting each time*).

Then, on the next beat, instead of pounding your fist, you will make a hand sign for

- rock (*show the crowd rock*),
- paper (*show the crowd paper*),
- or scissors (*show the crowd scissors*).

In this game, rock "crushes" scissors, scissors "cuts" paper, and paper "covers" rock. So, for example, if you show "rock" and your partner shows "scissors", you win.

Because the game is called "Evolution", everyone in the room will start off on the lowest end of the evolution chain as an "egg". (*Have a stage leader trained to show "egg" show the squatting position at this time.*)

You will all start the game with your partner in this squat position...unless you are physically unable to squat in which case you can crouch instead! (*have the leader demonstrate this!*)

You will then introduce yourselves and play rock, paper, scissors. (*Have two stage leaders demonstrate this action.*)

Whoever wins the game of rock, paper, scissors now becomes a chicken and tries to find someone else in the room who is a chicken to partner with. (*Stage leaders demonstrate the action for chicken and find each other.*)

However, if you lost your round of rock, paper, scissors, you stay an egg and find another egg to partner with.

Each time you win a round, you "evolve" to the next step. Each time you lose, you stay as you are and find a new partner on your level. Your goal is to become a "super cool human"...the highest of the evolved characters in the game.

My demonstrators will now show you each level:

(*stage leaders show each level and what it looks like as leader three reads out the following information*)

Slide with the following information on it to stay up throughout the game

- Egg: squatting down low near the ground
- Chicken: putting thumbs under armpits and flapping elbows
- Eagle: flapping arms by sides
- Pterodactyl - arms out at shoulder length and moving body back and forth as if soaring through the skies
- "Super cool" human or "Ultimate Person": Strikes a relaxed, confident, "cool" pose off to the sides of the room as they wait for other pairs to finish.

The levels will be on the screen in case you forget! AND, if there is any action that you can't physically perform, you are invited to act it out in a way that works best for you OR make the appropriate sound effects (like the clucking of a chicken for example) for that level.

One last thing! Each time you find a new partner...introduce yourself!

So...just a quick reminder:

1. Find a partner on the same level as yourself (starting as an egg in round one).
2. Introduce yourself.
3. Play a round of rock, paper, scissors.
4. "Evolve" if you win, or stay the same level if you lose.
5. And repeat until you are "Super Cool!"

It's your turn now! Stand up as you are able, be an egg, find a partner and.....GO!



This game may go very quickly. Synods may make the choice to play it again, do a different game if time allows, or spend a few moments making some special announcements for your own individual synod in the time remaining!

CLAIMED



12:25 - 12:45 PM

NOTE: Recruited helpers should go to their designated water/communion station to pick up bags with rocks and black and silver sharpies as soon as the game has ended for distribution around the room when instructed to do so.

Slide: Logo

Leader Three

Ok, everybody. Find a seat.

Video: Synod Day Intro for the Theme of the Day: Love

Slide: Black screen

Leader Four

I am (name of leader), and I am from (name of congregation and city).

Each day of the Gathering, we are focusing on this big theme “This Changes Everything.” But we also have some daily themes we are paying attention to. This video we just watched introduced our theme for today - which is centered on love.

Leader One

Slide: God’s love changes everything

So, I want you to do something with me today, any time you hear a leader shout, “God’s love ” – I want you to shout back, “CHANGES EVERYTHING!”

Let’s try it:

God’s love...

Changes everything!

I know you can do better than that!

God’s love...

Changes everything!

God’s love...

Changes everything!

Great job!



It may be effective to have 3-4 participants who are in the crowd yell the greeting “God’s love” each time, rather than from the stage. Be sure to prep these participants that when the screen shows “God’s love changes everything” – they yell the call and response several times.

Thanksgiving for Baptism

Leader Two

God’s love does change everything. Without God’s unconditional love, we would be stuck – no connection. No relationship. Always drowning in the sin that we can’t free ourselves from.

Slide: Logo

Leader Four

But that is not who God is. God loves us, and God claims us.

