

A CROSS-GENERATION FAITH RESOURCE

THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



The 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering brought together more than 31,000 youth, adult leaders and volunteers to learn, worship and experience God's grace through the theme "This Changes Everything." The scripture focus was 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.

It is our hope that people understand the fierce love that God has for them, just as they are, and that by grace, through faith, they have been saved. When we truly claim this reality, it indeed changes everything!

These resources have been created to be used by congregations to build cross-generational engagement and relationships. They are meant to be simple to use in any context and setting. They will take about 40-45 minutes to complete depending on group size and level of engagement.

Engaging in cross-generational ministry is a blessing to all involved. Each can learn from one another. Encourage adults to listen closely to what children are saying, not to interrupt or correct right away, but help them explore the answers together. Also encourage adults to "interpret" the questions for the ages they are engaging with if need be. Be sure to lead the mixing of groups to be truly cross-generational to get beautiful benefits from this kind of engagement. Have hands-on things available for all people to draw, create, express their thoughts and ideas. Have a place to display these creations with a title sheet placed so people know what they represent. As facilitator, make your way around the room offering encouragement and guidance as needed.

We hope you find these sessions fulfilling and engaging. If you have any questions or need assistance with these resources, please email the Gathering office at gathering@elca.org or chuth@uls.edu.

Blessings on your ministry,

Jesse Weiss, Ariel Williams & Chelle Huth
Curriculum Writing Team

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GOD'S GRACE CHANGES EVERYTHING

SESSION 1: GOD'S GRACE

LEADER INFO

The objective of this session is to **learn about God's grace** and how it changes each of us.

SOCIAL MEDIA

@ELCAGathering #ELCAYG2018



MATERIALS NEEDED:

- bibles (or printouts of session verses)
- papers
- pens, pencils, crayons

GATHER (10 minutes)

As people finish gathering, welcome them to this time of sharing, growing and learning. If you have any announcements that pertain to your particular ministry, take this time to make those.

The Intro:

Say: It's great to have everyone gathered together to build our relationships with one another and with God. These sessions will help us focus on God's grace for all of us.

Gathering Prayer:

God of love, we give you thanks for gathering us together to grow in our relationships to each other and to you. Let our time be full of joy as we play, pray and share. In your name and in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Gathering Song: "Saved By Grace" words & chords on page 17. Check out the song at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Mc8hcnnWxA>

Experiential Learning: What Changed?

This is a simple game of observation and memory that will help people recognize the changes in the people around them.

Play:

- *Say:* Find a partner, preferably someone you don't know very well, and introduce yourselves.
- *Explain:*
 - Each participant face their partner with eyes closed.
 - On the leader's signal, the partners will open their eyes and have 30 seconds to observe and remember as many things they can about their partner:
 - o what kind of shoes they are wearing
 - o whether or not they are wearing socks
 - o if they have a pony tail, glasses, etc.
 - Call when the time is up.
 - *Say:* Ok, now that you've looked at your partner and noticed things about them, each partner is to turn around, facing away from their partner, and take 30 seconds to change one thing about yourself. Go.
 - When time is up the leader signals.
 - *Say:* Ok, turn back around and face each other. The first person to notice what is different about their partner is the winner.
- Play a few rounds, each time finding new partners.

Discuss:

- *Ask:*
 - Was it difficult to notice the changes?
 - Who did a good job of making a change that was hard to see?
 - Is change easy or hard? Why?
- Thank everyone for participating and invite them to be seated in small groups of 5 or 6 (or around tables if that is your set-up.)

WORD (25 MINUTES)

God's Story:

Once seated ask groups to take a few minutes to share with each other the best gift they have ever received and why it was such a great gift. Give enough time for all to answer. After time is up, ask a few people to share what they heard others say.

Say: God gives us gifts, one of those is really amazing, it's the gift of grace! Let's hear a passage from the Bible about God's grace.

Have Bibles available or have the theme verse, **Ephesians 2:8-9**: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God." printed out so people can read along while you have a child read the passage.

After the passage is read, give the definition of grace: Grace is getting what you DO NOT deserve.

