



*A four-session  
small group  
study for growing  
disciples*

# ENCOURAGE

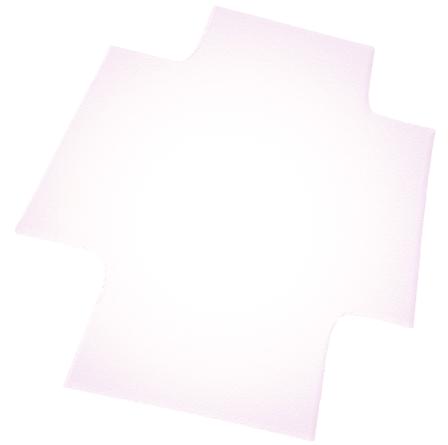
*Living Faith in Daily Life*

**a small group Bible study exploring life in community**



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# ENCOURAGE *Living Faith in Daily Life*

*A small group study on exploring life in community*

**T**o encourage is to build community. This mark of discipleship is one of the seven faith practices highlighted in the ELCA-wide *Call to Discipleship*. Beyond the initial actions of welcoming people into the community are the ministries of friendship and support. Encouragement is the cluster of friendly attitudes and actions that forge relationships, building a diverse set of people into a community in Christ. Jesus promises to make community with us (Matthew 18:20). Encouragement makes it possible to cross lines of race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, politics, economic class, educational level and generation. Common social skills are transformed by the presence of the Holy One into acts of discipleship whereby the body of Christ is continually built up and strengthened for mission and ministry.



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This resource and further support materials are available at [www.elca.org/dcm/christian\\_education/resources/](http://www.elca.org/dcm/christian_education/resources/)

# encourage

## About this study

This study is an introduction to life in community. It is divided into four sessions. Depending upon the level of interest and the conversation generated, it could extend beyond a small group session into concrete actions of friendship and subsequent evaluation highlighting successes and growth edges. Consider using *Encourage* with new member groups as people learn their way into a new congregation. This resource is well suited for congregation council members who desire to build up the faith community in healthy ways springing from sound scriptural understandings. All members of the congregation would benefit from intentional reflection on their life together.

## How to use this study

This course will work best with small groups of seven to 12 adults or youth. Participants may share experiences and insights as they practice the arts of encouragement. Scriptural content is offered as ancient story in dialogue with the lives of group members. One person can take the lead, or the leadership may be

rotated among the participants. Suggestions for the leader are found in small boxes throughout this resource. Leaders should facilitate discussion, making sure that all are able to express their thoughts and to carefully listen to their fellow group members. The goal is to become a community of friends in Christ through the use of some of the skills of encouragement. Each session of the study is divided into three sections:

### Gathering

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Here participants come together from many places bringing a variety of joys and burdens. Through questions and personal sharing participants find new appreciation for each other. The group gains identity and a sense of common purpose.

### Growing

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In this segment the ancient story becomes part of our contemporary story through exercises and discussion. Journaling records both individual and group discoveries.

### Going

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This is a time to plan for the ways group members will put into practice some of the things they have discovered during the session. Participants will pray for each other and engage in simple sending rituals.



## Advance preparations

To facilitate a successful small group experience, attend to the following needs in advance of the first session:

- Order a copy of this study, *Encourage: Living Faith in Daily Life*, for each participant. (ISBN: 6-0002-1124-4, \$1.25 each, plus shipping.)
- Provide a small notebook for the personal reflections and journal exercises. Remember extra pencils, pens, and Bibles.
- Review this study in advance of the group's gathering to determine which resources to have on hand for each session.
- Plan for refreshments.



# Session 1

## How good and pleasant it is!

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### Gathering

#### Let's Get Acquainted

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Make sure all feel welcome and are comfortable as you begin this study. Ask participants to share in creating a group identity by making some lists about the group. These can be written on newsprint, a chalkboard, or whiteboard.