Slide: We are claimed in baptism

We are *claimed* in baptism. And being claimed by God is not being a slave or being owned by someone. We're not talking about that kind of a claim on you.

Slide: We are claimed in baptism, We are named, "Child of God."

We are claimed and named "Child of God." It's being a child. It's being cared for and loved. We are connected to Jesus and through baptism into Christ, we are connected to one another. We need each other, and in Christ, we have each other. We are not complete without the other. **We belong together.**

Slide: We Belong Together

Leader Two

As Lutheran Christians, an important part of our journey is baptism. In baptism, God delivers us from the forces of evil, puts our sinful self to death, gives us new birth, adopts us as children, and makes us members of the body of Christ, the Church. If you haven't been baptized yet and would like to know more about baptism, talk to your parents, pastor or youth leader. Even if you have been baptized you can also ask to learn more about it!

Whether you are baptized or not, you are a child of God. As God's children we are all called to live responding to Jesus' good news by growing in faith, love, and discipleship.

So today, we give thanks for baptism.

Leader Four

The church just observed the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation. Martin Luther understood that God's love changed everything when he posted his "Ninety-Five Theses" in Wittenberg, Germany in 1517. Luther helped the church understand really important things about our faith, including baptism. He asked...What is baptism?

Please join me in the following litany from Martin Luther's own words by responding with the bolded text on the screen.

Slide: Baptism is not just plain water...

Baptism is not just plain water

Baptism is water included in God's command and combined with God's Word.

Slide: Therefore go and make...

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations

Baptizing them in the name of the † Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Slide: As the words...

As the words and promises of God declare,
baptism works to forgive sin, saves us from death and the devil and gives eternal life

Slide: Without God's Word...

Without God's Word, water is plain water
but with God's Word, it is Baptism...life-giving water, rich in grace, giving us new birth in the Holy Spirit

Slide: In baptism...

In baptism, our old, sinful self is drowned and dies
And our new saintly self is raised with Christ

Slide: We were therefore...

We were therefore buried with him in baptism into death
so that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life!

Slide: Logo

Leader One

Christ is our rock and our salvation. As a remembrance of our connection to Christ in baptism, you will be receiving a rock from someone near you.

Slide: Picture of a rock

On one side, the rock has the name, Jesus. You are invited to write your first name and last initial on the other side of your rock as a symbol of that connection to Christ. Hold on to your rock for just a few minutes as we will be placing them together as a community shortly.

*Recruited helpers pass out the rocks so that each person gets one and then distribute the sharpies for people to share as they label their rocks. The Bishop will give adequate time for this process, then gather the large group back after the song together for the thanksgiving. **Please be sure to pick up the Sharpies after the activity is over and return them to the bag.***

Invite the band to sing during this time of passing items out – or just instrumental music.

Those who are blessing participants move to water stations and retrieve their water bowl and move to the baptismal font in the center of the room.

When the assembly is prepared...

Slide: God's love changes everything

Bishop

God's love...

Changes everything!

God's love...

Changes everything!

Slide: Thanksgiving for Baptism

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God,

The fountain of living water,

(the Bishop lifts up their rock)

The rock who gave us birth,

Our light and our salvation.

Amen

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism,

We are clothed with God's love, grace, hope, mercy and forgiveness.

Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

We give you thanks, O God,

for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters

and by your Word you created the world,

calling forth life in which you took delight.

Through the waters of the flood you delivered Noah and his family.

Through the sea you led your people Israel from slavery into freedom.

At the river your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Holy Spirit.

Your Son gave living water to the woman at the well,

And showed welcome to the marginalized and excluded in the baptism of the Ethiopian at the river.

By water and your Word you claim us your children,

making us heirs of your promise and servants of all.

We know that we belong to you.

We praise you for the gift of water that sustains life,

and above all we praise you for the gift of new life in Jesus Christ.

Shower us with your Spirit,

and renew our lives with your forgiveness, grace, and love.

To you be given honor and praise

through Jesus Christ our Lord

in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

Amen.

