

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

# LED TO LEAD



AN ONGOING EXPRESSION OF THE CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP

2005–2006

Christian Education Planning Guide



## HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

Adapt this material to fit your setting. Use it as you plan and prepare for the 2005–2006 education year. Be sure to maximize your use of Web page references found throughout this resource and the key links listed on the inside back cover.

For reference to other key resources in support of the ongoing Call To Discipleship see [www.elca.org/christianeducation/discipleship](http://www.elca.org/christianeducation/discipleship)



*“...for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.”* Romans 11:29

### Project Manager

Diane Monroe

### Writers

Miriam Campbell,  
Diane Monroe,  
Ted Schroeder

### On-line Material Design and Development

Miriam Campbell

### Editors

Diane Monroe,  
Ted Schroeder

### Designer and Illustrator

Orangeflux, Inc.

## WHAT'S INSIDE?

Introduction to the Theme	3
Led to Lead Bible Study	4
Commitment and Affirmation of Christian Education Leaders	6
Faith Trek: An Intergenerational Rally Day Module	7
God Gifted: Spiritual Gifts and Leadership	9
The Disciple Leader	12
Engaging Leaders of All Ages	14
Gifted of the Community: Affirmed and Equipped	15
Gifts of the Community: Called, Gathered, and Sent	17
Ensuring a Safe and Nurturing Environment	19
2005–2006 Planning Calendar	20
Clipart	22



This planning guide is designed to be both a print and electronic resource. For all material related to this resource, including the full contents of the print resource, clipart and other support materials, visit [www.elca.org/christianeducation/programplanners/2005CEProgramPlanner/](http://www.elca.org/christianeducation/programplanners/2005CEProgramPlanner/)

Additional copies of this resource may be obtained by calling 800/638-3522 x2594. (Limit three per congregation). In addition, if you are unable to access the electronic supplements, you may obtain a print copy by calling the telephone number above.

# INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME



## “Me? A Leader?”

We may think of ourselves as followers. But leaders? Aren't leaders talented, able, charismatic, and remarkable? Don't leaders stand out in groups and cause people to take note of them? For most of us, that doesn't exactly seem like a list of characteristics that applies to us.

### “Leader? Perhaps you have someone else in mind.”

The Bible is full of God's chosen leaders. And almost without exception, they are unlikely leaders, indeed. Moses, sent to Pharaoh to plead for the release of the people, had a speech impediment (Exodus 4:10). Gideon protested that he was the “least of the least” (Judges 6:15). Jeremiah complained that he was “too young” to be a prophet (Jeremiah 1:6). Isaiah pointed out his “unclean lips” (Isaiah 6:5). Mary was an unknown young girl from an obscure village (Luke 1:26). Paul, the great missionary, started out as a persecutor of the church (Acts 9). And yet each of these was chosen. Each became a leader, not because of their own remarkable abilities, but because God was able to equip them and work through them to accomplish great things.

### In the Bible God's leaders are chosen, set apart (consecrated), equipped, and sent. It is no different today.

God's leaders are not self-selected. They are **chosen**. “I am sending you,” God says to Moses (Exodus 3:10). “You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go. . .” (John 15:16) Jesus says to his disciples and to us. When we step forward to lead in God's Church, we are moved by the Spirit and selected by the hand of God. Chosen.

God's leaders are **consecrated**—set apart for **ministry**. Moses stepped on holy ground at the burning bush (Exodus 3:5). Jeremiah was touched by the hand of God (Jeremiah 1:9). Isaiah's mouth was purified by a burning coal in the hand of an angel (Isaiah 6:7). Mary was visited by the angel (Luke 1). Paul was struck down by a bright light and called by the voice of Jesus (Acts 9). Each person set apart. Each person consecrated—as we are when we are chosen to lead.

In every case, the leader God had chosen was **equipped** by promise and by gift. God keeps saying: “I will be with you.” And Jesus promises the same thing as he sends us (Matthew 28:20). Gideon is given 300 remarkable soldiers. Moses is given not only miraculous power but his brother Aaron to speak for him. And we are given the Spirit, the Comforter or the Advocate (John 14:15–17) to equip us as we lead.

And God's leaders are **sent**. “Go” God says to Abram. “Go” God says to Moses and David and the prophets. “Go” Jesus says to us. “Go” and teach all things (Matthew 28:20).

Without reservation, we name ourselves God's leaders today. We are led to be leaders because we have been chosen, we have been set apart, we have been equipped by God's Spirit and we have been sent to bring the Good News to all.