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1. If people do not know one another, have each one tell their name.
2. Make lists of favorite colors, places of birth, best vacation spots, high school mascots, hobbies, number of siblings, or other topics appropriate to the group.
3. As a group, examine the lists to discover the following: How many things do participants have in common? Are there multiple commonalities, for example, those with three siblings whose favorite color is blue? How many different things are there? Which are more important commonalities or differences? Why?

#### Let's Pray

---

Pray or ask a volunteer to pray the following prayer aloud or speak another prayer of your choosing, inviting petitions from participants.

---

Beloved God, you have made us all in your image. We thank you for the wonderful variety of interests, abilities and backgrounds represented here. Enrich our lives by an ever-widening circle of fellowship. Show us your presence in those who differ most from us, until we are made perfect in love for you and love for all your children. Amen.

### Growing

Read the following aloud or tell a similar story from your own experience.

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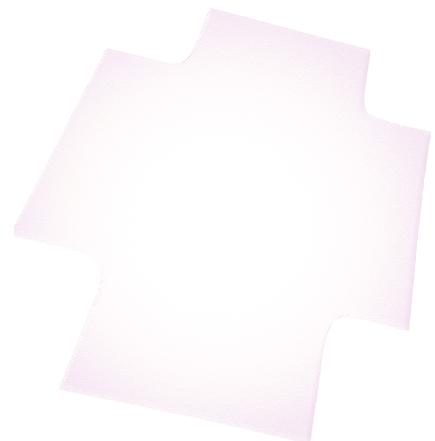
Twenty-three thousand teenagers filled a large city arena. They cheered, clapped, and sang together. They marveled to see so many other Lutheran teenagers. It was a national youth gathering where young people from throughout the ELCA came for several days of inspiration, service and fun. Angel (ang-hel) was there with kids from his youth group in Puerto Rico. Angel's dark skin showed his African ancestry. In Angel's group there were many skin colors, nevertheless, their Puerto Rican culture and the Spanish language united them. One day, while walking toward the arena, some African American teenagers attending the gathering from another part of the country challenged Angel. They wanted to know why he was walking with white kids. "Why," they asked, "don't you stay with your own kind?" "These are my brothers and sisters," replied Angel, speaking in his second language, English.

---

Discuss the following questions.

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1. What are some of the ways this story might continue?
2. How do combinations in the lists (African American, Caucasian, Latino, Anglo, Lutheran, teenager) change perceptions of community?



## BIBLE FOCUS *Psalms 133*

*Read this psalm aloud together. You might like to read it responsively by verses. Two distinctive musical versions of this psalm with texts in English and Spanish, are found in Libro de Liturgia y Cántico, # 475, and Renewing Worship Songbook: New Hymns and Songs, #R212.*

This psalm is known as a "Song of Ascent." It is one of a group of 15 psalms that are thought to have been sung by pilgrims as they climbed the hilly roads into the city of Jerusalem for the great yearly feasts. These psalms functioned as gathering songs, unifying the experience and expectation of pilgrims as they ascended the steep slopes of Jerusalem.

In this text, the psalmist poetically describes two distinct images for the blessedness of community. According to this song Aaron, the brother of Moses, was the ancestor of Israel's priesthood. The anointing oil is abundant, extravagant, and expresses overflowing joy and richness of experience as it drips down Aaron's beard onto his robes.

Dew in the desert is a gift. It is refreshment in an arid climate. It is always a source of life. Mount Hermon was often shrouded in clouds and therefore known for abundant dew. It was thought to be the place where the life-giving words of God were given to Moses. The psalmist uses this image to reflect freshness and renewal of all life experienced in God's blessing of life forevermore.

*Discuss the following questions.*

1. In verse 2, the anointing oil is an image from worship that tells us about the richness of community. What might be some sensory images from our worship that point to the blessedness of community?
2. How does the dew of Mount Hermon falling on the mountains of Zion (Jerusalem) point to the blessing of community? What might be some images from our own congregation's life that give people a sense of the goodness of being in community?

3. People came from rural mountain towns, seacoast areas, lakeshore settlements, Roman-influenced cities, and desert outposts to ascend into Jerusalem for the feasts. What are some of the barriers to community that might have been a part of these gatherings? How does this psalm encourage people to set aside differences and become a community of faith?