- Ask: What does it mean when you get something you don't deserve?
- Say: How about this: You do something wrong and there are consequences for your action.
- Ask: Who has an example of something they have done wrong that they are willing to share?
- Ask: Who has some ideas of what consequences might be for that?
- Say (or have people act out this scenario): What would it look like if the consequence that would be deserved for the person who did the wrong, was actually taken by someone else. For example: someone throws a rock through a window and breaks it. Instead of the person who threw the rock paying to have it fixed, the neighbor of the home with the broken window pays for it. They had nothing to do with breaking the window, nor any responsibility to the neighbor to pay for it. They just do it because they want to. That's what God's grace looks like. God takes our consequences for us to forgive our sins. That's what grace is. God's love undeserved but given freely.
- Ask groups to share together how they have experienced God's grace using the following questions. Encourage groups to draw, write, create however they see fit, their responses:
 - What is God's grace?
 - What do you think God's grace looks like?
 - How do we act as people who know God's grace is for everyone?
 - How does God's grace help us make choices about how we act or what we say?
 - God's grace changes us. What ways are you changed by God's grace?
 - How can we help others see that God's grace is there for them too?
 - How can we help others see that God's grace changes them like we've just shared?

Our Story: Change Map Activity

Intro: This activity will help participants to think about the places in their lives where God might be calling them to change.

Activity: It may be beneficial for younger children to pair with adults to help them with this activity. Invite participants to draw a "map" of the places in their daily lives – home, work, school, the gym, the coffee shop, etc. The map can be drawn and represented however each individual would like.

After some time to draw, invite participants to think about who they are in each of those places – how they interact with others, what their typical mood or attitude is, whether or not they find joy, etc.

To complete their map, next to each one of their places, have them write or draw some ways in which they might share the grace God gives each of us with people in each of those places or with the place itself. Try to think of ways that would be new to you, something you're not already doing.

SEND (5 Minutes)

Blessing & Prayer:

Say: Find a partner (if there is an odd number there can be 3 together) and face each other. As I read the following prayer take turns making the sign of the cross near that part of your partner's body.

Forehead: May your thoughts be kind and caring to all people

Eyes: May you see the beauty of God's creation in all people and all things

Ears: May the words you hear be ones of blessing and love

Mouth: May the words you say be ones of blessing and love

Hands: May your hands always reach out in love doing God's love

Feet: May your feet lead you in the ways that God is calling you

Heart: May you feel God's love surrounding you so that you may share that love with everyone

Let us pray: Dear God, we give thanks for your love and for your grace. Let these things lead us in our daily lives, sharing your love and grace with everyone we meet, letting them see the love you have for everyone through our words, actions, heart and presence. For these things and so many others we give you thanks in the name of your Son Jesus whom you gave so that we might be free from sin. In your most beautiful name we pray. Amen.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord! Thanks be to God!

GOD'S GRACE CHANGES EVERYTHING

SESSION 2: GRACE IN DAILY LIFE

LEADER INFO

The objective of this session is to **recognize and experience God's grace in their daily lives.**

SOCIAL MEDIA

@ELCAGathering #ELCAYG2018



MATERIALS NEEDED:

- bibles (or printouts of session verses)
- papers
- pens, pencils, art supplies

GATHER (10 minutes)

As people finish gathering, welcome them to this time of sharing, growing and learning. If you have any announcements that pertain to your particular ministry, take this time to make those.

The Intro:

Say: It's great to have everyone gathering together to build our relationships with one another and with God. These sessions will help us focus on God's grace for all of us.

Gathering Prayer:

God of love, we give you thanks for gathering us together to grow in our relationships to each other and to you. Let our time be full of joy as we play, pray and share. In your name and in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Gathering Song: "Saved By Grace" words & chords attached. Check out the song at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Mc8hcnnWxA>

Experiential Learning: Find the Leader

This game will help participants think about how the gift of God's grace brings us into a relationship through which Christ leads us in our daily lives.

Play:

- *Say:* Get into groups of about 8-10, try to mix with people you don't know very well and introduce yourselves to one another.
- *Explain:*
 - Each group should form a circle, spaced out just beyond arms' length. One participant should be selected to be in the middle.
 - The person in the middle of the circle should close their eyes.
 - The group designates a leader.
 - With the person in the middle keeping their eyes closed the group leader silently designates one person to be the "Motion Leader" for that round.
 - *Say:* The Motion Leader will secretly lead the group in a variety of hand, arm, or body motions while the person in the middle of the circle tries to figure out who the Motion Leader is. The Motion Leader will start the round by doing a certain motion and the rest of the group will mimic the motion. Throughout the round the Motion Leader will change up the motions as the group mimics each new motion while trying not to be detected. As the person in the middle observes the group, they have three guesses to try and select the Motion Leader. The round ends when the Motion Leader has been caught or the person in the middle is out of guesses. Go ahead and begin.
- Play a few rounds, each time having someone new in the center.