“Me? A leader?” Most certainly, by the choosing, equipping power of God.

*And God's leaders are sent. “Go” God says to Abram. “Go” God says to Moses and David and the prophets. “Go” Jesus says to us. “Go” and teach all things.*





## LED TO LEAD BIBLE STUDY

This study is for congregational leaders or for those considering special service in the congregation and beyond. It is for all of those who are moved to be part of the mission of the congregation.

This material can be studied by one person (study and reflection), by a pair of leaders working together (mentoring), or by a small group. It would be particularly helpful to those newly chosen as congregational leaders—teachers, council or task force members, and others. It is well-suited as a foundation study for a leadership retreat.

There is more material here than can be easily done in one or two sessions. It is important that you choose portions and activities that will fit what you are trying to accomplish and your time frame.

### For each session:

- ...» Begin with prayer or a brief devotion.
- ...» Choose one or more of the **Focusing Activities**.
- ...» Choose one or more of **Search in the Word** sections to work through.
- ...» Choose one or more of the **Connecting Activities**.
- ...» Close with a prayer, hymn, or blessing.



### Focusing Activities

- Write the word **leader** on the board or on a piece of paper. Write all the words that come to mind as you look at the word. Reflect on what you have written and share your list with others.
- Talk about or think about a time when you were a leader. What marked the experience for you? What was negative or positive in the experience? How did the experience equip you or change you? Share your insights.
- God's leaders are chosen. What does it mean to you to be chosen by God? Reflect on the question or share with others.
- Think of a biblical leader with whom you most identify. What about that person connects for you? What can you learn from that person? Share your insights with someone else.
- Interview people you identify as leaders. Find out what makes leading important for them. What does leadership mean for them? Why do they lead? What does God's choosing have to do with their leading? Share your discoveries.

### Searching the Word

1. **Leaders:** God's Church is full of leaders. Leaders are not only those who are specially trained or commissioned or ordained. Leaders are all of those who carry out the mission of the church, whether their service is in the kitchen, in front of a group, behind a broom, or in a pulpit. Leaders in the church have something in common. Those who lead in the church or in God's mission are not self-selected or simply come into the task by default. Scripture clearly tells us that **God's leaders are chosen, set apart (consecrated), equipped, and sent.**
  - How would you define a leader in God's church? Read Acts 1:8. Jesus is talking to his sometimes reluctant disciples. What task does he set before them? How are they equipped for the task? How is that also our task?
  - Jesus sends us. What description of that sending do you find in John 10:16? What does it mean to you to be a sheep among wolves? What promise of equipping does Jesus give in John 10:19? What does that promise mean to you?
  - Read Jesus' encounter with the repentant Peter in John 21:15–19. How does Jesus describe Peter's (and our) leadership task? What command does he give? In what way is following Jesus leading? What does it mean for you to be a follower/leader?
2. God's leaders are **chosen.**
  - Read Exodus 3:1–11. What words of choosing do you find? What leadership task was Moses given?



*This study helps youth and adults consider what it means to be led to lead.*

- Read Jeremiah 1:1–10. What words of choosing do you find? What leadership task was Jeremiah given?
- Read Isaiah 6:1–9. What words of choosing do you find? What leadership task was Isaiah given?
- Read Judges 6:11–16. What words of choosing do you find? What leadership task is Gideon given to do?
- Read Luke 1:16–37. What words of choosing do you find? What leadership task is Mary given to do?
- Jesus said: “You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go. . .” (John 15:16). What words of choosing do you find? What leadership task are we given to do? (See also Matthew 28:18–20).
- What does it mean to you to be a chosen leader? See Matthew 25 and John 13:1–17 as you think about leadership.

### 3. God’s leaders are **consecrated—set apart for ministry**.

- Read Exodus 3:5 again. How was Moses consecrated at the burning bush?
- Read the texts above from Jeremiah and Isaiah. How were these two prophets consecrated—set apart?
- Read Luke 1:16–17 again. How was Mary consecrated—set apart?
- In what way are teachers and leaders in your congregation consecrated or set apart for their task? How is God a part of that consecrating?

### 4. God’s leaders are **equipped by gift and promise**.

Read again the accounts of the calling of Moses, Gideon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Mary.

- In each case, the chosen one protests. What kind of protests do you see? How are these protests familiar to you?
- In each case, the protest is met with promise. What promises do you find? How is that promise similar to Jesus’ promise to us in Matthew 28:20? What does that promise mean to you as you consider your roles in leadership?