## JOURNAL TIME

*Journal work may include notes taken on the Bible study during the session as well as observations, thoughts, and ideas written between sessions in response to the bulletted questions. If you are using your own Bible, do not be afraid to write notes in the margins. When you return to the passage, they will enrich your future reading.*

Write your observations about gathering diverse peoples into community.

Reflect on the attitudes and actions that promote community. What are the attitudes and actions that tend to divide or break up community?

What are some real-life acts of encouragement that will make your congregation a stronger faith community?

## Going

### Final Thoughts

The word "community" is rooted in sharing. Shared experiences, shared values, and shared space lead to community. The church shares the love of God, the forgiveness of sin through Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit who continually calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies us. The forces of sin work at division and estrangement. They promote differences as barriers to community. Encouragement is the practice of all those actions and attitudes that promote friendship, break down distrust, and bring us to the fullness of the blessed community of God's own life. It takes courage to connect and hold onto each other. In Christ we are encouraged. That is to say, gifted with community and the valor to maintain it.

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Invite all to complete the Small Group Covenant. Suggest that participants read the covenant and sign it prayerfully. The covenant is a way of building community as well as a statement of intention, seeking God's blessing.

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### Small Group Covenant

1. I commit to being a part of this group for each of our meetings.
2. I will pray each day for each small group member by name.
3. I will treat all that is shared in the group as confidential.
4. I will invest time each week to pray, reflect, and write on the journal topic.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### BLESSING AND PRAYER

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You will need olive oil, or another pleasantly scented oil for anointing and a cloth or towel to wipe your hands. Gather in a circle to bless one another. You may divide the group into equal parts or select a leader to say the first line while the group responds with the second.

---

**L: Peace to you from our Lord Jesus;**

**G:** And peace to you also.

**L: May this precious oil be to us a sign of community;**

**G:** As pleasant as gathering together to receive the blessing of God.

*Each person in turn dips their thumb in the oil, makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of the one to their right and says:*

I anoint you with oil, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

*The one anointed responds:*

How very good it is!

*The one anointed receives the oil and turns to anoint the neighbor. Continue around the circle until all have been anointed. Say together the blessing:*

The Lord bless us and keep us,

May the Lord's face shine on us,

May the favor of the Lord be upon us and give us peace. Amen.



# Session 2

## So many friends!

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### Gathering

#### Let's Get Acquainted

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Make sure all feel welcome and are comfortable as you meet again. Allow a few moments for anyone who might wish to share an insight from their journal. Then:

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1. Select and share your response to one of the following:
  - Describe a new friendship you have developed in the last six months
  - Name a close friend whom you became acquainted with as an adult
  - Name one friend from your teen years with whom you are still in touch
  - Describe a life-long friendship that began in childhood
2. The most important quality of friendship is.... (list on newsprint, whiteboard or black board)
3. Talk about the results. How does your list of friendship qualities compare with friendships portrayed in the media?

#### Let's Pray

---

Pray or ask a volunteer to pray the following prayer aloud or speak another prayer of your choosing, inviting petitions from participants.

---

Amazing God, we would be lonely without friends. We thank you for the gift of these relationships that nourish us. Help us to be faithful friends, encouraging others and building community through the arts of friendship. Amen.

### Growing

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Read the following aloud and then talk about what it means for friendships.

---

Kaleb was not in a hurry. Even though his mother waited for him outside the schoolyard, he continued to play with several children. His mother watched. She

noticed her first grade son was reluctant to come to the car and head for home. Now she watched as he interacted with his playmates. They talked as they slid down the slide. They laughed at things together. They challenged one another and they watched out for each other. With a start, she realized-it's not just the play equipment. They are really relating to one another. Then she called Kaleb to come. It was time to go home. As he got into the car, he said contentedly, "I just love being with my friends."