Those appointed to offer the blessing at stations approach the font with their bowl, dip the bowl in the font, and move to their stations near the walls. (Same as communion stations)

Leader Three

(Leader Three should wait until the blessing station volunteers have retrieved their water from the font and are at their appropriate stations before beginning the instructions to the crowd.)

When we say “go” - you are invited to move toward a “water station” near you. They are located around the room near the walls. As you arrive, you will receive a sign of the cross on your forehead and a blessing.

Leader Two

Be sure to take your rock with you.

After you receive the blessing, we invite you place your rock on the table at your station and return to your area or find a different place in the room. We are going to mix you up in just a little bit anyway.

At this time, please move to a station for a blessing.

Slide: Move to a water station near you.

The person with the water will give a blessing by dipping their finger in the water, making the sign of the cross on the participant's forehead, and say “You are a child of God...you belong here.”

During the time, there will be a video of baptisms playing with music in the background or you may have the band lead the assembly in song. Song suggestion is “Oceans.”

After the blessing, the bowls with water and the rocks will remain at the communion stations until the time of communion distribution.

The time of blessing can be concluded with a song.

Song Suggestion: “Oceans” (Lyrics with Baptismal Imagery)

Video: “Oceans” with Lyrics and Baptismal Images”

OR

Slide Series: “Oceans” Lyrics with Baptismal images

Slide Series: Other Baptismal Images

Slide: Logo

Once everyone is back to their places, the leaders continue.



12:45 - 12:55 PM

People to People

Slide: God's love changes everything

Leader Three

God's love...

Changes everything!

God's love...

Changes everything!

Please be seated!

Slide: Logo

Ok, Children of God, let's get to know your family a bit better! I'm going to have you do something that has some very specific instructions. We are going to end up in small groups of four people. This will come in handy later this afternoon.

I'll go over all the directions, and then we'll begin. I've asked my friends to help demonstrate. Here's what I need you to do.

1. When we start, I'm going to invite you to stand as you are able, and walk around the room. As you do so, we will all speak the words "people to people" over and over in rhythm like this...*(leader chants "people to people" in a fun walking pace.)*
Suggestion: At this time, you may also want to have music playing in the background as the group moves and chants...just fun upbeat music with the rhythm.
2. When I stop chanting and yell a command (OR the music stops and I yell a command) – you will find a partner and connect with them by following that command.
3. The command might be something like, "Elbow to elbow." So that means that you and your partner would find a way to connect elbows. Got it?
4. Once you have found a partner and connected, introduce yourself and answer the question on the screen!
5. When that has happened across the room, I will tell you to disconnect, and everyone will begin milling around again chanting "people to people".
6. Again, when I stop chanting and yell a command (OR the music stops and I yell a command) – you have to find a new partner, connect with the new command, and follow the introduction/question procedure! I encourage you to find people you may not know.
7. After we do that about four times, I will instead yell, "link elbows!" – That means you will stay with your partner and walk about chanting "group to group" linked together at the elbows. This time, when I yell a command, find one other group of two. Follow the command to link up with another pair, and then introduce yourself to each other. Got it?

8. Once we've gone through the game and gotten into groups of four, the game is over. Please stay in these small groups after the game!

So, to summarize:

Walk around chanting people to people.

When you hear my command, connect with a partner, introduce yourself and answer the question on the screen.

When I yell disconnect, begin walking around chanting people to people.

Repeat this process until I yell "link elbows!"

Then, walk with your partner chanting group to group until the final command.

Find another partner group, introduce yourselves and stay together in a group of four!

Are you ready? Set? Go!

Different questions will be on the screen after each transition.

Series of Slides: Questions

Play the Game, eventually getting participants into groups of 4



Possible Commands (OR create your own):

Foot – Foot

Hand - Head

Back – Back

Thumb - Shoulder

Wrist - Ankle

Foot – Knee

Hand – Elbow

Knee – Knee

Be sure that whatever command you choose, you think through the comfort level of the group before-hand! For example, head to foot might be a little weird for some people, or finger to nose!

After the groups of four have been formed, invite everyone to remain standing as able and sing.