- Read the rest of the story of the calling of Moses in Exodus 3. Moses is equipped for his task with special gifts. List some of them.
- Read 1 Corinthians 12. In what way can we all say that we are gifted? What are the gifts meant for? How do we use our gifts (See verse 7)?
- What special gifts does Jesus promise in John 14:26–27? What do those gifts mean as we lead?

### 5. God’s leaders are **sent**.

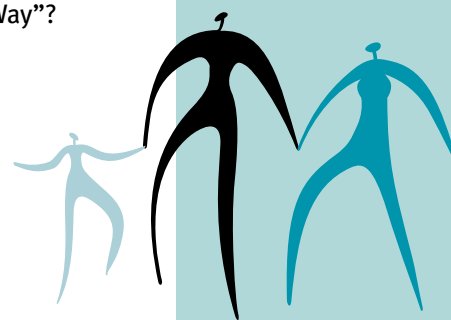
- Read Genesis 12:1–3. Abraham is sent. For what purpose?
- Review again the sending in the stories of Moses, Gideon, Isaiah and Jeremiah. What does their sending have in common? What does God’s will have to do with their sending?
- Read Matthew 28:18–20 and Acts 1:8 again. How are we sent? For what purpose? How do we carry out our sending?
- An early name for the Christians was people of “The Way” (Acts 9:1–2). Why is that a good name for believers? On what way have we been sent? How have we been equipped for the journey? Who goes with us? How do we know when we are on “The Way”?

### Connecting Activities

- Write a job description for your leadership in God’s church. What are you called, equipped, and sent to do? Share your description.
- What are some of the ways you can recognize the leaders in your congregation? How can you express your thanks for their leadership?
- What are your special gifts, gifts you can use as you carry out the mission given by Jesus? You might use an inventory such as “Opening your Spiritual Gifts”, available on-line at [www.elca.org/christianeducation/programplanners/2005CEProgramPlanner](http://www.elca.org/christianeducation/programplanners/2005CEProgramPlanner) as you consider ways to use your gifts.

*Jesus said: “You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go. . .”*

*(John 15:16).*





**“...for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.”**

**Romans 11:29**

“Me? A Leader? Just as many individuals throughout Scripture found themselves “tapped on the shoulder” by God, every Christian child, youth, and adult today is led by God to lead.

God’s leaders are not self-selected. They are **chosen**. “I am sending you,” God says to Moses (Exodus 3:10). “You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go. . .” (John 15:16) Jesus says to his disciples and to us. When we step forward to lead in God’s church—we are moved by the Spirit and selected by the hand of God.

God’s leaders are **consecrated—set apart for ministry**. Moses stepped on holy ground at the burning bush (Exodus 3:5). Mary was visited by the angel (Luke 1). Paul was struck down by a bright light called by the voice of Jesus (Acts 9). Each person set apart. Each person consecrated—as we are when we are chosen to lead.

The leader God appoints is **equipped** by promise and gift. God keeps saying: “I will be with you.” And Jesus promises the same thing as he sends us (Matthew 28:20). Gideon is given 300 remarkable soldiers. Moses is given not only miraculous power but his brother Aaron to speak for him. And we are given the gifts of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:4–11) to equip us as we lead.

And God’s leaders are **sent**. “Go” God says to Abram. “Go” God says to Moses and David and the prophets. “Go” Jesus says to us. “Go” and teach all things (Matthew 28:20).

“Me? A leader?” Most certainly. Through the promise of our baptism, we are bolstered with the assurance God’s leaders today are chosen, consecrated, equipped, and sent.

## COMMITMENT AND AFFIRMATION OF LEADERS

*The pastor may welcome children, youth, and adults to come forward to bless their teachers, guides, and facilitators for the coming year. At the appropriate time, teachers and leaders of all the congregation’s educational ministries are invited to come forward.*

### **A lay assisting minister begins:**

The following leaders have been called to teach and disciple in our midst this year: *Names are read as individuals come forward.*

### **The pastor continues:**

Today we recognize and bless those who have been called, set apart, equipped, and sent as leaders in our teaching ministry.

### **The pastor addresses the teachers and leaders:**

As those called and empowered by God to teach, guide, and lead the children, youth, and adults, do you accept this responsibility to nurture Christian growth in others and give witness to God’s faithfulness in your own life?