#### BIBLE FOCUS *Matthew 18:1-5*

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Read this passage aloud, pausing for a few moments between each verse. Ask participants to use the pauses to create a mental picture by visualizing the scene and observing the relationships.

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Matthew wrote this Gospel to encourage the believers of his community to deepen their faith in Jesus and live in ways that are consistent with their faith. Matthew affirms that what we believe should influence our behavior. This passage comes at the beginning of the third of five discourses (Jesus' teachings) that are interspersed in the gospel story. Each discourse deals with ethical issues of the believers' life. The subject of the third discourse is the common life of the church. The text begins with a loaded question perhaps prompted by a sad state of heart. The question, "who is the greatest?" is one of comparison and judgment. The greatest is always chosen over against the not so great, isn't it? Jesus' response is one of bold, radical action. He called a child into their midst. In the ancient world, a child was the perfect example of someone judged "not so great." Children had no rights and no place in the community. This child is not chosen because he or she is innocent or beautiful. This child is powerless. This child is on the bottom of the social heap. Jesus begins his ethical conversation about the greatest with a nobody. Then he tells his hearers that they need to change and be like this child or they will not be able to enter the kingdom of heaven. It is likely that he is not speaking of a future heaven after death,

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# encourage

but of life with God in the lived moment. In other words, categories like "greatest" and "not so great" aren't appropriate in the community of God's friends. In their world, they may have been poor men, but they were adult males and they had some stature.

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*Discuss the following questions.*

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1. Think of examples of "greatest" and "not so great" in our culture today. What influence do those kinds of judgments have on attempts to build community?
2. Imagine how the disciples reacted to Jesus' response. What was at stake for them?
3. Whoever becomes powerless like this child is greatest among God's friends. What might happen if people were to compete for ever-greater humility?

## JOURNAL TIME

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*Journal time may be started during class time and completed at home.*

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Write your observations about some of the ways people relate to one another in the communities you are a part of during the week. Reflect upon the attitudes and values you see demonstrated. Think about what could be different if people listened to each other, laughed with each other, watched out for each other, and challenged each other.

## Going

### Final Thoughts

Scholars have made many suggestions about the meaning of "become like a child." A possible meaning is innocence or purity. Another is willingness to learn the ways of God. Still another is the dependence of a child on parents for food and shelter. Think of Kaleb, the child in the story at the beginning of this session. Children are social. They love to be with their friends. Despite their struggles in learning to share, they listen to each other, laugh with each other, watch out for

each other, challenge each other. Children learn how to live in community by doing so. If their communities are healthy, they learn positive social skills. If not, they learn divisive ones.

Receiving one who is like a powerless child is to welcome Jesus himself! Jesus said that those who are willing to learn new ways of living in community will indeed live in community with him. In our church community we are called to listen to each other, to laugh together, to watch out for each other, to challenge each other with new thoughts and ideas. With the skills of encouragement learned in Christ's community, we bravely go out in Jesus' name to be friends with the world.

## BLESSING AND PRAYER

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*Gather in a circle to bless one another. You may divide the group into equal parts or select a leader to say the first line while the group responds with the second.*

---

**L: Peace to you from our Lord Jesus;**

**G:** And peace to you also.

**L: May the Lord be with us in this circle;**

**G:** He is indeed here, in the center, calling us his friends.

*Each person steps into the circle as the group says to them:*

You are welcome in the name of Christ

*The one in the circle says:*

Amen

*Continue around the group with each one standing in the center and receiving the words of encouragement. Say together the blessing:*

The Lord bless us and keep us,

May the Lord's face shine on us,

May the favor of the Lord be upon us and give us peace. Amen.

# Session 3

## Sharing the Peace of Christ

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### Gathering

#### Let's Get Acquainted

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Make sure all feel welcome and are comfortable as you meet again. Allow a few moments for anyone who might wish to share an insight from their journal. Discuss the following questions. You may choose to record some of the reactions for further reference.

---

1. Invite each participant to share a brief story of a moment when they felt at peace.
2. Talk together about peace. What does it look like? How does it feel? What kinds of actions are peaceful? What brings peace into stressful and conflicted situations?