Discuss:

- *Ask:*
 - What was it like to follow the leader's motions?
 - Was it hard to figure out who the leader was?
 - What are some ways that God leads us in our daily lives?
 - Why is it sometimes hard to remember that God is leading us?
- Thank everyone for participating and invite them to be seated in small groups of 5 or 6 (or around tables if that is your set-up.)

WORD (25 MINUTES)

God's Story:

Say: Sometimes it is hard for us to see grace in our daily lives, just like it was hard to figure out who the leader was in our opening game. Sometimes grace is obvious and sometimes grace is not so easy to recognize, but grace is always present.

Have Bibles available or have the verse, **Titus 2:11** "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all," printed out so people can read along while you have a child read the passage.

After the passage is read remind the group of the definition of grace – grace is getting something that we DO NOT deserve.

- Ask:
 - Who receives grace?
 - Is it easy for us to accept that everyone receives grace?
 - How do we receive grace?

Have Bibles available or have the verse, **Titus 3:3-6** “ We were once foolish, disobedient, deceived, and slaves to our desires and various pleasures too. We were spending our lives in evil behavior and jealousy. We were disgusting, and we hated other people. 4 But “when God our savior’s kindness and love appeared, 5 he saved us because of his mercy, not because of righteous things we had done. He did it through the washing of new birth and the renewing by the Holy Spirit, 6 which God poured out upon us generously through Jesus Christ our savior.” CEV printed out so people can read along while you have a child read the passage.

- Say: The author of Titus is teaching that all receive grace even though all have made mistakes and are unworthy. The author is also teaching that grace comes directly from God through the water of baptism. In response to receiving God’s grace, we are called to live in love and service to our neighbors.
- Say: In your groups share a time when you received grace from a neighbor.
- Give enough time for each member of the group to share. Come back together and ask for a few groups to share situations that were discussed.
- Ask: Where else are we promised to receive God’s grace? HINT: The second passage in Titus is a big clue! (Allow for a few answers)
- Say: God promises grace in the waters of baptism and in holy communion. In water, wine, and bread we also receive God’s grace in our lives. This is why it is so important to gather together in community – to receive God’s grace with, for, and from one another.

SEND

G.R.A.C.E. Reflection Activity

This activity gives participants the opportunity to think about the people and places where they see grace in their daily lives.

Say: Working in pairs (“helping” pairs like an older person helping a child who can’t write yet, etc.) each partner should write the letters that spell GRACE on your paper in whatever way you would like – i.e. down the left edge of the paper, in a circle, etc (have examples ready to show.) While taking some time to reflect, you should write the answers to the prompts below next to the specified letter. [This can be a simple project, or it can be a more creative activity by making it into a bookmark, wall hanging or something else.]

Here are the prompts to discover how is grace reflected in your life through...

- ...Guides – the important people in your life?
- ...Resources – the gifts that you have been given?
- ...Activities – the things you enjoy doing?
- ...Communities – the places and people you visit every day?
- ...Experiences – the special moments in your life?

After the activity take time to discuss the following:

- Was it hard to come up with answers for any of the prompts?
- Were any of your answers surprising to you?
- Did you learn anything new about yourself?
- How will this activity help you to continue to reflect God's grace in your daily life?

Blessing & Prayer

Say: Find a partner (if there is an odd number there can be 3 together) and face each other. As I read the following prayer take turns making the sign of the cross near that part of your partner's body.

Forehead: May your thoughts be kind and caring to all people

Eyes: May you see the beauty of God's creation in all people and all things

Ears: May the words you hear be ones of blessing and love

Mouth: May the words you say be ones of blessing and love

Hands: May your hands always reach out in love doing God's love

Feet: May your feet lead you in the ways that God is calling you

Heart: May you feel God's love surrounding you so that you may share that love with everyone

Let us pray: Dear God, we give thanks for your love and for your grace. Let these things lead us in our daily lives, sharing your love and grace with everyone we meet, letting them see the love you have for everyone through our words, actions, heart and presence. We give you thanks for the people in our lives that we put on our GRACE page who have shown us Grace. For these things and so many others we give you thanks in the name of your Son Jesus whom you gave so that we might be free from sin. In your most beautiful name we pray. Amen.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord! Thanks be to God!