### **The teachers and leaders respond:**

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

### **The pastor continues:**

Will you draw upon the spiritual gifts God has bestowed upon you? Will you use your talents, interests, and abilities to lead others to fullness in a life in Christ?

### **The teachers respond:**

I will and ask God to help and guide me.

### **The pastor addresses the congregation:**

It is our privilege to affirm and send forth those who are called to the teaching ministry of our congregation and God’s kingdom in this place. Will you commit to support them in their spiritual well-being through prayer, encouragement, and service?

### **The congregation responds:**

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

### **The pastor continues:**

Let us pray.

Gracious God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon all those who teach and learn. Bless the gifts you have bestowed on us and help us to acknowledge your intent for these gifts. Fill us with desire to live faithfully and committed to leading others to your abundant grace and love. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen

# FAITH TREK: AN INTERGENERATIONAL RALLY DAY MODULE



*Faith Trek* highlights God’s mission and provisions for children, youth, and adults as they journey in faith together. It provides several creative and practical entry points for exploring the role of leadership within a call to discipleship. The module includes resources for recognizing and responding to the many roles people of all ages have been called and equipped to play as they are led to lead others to follow Jesus every day.

## Key Bible Verses

“Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith”. Hebrews 12:1

“For the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable.” Romans 11:29

## Program Offerings

### “Count Me In” Large Group Presentation and Celebration

Scripture readings, songs, and a *Litany of Intent to Lead* will characterize what it means to be “led to lead.” The program includes a skit titled “Take Me to Your Leader” which features a friendly alien on an intergalactic faith trek in search of God’s presence and activity in the universe. The six minute script includes a ready reference to backstage directions, preparations, and accessories.

### Run the Race Set Before You! Gathering Activities

The following activities are designed to introduce the theme and content of this event and provide tools for integrating its various components. They will identify life as a journey and reference baptism as the entry point for perceiving it through a lens of faith.

#### ...» Mapping Your Journey

Participants will perceive their days and lives as a lifelong journey in faith. Maps of the world, nation, county, or local

community will be available to track their movement from one location to another on any given day or throughout their many years of life.

#### ...» First Steps

Participants are invited to engage in an interactive display highlighting baptism as the entry point for a lifelong trek in faith and discipleship. They will “hand-stamp” creative footprints to affirm their individual commitment to Hebrews 12:1 “...Run...the race that is set before us...”

#### ...» Hey You! Follow Me!

Here’s a quick game designed to recognize our natural interplay of leading and following. Participants will be encouraged to consider ways they lead and follow others in the various roles they play.

## Includes...

- Gathering activities
- A large group celebration
- Activities to support the theme

Detailed descriptions and practical support for planning and coordinating a rally day program or event are available on-line at



[www.elca.org/christianeducation/  
programplanners/2005CEProgramPlanner](http://www.elca.org/christianeducation/programplanners/2005CEProgramPlanner)



*The lessons and activities provide content for planning one or more events throughout the year.*



## Faith Trek Training Centers

Five activities have been designed to nurture a knowledge and understanding of God’s mission in the world and God’s provisions for those who are led to lead. They will provide opportunities for people of all ages to identify ways they have been called and gifted to serve God and others. The centers will also invite children, youth, and adults to consider some practical and age-appropriate ways they may be called to strengthen God’s mission and ministry in their own congregations.

### ...» Gift Discovery Center I & II

Three resources may be used to identify some of the many talents, interests, and abilities children, youth, and adults have been given to lead and serve. A creative reference sheet, a “mini-me” craft activity and a simple game to engage younger participants in identifying ways they share God’s love, grace, hope, joy, and peace with others.

Participants may also be encouraged to complete age-appropriate spiritual gift assessment tools to help them discern some of the special gifts they have been given to strengthen the mission and ministries of their own congregations/faith communities and other places in God’s kingdom.

### ...» Mission Control

The call of Moses will be highlighted as participants consider God’s overall plan or mission for God’s people in the world. Participants will be engaged in a creative exercise to reflect on their own life stories and identify occasions when they have been chosen, set apart, equipped, and sent.

### ...» Strength for the Journey

Participants will recognize the need for nurture and support as they journey in faith together. They will recognize the importance of daily Bible reading and ongoing faith community as they respond to their individual calls to lead and serve.

### ...» Now-Then Mentor Center

Participants will become acquainted with people from biblical times who were chosen to be unlikely leaders. They will consider the role God called them to play in God’s overall salvation story and appreciate the mentoring role they still play for us today. Participants may also post the names of people in the congregation and community they would consider to be mentors.