Song Suggestion: "We Are Stronger"

Video: "We Are Stronger"

OR

Slides: "We Are Stronger" Lyrics"



12:55 - 1:05 PM

WORD

Slide: God's love changes everything

Leader Three

God's love...

Changes everything!

God's love...

Changes everything!

Slide: Logo

You are awesome. Now you should be in groups of four! Please have a seat in your groups!

Leader Two

So, our team has been thinking a lot about how God's love changes everything. The Bible has a crazy amount of information about God's love. In fact, "God's Love" pretty much summarizes the message of the entire Bible. There are so many verses and stories that ultimately show us how much God loves all people! One of my favorites is John 3:16: "For God **so loved the world** that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life."

Leader Four

Everything in scripture can be summed up by the fact that God loves the world...you...me...unconditionally, and that love is called grace, and that love is free. Let's now listen to the story of Jesus and a woman in scripture.

Option One: Show John 4:1-42 Storytelling Video by Jason Chesnut

Option One: Person reads John 4:1-42 from stage.

Video: John 4:1-42 Storytelling Video by Jason Chesnut



If someone reads the lesson from the stage, make sure this person has rehearsed it so it might be read in a "storyteller" fashion. This could be any leader beyond the four other leaders.

After the scripture reading is over, the Bishop proclaims the good news through a sermon. Invite the bishop to preach no longer than 8-10 minutes)

Slide: Logo



1:05 - 1:15 PM

Sermon



Sing one of the following hymns from ELW. Encourage musicians to be creative with the style that will lead to best participation. Or, use one of the music videos provided.

Song Suggestions: ELW 807 – Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing

ELW 618 – Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer

ELW 419 – For All The Faithful Women

ELW 860 – I’m So Glad Jesus Lifted Me

Video: “I’m So Glad” Song Video



1:15 - 1:40 PM

Video: Special Report #2

(Sam Aritan and JayCee)

Slide: Black screen

Reflection on the Word

Leader One

We’ve watched some videos, we’ve heard the word, and we’ve had the opportunity to listen to our Bishop proclaim the good news. Now, it’s your turn to reflect on this story and how it applies to our lives.

So you are in your groups of four. When I say “go,” I would like you to discuss, in your group of four, the questions on the screen. Sit in a square so you are facing a partner and you have a person on either side of you. You will have about three minutes to discuss each question. Ready? “Go!”



One of the speakers should keep time. When there is one minute left, give a one-minute warning.

Slide: What one or two things...

1. What one or two things stuck out for you in the story about the woman and Jesus?

Slide: What did you hear the Bishop say in the sermon...

2. What did you hear the Bishop say in the sermon?

Slide: What did you take away...

3. What did you take away from the story of Sam Aritan in the “Special Report?”

Slide: What sounded like good news for you

4. What sounded like “good news” for you?



If time allows, take a few minutes after you gather the group’s attention back together and allow a few to share what they talked about in their discussion time with the whole group. You might make this fun with a stage leader moving about the room selecting people, or you could have three group representatives come up to the stage instead.

Leader Two

Slide: God’s love changes everything

God’s love...

Changes everything!

God’s love...

Changes everything!

Take a look at this video

Video: Woman at the Well Poetry

Slide: For to be known is to be loved:

Leader Two

“For to be known is to be loved;

And to be loved is to be known.

And they all need this, too.

We all do”

The witness of the Samaritan woman is yet another reminder to us that it is God who shows up in our life, who meets us where we are, and transforms us through the unconditional love made known to us in and through Jesus Christ. Her story is our story. We all seek to be known and to be loved. We belong together!

So...when I say “go” - I would like two of you in your group of four to stand as you are able, and switch places with two people from another group of four. Make sure you introduce yourselves again, and then discuss the next set of questions on the screen. Ready...Go!

Slide: How did this video...

1. How did this video alter or change how you understand today’s scripture passage?
2. How does today’s word change everything?

Slide: Logo



Again, If time allows, take a few minutes after you gather the group’s attention back together and allow a few to share what they talked about in their discussion time with the whole group.