GOD'S GRACE CHANGES EVERYTHING

SESSION 3: SHARING GOD'S GRACE

LEADER INFO

The objective of this session is to **share God's grace with others** by extending love to all the world.

SOCIAL MEDIA

@ELCAGathering #ELCAYG2018



MATERIALS NEEDED:

- bibles (or printouts of session verses)
- wooden clothes pins (about 5 per person)
with the words "God's Love" written on them
- loaf of bread
- bowl dirt
- bowl of water
- candle (a battery operated one is perfect)
- matches
- hand sanitizer

(multiples of bread, bowls, and candles if your group is large)

GATHER (10 MINUTES)

Gathering Prayer:

God of love, we give you thanks for gathering us together to grow in our relationships to each other and to you. Let our time be full of joy as we play, pray and share. In your name and in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Gathering Song: "Saved By Grace" words & chords attached. Check out the song at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Mc8hcnnWxA>

Experiential Learning: Clothes Pin Give Away

This is a simple game that encourages participants to think about what it means to give instead of just receive.

Play:

- Gather the group in a large, open space. Define boundaries of where the participants will be able to run in order to keep them contained in the area.
- Each participant will begin with five clothes pins.
- Say: The goal is for each person is to get rid of their clothes pins by distributing them to others. Instruct the participants that when the game begins, they are to attempt to pin their clothes pins on someone else while avoiding getting clothes pins attached to themselves. They may only attach the clothes pins to loose-fitting pieces of clothing. Each time a clothes pin is pinned on someone, they must take it off and try to get rid of it in addition to getting rid of their five original clothes pins.
- The game continues until one person has all the pins.
- End the activity by encouraging the participants to take 5 clothes pins with them and offer to pin them to others throughout the day so that they have a reminder of God's love!

Discuss:

- Ask:
 - Why was it challenging to give your clothes pins away?
 - When in our lives do we try and accumulate things instead of share them?
 - What are some ways we can better share the gifts we have been given?
- Thank everyone for participating and invite them to be seated in small groups of 5 or 6 (or around tables if that is your set-up.)

WORD (25 MINUTES)

God's Story:

Say: Remember the definition of grace – grace is getting something that we DO NOT deserve.

Say: Share with one another a time when you gave away something that was important to you.

Allow time for discussion in small groups.

Ask: Would anyone be willing to share one of the memorable stories that they heard? (Allow a few groups to share)

Ask:

- How easy was it to give away the item that was important to you?
- Did the person you gave the item to deserve it?
- How did you feel after you had given it away?
- How did the person who received the gift react?

Have Bibles available or have the verse, **Matthew 28:16-20**: "Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." printed out so people can read along while you have a child read the passage.

- Ask:
 - What are we told in this passage that we are to do? (Make disciples of all nations.)
 - How do we do that? (Teach, preach, baptize, share God's grace.)
 - Does this ever feel overwhelming to you? Like it's a bigger job than you can handle?

Have Bibles available or have the verse, **1 Peter 4:8-10** "Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaining. Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received." printed out so people can read along while you have a child read the passage.

- **Say:** Sometimes the Great Commission – what we are told to do in the Matthew passage - can feel overwhelming, but in 1 Peter we are reminded that sharing God's grace isn't hard. We are reminded to love one another, extend hospitality, and use our gifts to serve one another. In your groups, create a list of different ways you each do these things in your lives.
- Give enough time for each group to compile a list. Come back together and ask what items are on each groups list. On a wipe-off board or large piece of paper, compile a master list.
- **Say:** We are called to share in God's mission and share God's grace with the entire world. And look at our list! There are so many different ways that we show love, that we use our gifts in service, and that we engage in being welcoming and open. And like we learned in our opening game – sometimes giving or sharing those things that are most important to us can be incredibly rewarding, but also FUN. [You could use this list to do something creative for display and encouragement in your gathering or worship space, ask if anyone has any ideas for this.]