### ...» Leadership Lab I & II

Participants will become acquainted with opportunities for leadership and service in their own congregations. An electronic listing of age-appropriate roles and responsibilities is available for the coordinator of this activity to custom design and distribute for easy reference and response.

...» Interactive and/or experiential orientations to various ministries in your congregation may be led by the children, youth, or adults who are currently involved in them. Participants may be invited to indicate their interest in leadership or involvement.



# GOD GIFTED: SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND LEADERSHIP

*“We must no longer be children....but speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love.”* Ephesians 4:14–16



Every Christian is called to discipleship and we’ve been given all that it takes to do the job. God’s inexpressible love and grace assures us we are a cherished part of God’s on-going story of creation and salvation. Our master teacher and mentor, Jesus Christ, shepherds us and illustrates the most perfect ways to give glory to God and to serve one another. The job description is clear (Matthew 28:19–20.) And, each Christian has been given special gifts for ministry—gifts of the Holy Spirit working through us.

These gifts known as spiritual gifts are different and distinct from other God-given gifts and talents. New Testament Greek uses the word *charismata* (meaning *grace-gift*) when the writer is speaking specifically about spiritual gifts. There are more than 20 spiritual gifts *charismata* listed in four primary scripture references:

- Romans 12:1–8
- 1 Corinthians 12
- Ephesians 4:1–16
- 1 Peter: 4

The following list is one way of ordering our understanding of spiritual gifts:

## Gifts for Shepherding:

*Keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to shepherd the church of God that he obtained with the blood of his own Son. Acts 20:28*

**Apostle, evangelist, leader (administration), pastor, prophet, and teacher**

## Gifts for Service:

*Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. 1 Peter 4:10*

**Giving, helping (serving), and hospitality**

## Gifts for Strengthening:

*Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing. 1 Thessalonians 5:11*

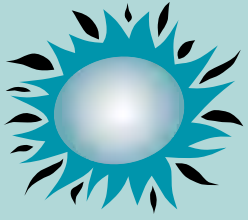
**Encouragement (exhortation), healing, mercy (compassion), and prophecy (discernment)**

## Gifts for Spiritual Insight:

*First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. 2 Peter 1:20–21*

**Faith, knowledge, prayer (intersession), prophecy, and wisdom**





*These gifts known as spiritual gifts are different and distinct from other God-given gifts and talents.*



### **Spiritual Gifts are...**

- a gift given to every Christian. (Ephesians 4:8)
- given for one purpose—to build up the church, the body of Christ. (Ephesians 4:12)
- never earned or deserved. Through God’s abundant love and grace, gifts are freely given. (John 1:16)
- focused on the unifying Source and Giver, rather than on the gift. (1 Corinthians 2: 1–12)
- equally cherished. There is no gift more important than another and there is no gift the Body is better off without. (1 Corinthians 12:21–22).
- for serving. (1 Peter 4:10)
- the embodiment of diversity. In fact, the word “measure,” when read from the Greek translation, suggests a broad diversity rather than a quantity of giftedness. (Ephesians 4:7)
- meant to be used in community. One’s gift is fully expressed when it complements another and is used interdependently to unify and bring wholeness to Christ’s mission on earth. (1 Corinthians 12:14–26)

### **Spiritual Gifts are not...**

- a ticket to the private inner circle. They are given to each person for the communal edification of the Body of Christ and not for personal gratification or acclamation. (Romans 12:3–8)
- the Holy Spirit’s shopping list. While it is important to discover and use the gifts of the Spirit that we have been given, we must remember the Holy Spirit comes to us in many ways especially through Jesus, scripture, the sacraments, and through God’s on-going action in our lives as creator and redeemer. (1 John 1:1–3)
- our choice. We can’t select our favorite from the menu. God has a much greater plan in mind. (1 Corinthians 12:11)

- the same as talents or tendencies. A talent is a natural attribute given at birth. A spiritual gift is a supernatural attribute given at baptism (new birth in the body of Christ)!
- the same as fruits of the Spirit— love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Gifts relate to ministry and service. Fruits relate to character and attitude (Galatians 4:22–23).

### **Gifts-Based Ministry**

The use of spiritual gifts is in fact the oldest way of being the church. Spiritual gifts are not a fad or a program, and they are not a reinvented “time and talent” approach to ministry. The very first church was established on the spiritual gifts God gave believers to do the work of ministry in order to grow the Body of Christ.