Leader Two

Thanks for taking time to talk about God’s love, especially as it relates to the Woman at the Well in the Gospel of John. We are going to stand as you are able and sing together! Stay in your groups of four.



1:40 - 1:55 PM

Song: “New Prayer”

Video: “New Prayer Song”

Or

Slide: New Prayer Lyrics

Prayer of the People

Slide: God’s love changes everything

Leader Three

God’s Love...

Changes everything!

God’s Love...

Changes everything!

Slide: Logo

One of the faith practices we are invited to make part of our faith journey is to pray. We will now spend some time in prayer in your groups of four.

Number each person in the group 1-4. Then, your group will move together through a series of petitions. The prompts for each petition will be on the screen. Person #1 will start the prayer. Then, Person #2 will read the prayer prompt for their number that is showing on the screen.

After they read the prompt, each person in the group may name out loud what they would like to pray for, or pray silently, as it relates to the petition on the screen. Give each person some time to name a prayer if they choose.

After a minute or two, then Person #3 will read the next petition, and so on until your group finishes. Once your group has finished, please wait quietly while other groups finish praying. Let us pray.

Slide: Petitions

Person #1: Called together as God's holy people, we come before the Lord with our prayers.

Person #2: We pray for the church and this Gathering...

Person #3: We pray for the world...

Person #4: We pray for those in need...

Person #1: God we know you hear our prayers and we trust you to respond in the ways you see that we need. Amen.



Consider having meditative instrumental music playing while the assembly is praying.

(A minute before you continue....)

Leader Four

Please take another minute to finish your time of prayer together.

Sharing the Peace (Shake Another Hand)

Leader Four

Everybody stand as you are able, and let's share the peace of Christ with each other BUT, let's do it this way. We're going to sing the song, "Shake Another Hand." We'll sing the chorus together, but when our song leader yells out an action, like, "Shake another hand," you will shake as many hands as possible.

*Song leaders teach Shake Another Hand if needed, then go back to the leader for the next spoken part to get it all started. **OR**...use the video provided.*

Slide: The Peace of Christ be with you

The Peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

Let's sing! (Last verse is "Share the peace of Christ, share the peace next to ya.")

Video: "Shake Another Hand"



1:55 - 2:05 PM

Slide: Logo

MEAL

Offering

Leader Three

Everyone have a seat. (*Wait until all have settled before continuing*).

Now, when you are in worship back home, and it's time for the offering, that usually means its time to give our money and put it in some plate or basket, right? And that money supports the ministry of our congregation, and our synod, and our Churchwide partners and the needs of the world.

Today, we're going to give our offering in a little different way.

Leader Two

In a minute, you will be given a notecard and a pen. As a way of offering our gifts to God and to each other, we want you to write a response to this question on the screen.

Slide: What is ONE thing...

"How do you share God's love?" Please write a way that you can share God's love in your daily life on your card. We have the promise that God loves us unconditionally. And God's love frees us to love one another in the world. So, what is ONE thing you can do to show God's love?

After you have written your one word or sentence, I invite you to bring that card and place it in the box located at the station where you received your baptismal blessing, and quietly return to your seat. Our Offering Box will be taken to the closing worship on Sunday morning. Once you have received your notecard and pen, please take a moment now to write your offering on your card and then go drop it in the offering box.

The people with bags begin distributing one pen and one card per person. You may want to have a stage leader tell people what is happening and to be sure they get a pen and a card. Music is playing throughout the offering.

NOTE: Those distributing communion should go to the table and pick up their assigned item and gather around either side of the stage AFTER they have dropped off their card in the offering box.

Song: “My Own Two Hands”

Video: “My Own Two Hands Video and Lyrics” OR “My Own Two Hands Lyrics Only”

Slide: Logo



2:05 - 2:30 PM

Offering Prayer

Slide: God’s love changes everything

Leader Three

God’s love...

Changes everything!

God’s love...

Changes everything!

I invite our offering from the other stations to come forward and be placed in the one box.
(Wait until the offering has been placed in the box)

Let us pray. God we give you thanks for our time, our talents, and our treasures. Strengthen and empower us so that we may continue to give back to you and to our neighbors through acts of love, grace, and hope.