#### Let's Pray

---

Pray or ask a volunteer to pray the following prayer aloud or speak another prayer of your choosing, inviting petitions from participants.

---

O God, it is your will that all creatures should abide together in peace. Give us the gift of peace so that all nature and all peoples might live together in fruitful harmony. Make us as your sons and daughters ambassadors for your peaceable kingdom. Amen.

### Growing

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Read the following aloud.

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A Virgin Islander by birth, Adolphus Howell lived most of his adult life in San Juan, Puerto Rico. He was a member of Grace, the English-speaking Lutheran congregation in San Juan. Every Sunday, at the exchange of the peace, Adolphus moved through the entire worship space shaking every hand, looking into every face, and saying, "The peace of the Lord be with you." The congregational members followed his example.

During the exchange of peace, everyone was out of their seat, moving about, offering the blessing of God's peace to one another. Adolphus was a patriarch. He stood at the font with countless children. As their godfather, he always took an active interest in their growing and their faith life. He was a friend to all, rich and poor alike. At his legendary birthday parties people from all cultures, races, and economic classes ate, danced, and chatted.

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Discuss the following.

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1. Share your reactions to the story.
2. How does this story compare with your experience of the sharing of the peace in worship?

#### BIBLE FOCUS | Peter 3:8-11

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Read this passage aloud.

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The writer of 1 Peter is an unknown theologian writing to Christians who are undergoing, or in fear of, persecution for their faith. This persecution, however, is not on the part of the Roman government. It comes from the general populace: neighbors, fellow townspeople, co-workers.

The inner strength of the faith community is very important. Therefore the author encourages them with wise words about mutual encouragement. In other words, those skills, attitudes, and behaviors that offer care, consolation, and support. This passage is a portion of a household code. A household code was wisdom distilled into a list of behaviors that made for successful community life. In some ways it was common sense.

If we divide the word encourage into some of its roots, we will find the word *couer* or "heart." Courage flows from a healthy heart. Encouragement is comprised of all those behaviors that strengthen the heart-health of the faith community. A heart-healthy community can meet the challenges posed by the, at

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times, hostile culture in which it finds itself. The Old Testament tradition has a name for the life that heart-health produces. It is *shalom*, a blessed state of balance where God, and human beings and indeed, the whole creation are in pleasant harmony. We translate that word as "peace."

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*Discuss the following questions.*

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1. Imagine what might be at stake for the believers that would make their relationship to each other the subject of a pastoral letter?
2. What are the behaviors listed in verses eight and nine? How do these virtues contribute to a heart-healthy community?
3. In verses ten and eleven, the writer offers wisdom from the tradition-the readers are connected to words of encouragement from the past. What are the virtues brought forward in these verses?
4. In what way are we called to be *shalom* people?

## JOURNAL TIME

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*Journal work may be started during class and completed later at home.*

---

What would be a recipe for heart-health in your congregation? How is common sense "uncommon" when it comes to the arts of encouragement that build up the body of Christ?

The writer of 1 Peter gives the source of encouragement that lifts it from the realm of duty to that of spirituality. Read chapter 2, verses 21-25. How does the sacrifice of Jesus Christ encourage us to in turn encourage one another?

*Going*

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## Final Thoughts

In worship, the gathered community hears the Word and feeds on the Bread of Life. Then the community scatters to carry that Word with them to the places

where daily life can threaten courage and attack healthy hearts. During the liturgy the community practices encouragement in an important ritual. Heart-health is nurtured by the passing of the peace. This momentous act offers us the opportunity to give and receive encouragement. As we take one another by the hand, we look into their face and offer the blessing of God's own peace, as they in turn offer it to us. Adolphus Howell knew that the exchange of peace was essential to living a Christian life. This is an act of mutual care and consolation. It is an act of strengthening one another in the Lord. What we are saying to one another through our ritual act and liturgical words is: "You can count on me for *shalom*. In Christ, I am there for you. Because of Jesus, I share your spirit, and have sympathy for you. Because of Jesus, I love you tenderly. Because of Jesus, I will return good to you. Because of Jesus, I bless and honor you." What an awesome gift to give and receive!