Grace Circle Activity:

This is an activity that provides an opportunity for participants to reflect and pray through utilizing multiple senses.

Gather the participants into a circle, facing inward (you may need to do this in small groups depending on the size of your group.)

- Before beginning, make sure everyone has utilized the hand sanitizer.
- Begin by passing out the elements to volunteers in the group. Gather the group(s) around the elements and then one at a time have each volunteer step to the middle of the group with the element as you give the explanation for that element.
- As each element is lifted up, share the instructions and questions listed while inviting participants into a time of silent reflection and prayer.
- Give an appropriate amount of time for reflection before passing the next element.

DIRT - Explain that this represents the things we have done wrong or that we fail to do. It covers us and makes us unclean. We are all made equal in our sin – each one of us has messed up and is in need of forgiveness. Invite participants to put their hand in and grab the dirt, slowly letting it slip through their fingers back into the bowl. As they feel the dirt in their hands, ask them to think about the following questions silently: What does the dirt feel like? How does it make you feel? When are times in your life when you have made mistakes or hurt others? How have these moments made you feel?

WATER - Explain that the water represents the grace we have been given through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The water washes us clean, bringing us new life through the work of the Holy Spirit. Invite participants to put their hand in, letting it be submerged. As they feel the water, ask them to think about the following questions silently: What does the water feel like? How does the water make you feel? When are times you have felt like you have needed a fresh start? Who or what have you turned to in these moments? How can you share God's grace with others?

CANDLE - Explain that the candle represents the light of Christ and the ways in which God empowers us to live out the love and grace of Jesus in the world. Through grace we are invited into a relationship with Jesus Christ – we are given the chance to ask God for what we need, to listen as God guides our lives, and we are empowered share this light with the world. Invite participants to pass the candle paying attention to the light coming from the flame. Ask them to think about these questions silently: How does the light make you feel? When are moments when you have felt lifted up by God? What are some ways you can share the light of Christ with those around you?

BREAD - Explain that the bread represents the body fuel that God gives us in our daily lives. Sometimes when we have plenty, it's hard to remember that God is the one providing for us and we take what we have for granted. Sometimes when we think we don't have enough, it's hard to put our trust in God for what we need. Recognizing that everything we have been given is a gift from God for God's work in the world, we are also called to help provide for the physical nourishment of our neighbors. Invite each person to take a small piece of the bread. As they touch and taste the bread, ask them to think silently: What does it feel like to hold the bread and to eat it? How does it make you feel? When are times in your life when you feel like God is providing for your needs? In what ways do you feel called to provide for others' needs?

SEND (5 MINUTES)

Blessing & Prayer

Say: Find a partner (if there is an odd number there can be 3 together) and face each other. As I read the following prayer take turns making the sign of the cross on that part of your partners body.

Forehead: May your thoughts be kind and caring to all people

Eyes: May you see the beauty of God's creation in all people and all things

Ears: May the words you hear be ones of blessing and love

Mouth: May the words you say be ones of blessing and love

Hands: May your hands always reach out in love doing God's love

Feet: May your feet lead you in the ways that God is calling you

Heart: May you feel God's love surrounding you so that you may share that love with everyone

Let us pray: Dear God, we give thanks for your love and for your grace. Let these things lead us in our daily lives, sharing your love and grace with everyone we meet, letting them see the love you have for everyone through our words, actions, heart and presence. We give you thanks for the people in our lives who have shown us Grace, let us be examples too. For these things and so many others we give you thanks in the name of your Son Jesus whom you gave so that we might be free from sin. In your most beautiful name we pray. Amen.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord! Thanks be to God!

SAVED BY GRACE (Song Lyrics and Cords)

G X Y X G X Y X

Chorus: **S-a-a-a-a-a-aved by Grace (Wo-o-o)**

G X Y X G X Y X

Throu-u-u-u-u-u-ugh our faith, through our faith, yeah. (REPEAT)

(same chord progression through verses)

Verse 1: **G - R - A - C - E-e-e-e-e.**

Undeserved and free-e-e-e-e

Given to you and me-e-e-e-e.

So we can live etern-na-nanally. (Chorus)

Verse 2: **S - A - V - E - D B - Y, G - R - A - C - E -e-e-e-e (x2) (Chorus)**



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QUESTIONS?

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