Amen.

Please be seated.

Slide: Logo

Leader One

Today we are gathered together to join in a meal. Martin Luther asked, “What is this meal?” Join me in the following litany in Luther’s words from the catechism. Your responses are in bold print.

Slide: The Eucharist, the Communion Meal....

The Eucharist, the Communion Meal, is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ

Under the bread and wine, commanded by Christ, for Christians to eat and drink

Slide: The benefit we receive from eating...

The benefit we receive from eating and drinking is the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation.

For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is life and salvation.

Slide: It is not just eating and drinking...

It is not just eating and drinking that give this benefit
but the Words of Jesus “Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sin”

Great Thanksgiving

Slide: The Lord be with you...

Bishop: The Lord be with you.
 And also with you.
 Lift up your hearts.
 We lift them to the Lord.

Slide: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God...

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Slide: Great Thanksgiving

Bishop: Almighty God, from the beginning you have woven a story of love for your people.

 You created human beings in your image.
 You breathed your Spirit into us and gave us life.
 When sin damaged our relationship with you, you didn't give up on us.
 You loved us so much that you sent your only Son to come among us, to live with us, to die for us, and be raised so that we too might live a life of love, grace and hope.

 In the night in which he was betrayed,
 our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
 broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
 Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
 Do this for the remembrance of me.

 Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
 and gave it for all to drink, saying:
 This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
 shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
 Do this for the remembrance of me.

Just as you revealed yourself in the breaking of the bread to the disciples on the road to Emmaus, you reveal yourself to us now, in the breaking of this bread, in this meal that we eat together.

As we are nourished here, may we go out and break bread with others so that your love, grace and hope may be revealed throughout the world.

Blessing, praise, and thanks to you, holy God, through Christ Jesus, by your Spirit, in your church, without end.

Amen.

Slide: Our Father in heaven...

Lord's Prayer

Bishop: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.**

Slide: Save us from the time of trial...

**Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

Bishop: Taste and see that the Lord is good. Please be seated.

NOTE: Communion assistants move to stations during the instructions.

Leader Four

You are invited to receive the bread and wine (or grape juice) at the station where you received the baptism blessing earlier. A station with gluten free bread will also be located near the front of the stage. Please use this station only if you are allergic to gluten or have a severe intolerance. If you choose not to receive the bread and wine, you are welcome to come up and receive a blessing.

After you have received the bread and wine or juice at your station, we invite you to pick up one rock at your station – it doesn't matter whose it is, just pick up one rock. If you went to the gluten free station for communion, be sure to then go and pick up a rock from the station you went to for your baptismal blessing earlier! Keep the rock with you. More information about the rock will be given in just a few minutes! Come, for all is ready. You are invited to move to your communion station now.

Slide: Move to a station near you.

Distribution

Songs during Distribution

Video: "Come Let Us Eat" or "Come Let Us Eat" Lyrics Only

Video: "Chain Breaker" or "Chain Breaker" Lyrics Only

Video: "Beautiful Things" or "Beautiful Things" Lyrics Only

Video: Hallelujah" or "Hallelujah" Lyrics Only

Slide: Logo



2:30 – 2:45 PM

Prayer after Communion

Slide: Prayer after Communion

Leader Three

Leader: The Lord be with you!

All: And also with you!

Leader: Let us pray. O God, we give you thanks that through this meal you nourish us and give us strength to serve you and all our neighbors. Empower us that through our lives we can be your light to all the world.

All: Amen.

Leader: Please be seated.

SENDING

Video: Special Report #3

Slide: God's love changes everything

Leader Three

God's love...

Changes everything!

God's love...

Changes everything!

Slide: Logo

Please stand as you are able.

We have come to that time when we are ready to go back into the streets of Houston, back to the other 30,000 people that are part of the Gathering, and in a few days, back to our homes.

Leader Four

Like at the end of worship services in the congregations we belong to back home, today we are *sent* out of this space.

Leader One

We are sent to share the Good News that in and through Jesus, God loves us.

Leader Two

We are sent to love and serve the neighbor.