## BLESSING AND PRAYER

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*Gather in a circle to bless one another. You may divide the group into equal parts or select a leader to say the first line while the group responds with the second.*

---

**L: Peace to you from our Lord Jesus;**

**G:** And peace to you also.

**L: Because of Jesus I am there for you;**

**G:** Because of Jesus you can count on me for *shalom*;

**L: Because of Jesus I share your spirit and have sympathy for you;**

**G:** Because of Jesus I will return good to you.  
I will bless and honor you.

*Share the peace of the Lord with one another.*

*Say together the blessing:*

The Lord bless us and keep us,

May the Lord's face shine on us,

May the favor of the Lord be upon us and give us peace. Amen.

# Session 4

## Conspiracy: Sharing Breath

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### Gathering

#### Let's Get Acquainted

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*Make sure all feel welcome and are comfortable as you meet again. Allow a few moments for anyone who might wish to share an insight from their journal. Discuss the following.*

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1. Invite each participant to share a brief story of a conversation that helped them see something in a new light or gain a new insight.
2. Talk together about the dynamics of conversation. What does it take to have a good conversation? Do you seem to have the same conversations over and over without moving any further toward understanding?
3. How is a conversation on a controversial topic different from one about the weather or your favorite sports team? How do you handle conversations about faith?

#### Let's Pray

---

*Pray or ask a volunteer to pray the following prayer aloud or speak another prayer of your choosing, inviting petitions from participants.*

---

O God, your Holy Spirit continues to call, gather, sanctify, and enlighten us. Help us to use the gifts of the Spirit to fill each other with courage and new enthusiasm for living together in the body of Christ. Amen.

### Growing

*Read the following aloud.*

---

The congregation council set aside an hour for conversation, led by Pastor Janet, about evangelism. The first task was to look at a list of the last 100 people

who had joined the congregation. The list spanned the last seven years. Soon observations and patterns emerged. They were able to identify which members remained in the congregation; how many were children, men, or women; and how many they knew or did not know. They wondered what happened in the year when 19 new members were received. How did that compare to the year when no new adults joined the congregation? Someone noticed that several seemed to pass through, spending some time at the congregation before moving away from the area. As a group, they made a list of the names or descriptions of everyone they saw at worship who was not currently a member. They wondered together, what was bringing these people to their church? What could they do to incorporate these people and attract others? They questioned hospitality practices. Someone said, "Maybe we could have this list of names and pray for these people and their relationship to the congregation." Another suggestion was to commit, as leaders, to chat with someone new for at least three minutes after worship. Others picked up on the suggestions. The energy level increased. Council members and pastor had encouraged each other in the task of evangelism.

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*Discuss the following.*

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1. What are some of the dynamics in this conversation?
2. How can you use these dynamics in other conversations?

## BIBLE FOCUS Acts 15:1-21

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*This passage is a little longer. You may choose to divide the reading among the participants. Pause briefly after verse 5, verse 11, and verse 21 to allow participants to visualize the scene of the conversation.*

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The book of Acts is generally thought to be a sequel to the Gospel of Luke. Stories of the early church are presented in ways to help us understand how the followers of Jesus managed to extend the message of the Gospel and build a new community in a situation that was hostile to their values and beliefs. This story is sometimes titled, "The Council of Jerusalem." It is a story of believers with differing experiences and opinions who kept on talking to one another until they could reach a solution that honored all the participants and gave energy for mission.

Take a look at the word "conspire." If you divide it, you have a suffix that means "with" and a root word that means "spirit" or "breath." We tend to look at conspire as a negative term, meaning a "plot." On the other hand, "with-spirit" leads us to recognize the marvelous energy that comes from sharing breath—talking with each other in the confidence that the Holy Spirit is working in and through our conversations. Conspiracy becomes encouragement when the people of God receive the holy breath of God and share ideas and opinions with one another in spirited exchange. Sometimes the conversations are hard and controversial. But if we speak in the Spirit, share holy breath, we believe that God can work a new work in and through us.

---

*Discuss the following.*

---

1. Think about the controversy that is the subject of the conversation. Imagine what might be at stake for the believers. Why is it important for them to keep talking to each other?
2. "Listen" appears several times in the text. What does listening have to do with sharing holy breath?

3. How did the conspirators resolve the issue? What kind of energy might have come from this Council? How did the participants encourage each other?

4. Take some time to practice this kind of holy conversation. Share your insights and ideas about an issue that seems important to you right now. How can you listen and encourage one another as you converse? What can you learn about conversation from the Council of Jerusalem?

## JOURNAL TIME

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*Invite participants to read the following and to record their thoughts prompted by the questions.*

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In the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed, we witness to the work of the Holy Spirit. Look at the simple declarations of what the Holy Spirit does in Luther's *Small Catechism* explanation to the Third Article. How do you see holy breath encouraging believers and making conspiracy possible?

Take a look at a story of holy breath in the Old Testament. Read Ezekiel 37. Look at how the Spirit works in this passage. The holy breath of God is given to the people for what purpose? How do they become conspirators because of God's breath?

What are those things that you would like to have holy conversation about in your congregation? About what do you want to share breath?



## Final Thoughts

In our modern world, we are constantly bombarded with advertisements about fresh, clean breath. Breath freshening products from mouthwash, to tiny mints, to paper-like wafers are marketed and sold everywhere. Sweet smelling breath, it would seem, is worthy of great effort. With the recent world epidemic of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), people were afraid of breath. Many wore masks in the streets of the world's great cities. In this study, breath brings the energy of the Spirit of God to our attention as a source of encouragement. God's Spirit moved over the dark, chaotic waters at creation. And like a dedicated craftsman, God blew breath into the mud creature he had formed, giving it life. Breath is vital. It gives life to a community. To the extent that we can share breath in conversation and the exchange of ideas, we become a sweet and fresh community for each other and for the world. The holy breath of our faith conversation brings contagious life-giving energy to the world. It is witness that draws all to Christ. There is nothing to fear from such conversations. We do not need to defend ourselves from conversation, even controversy, in the church. We have the assurance that the blessed breath of God is always calling, gathering, enlightening, and sanctifying us, and all Christendom. The presence of God sweetens all our shared breath. It offers encouragement and health.

## BLESSING AND PRAYER

*Gather in a circle to bless one another. You may divide the group into equal parts or select a leader to say the first line while the group responds with the second.*

- L: Peace to you from our Lord Jesus;**  
**G:** And peace to you also.
- L: Breath on us, breath of God;**  
**G:** Fill us with life anew
- L: May our conversation be a breath of fresh air;**  
**G:** In a world that is stuffy and stale.

*Pray or sing together the words of "Breathe on Me, Breath of God" (Lutheran Book of Worship, #488).*

*Say together the blessing:*

The Lord bless us and keep us,  
May the Lord's face shine on us,  
May the favor of the Lord be upon us and give us  
peace. Amen.

## Suggested Resources

*Libro de Liturgia y Cántico.* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1998), ISBN 0-8066-1128-6.

*Renewing Worship Songbook: New Hymns and Songs for Provisional Use,* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2003), ISBN 0-8066-7005-3.

*Lutheran Book of Worship,* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1978), ISBN 0-8066-3330-X.





# ENCOURAGE *Living Faith in Daily Life*

a small group Bible study exploring life in community

## LIVING FAITH • ELCA-wide Call to Discipleship



Produced by the Christian Education team of the Division for Congregational Ministries. Multiple copies of this resource can be ordered by calling Augsburg Fortress, 800/328-4648 and asking for item code 6-0002-1124-4 \$1.25 each, plus shipping.



6-0002-1124-4

This resource and further support materials are available at [www.elca.org/dcm/christian\\_education/resources/](http://www.elca.org/dcm/christian_education/resources/)