Leader Three

And we are sent to invite others into a relationship with Jesus, who is hope for the whole world.

Bishop

As we leave this place where we belong together, you are invited to take the rock that you picked up at communion along with you, and keep it as a reminder that we are never alone in the Body of Christ. Pray for the person who is named on your rock, and know someone is praying for you...each a beloved child of God, called together, claimed in baptism, renewed by God's Word, nourished in the communion meal, and sent out to let your light shine.

Let us take time now to pray for those named on our rock.

God, you have saved us by grace through faith. Remind us daily that in baptism we belong together, and bring us back into community again and again. God, we pray for the person named on the rock we now hold in our hand. May we each know that we are connected to that person, every person in this room and all who are at this Gathering as special siblings in Christ. Please be with the person named on this rock that they may know every day they are loved, they belong, and that they are being prayed for by someone else. Help each of us to remember that your love, your grace, and your hope - changes everything.

Amen

Slide: Siblings in Christ...

Siblings in Christ, we are saved by grace through faith
This is not our own doing, but the gift of God

Slide: We are saved by grace...

We are saved by grace through faith
Not by works so that no one may boast

Slide: For we are what God has made us...

For we are what God has made us
created in Christ Jesus for good works

Slide: God gives us these gifts...

God gives us these gifts to be our way of life
so let our light shine before others so that they may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven.

Slide: In the name of the Triune and God of love...

In the name of the ☩ Triune and God of love.

Amen.

Slide: Theme Song

Song: "This Changes Everything" (Gathering Theme Song)

Video: "This Changes Everything"

Or

Slide: "This Changes Everything" Lyrics

Bishop

Let us go out and change the world.
As God has changed our lives.



2:45 pm

Play music as people leave – live or recorded

OR

Slide: “We Belong Together” Video

Additional Game Options for the Gathering Time:

Stand up (arm linking game): Have everyone find a partner and have them sit back-to-back, arms linked. The object of the game is to have them stand up together. When a pair has done it, have two pairs pair up to make a group of 4. Have them try standing up. If they don't know everyone in the group, have them introduce themselves. Then if they can get 4 people to stand up; have them try to get 8 people to stand up. See how many people they can get to stand up together.

Human Knot: Have the group form circles of 10 people. Have everyone go around and introduce themselves. Have everyone put their left hand in the middle, and hold hands with someone in the circle, not directly next to them. Repeat with the right hand, and be sure to hold hands with a different person, who is not directly next to them. Then the group must use teamwork to unravel themselves into a circle again without coming disconnected. To make it fun, have each circle racing against each other to see which circle can finish first. *Helpful Hint: To ensure that everyone is in the same circle, send a "pulse." One person begins by gently squeezing their right hand. The person who is squeezed gently squeezes their opposite hand, which passes the pulse to the next person. Continue until the first person has their second hand squeezed.*

Bishop's "We Belong" Greeting

This following text can be used as a resource for bishops, if they so choose.

The following text was used by Pastor Emmanuel Jackson for the Synod Day Training at the ELCA Youth Leadership Summit in November 2017.

After a greeting...

Think of a time in your life when you felt you didn't belong. Think of a time when someone or something made you feel excluded and unwanted. Think of a time when you felt like the "other"...feeling rejected and marginalized. (30 secs)

Think of a time when YOU made someone feel they didn't belong. Think of a time when YOU made someone feel excluded, rejected and marginalized. Think of a time when you made someone feel like the "other". (30 secs)

Each of us here this morning BELONG, because God in Christ has loved with an everlasting love and calls us by name.

So, no matter what you believe or doubt,
No matter what you're feeling or not feeling
No matter what you have or don't have
No matter your connections or lack thereof
No matter if you have a Ph.D or a GED
No matter the color of your skin or the content of your character
No matter your gender or sexual orientation
No matter your social or economic status
No matter if you graduated from Yale or just got out of jail...

YOU BELONG!

You belong, because God in Christ has named and claimed you through the waters of baptism, and God calls you, beloved.

High five those around you and tell them, "You Belong".