St. Paul uses “body language” in his letters to paint a picture of the church and help us understand the importance of being a part of a whole. In the body each part contributes, not by its own steam or initiative, but by the equipping and empowering of the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual gifts produce unity through diversity as they call forth a sense of mission and stimulate a shared vision for ministry. In the midst of the articulation of each diverse gift, God intends for us to complement one another’s gifts by relying on each other to equally contribute to the whole. Like parts of a body or members of an outstanding team, the intricate interrelationship of many parts and roles function as a unified body. Thank God we are not asked to go it alone or do it all. Thank God for the promise that each one of us has distinct purpose and empowerment, through the Holy Spirit, to make a difference and bring help and wholeness to our congregation and to our community.

Some congregations lament they have found themselves in an 80/20 situation. 20% of the people do 80% of the work while the 80% sit back and watch the 20%. Gifts-based ministry moves congregations beyond this scenario. A gifts-based congregation encourages all

of its members to discover their gifts so no one is left on the sidelines and no one is overextended. A congregation that knows the gifts of its members is a community that thrives on everyone doing what they are gifted to do. There are no more “warm bodies” serving out of a sense of guilt or obligation. A gifts-based church understands the purpose is not to be served, but to serve with joy, on-fire passion, and grateful hearts.

### **Suggestions for Beginning a Gifts-Based Ministry**

#### **Resist the temptation to ONLY use a spiritual gifts assessment tool.**

The rich, deep, and complex exploration of spiritual gifts warrants attention especially in assisting individuals and congregations grow to embrace the theology of a spiritual gifts-based ministry. Spiritual gift theology is NOT a new-age “time and talent approach” to ministry or a passing fad. It is biblical truth that requires teaching.

#### **Educate and train individuals in small groups.**

Gifts are typically discovered in relationships. Use small group settings to create a learning and doing environment where spiritual gifts are explored, identified, celebrated, and where individuals are supported and encouraged for ministry. (see page 13)

#### **Form a spiritual gifts ministry team.**

This team will help carry the vision of giftedness and set in motion plans for the many ways gifts will be used in the congregation and in the community. An ideal team includes the pastor, a gifted teacher of the faith, a visionary leader, a person gifted in wisdom, a person gifted in helps/servanthood, and dedicated intercessors who will pray faithfully for both the leadership team and the individuals in the small groups as they are learning about and discovering their gifts.

#### **Encourage exploration and experimentation of spiritual gifts.**

Foster an atmosphere where creative restlessness is encouraged. Help one another self-assess the method and effectiveness each individual is exploring. Spiritual gifts bear fruit. Keep in mind assessment tools are just that—tools to use along with other resources and inspiration for ministry. Another way we come to learn about our own spiritual giftedness is by what others observe and tell us.

#### **Adopt an attitude of patience and persistence.**

Decide from the start you are in it for the long haul, no matter what! Changing a culture is hard work and may be resisted. Take heart in knowing others have gone before and survived! It often takes several years of persistent, steadfast prayer and teaching for the culture of a congregation to shift its mission and identity to one based on spiritual gifts.

#### **Learn to use spiritual gifts language.**

Help members of the community to talk about their gifts. Seek servants for specific ministries who have been given specific gifts—but avoid being too narrowly focused. For example, all Sunday morning teachers need not have a teaching gift. The nurturing gifts of leadership, knowledge, and servanthood are wonderful gifts to have when working with children and youth. On the other hand, wisdom and discernment gifts, though valued in all ministries, are considered absolutely essential gifts to have represented on congregation councils or leadership boards.

#### **Celebrate the gifts of God’s people.**

Be quick to praise God publicly for the spiritual gifts of the brothers and sisters in Christ, articulating specific gifts used to perform specific ministry. Regard diversity as a positive and help the congregation delight in God’s diverse creation.

*A congregation that knows the gifts of its members is a community that thrives on everyone doing what they are gifted to do.*

This section of the planner is taken in part from “Spiritual Gifts,” by Debbie Heierman. Download the entire article, and other suggested resources including on-line Spiritual Gift Inventories at

[www.elca.org/christianeducation/  
programplanners/  
2005CEProgramPlanner](http://www.elca.org/christianeducation/programplanners/2005CEProgramPlanner)



# THE DISCIPLE-LEADER

*An effective Christian leader is first a disciple. A disciple-leader is one whose actions, attitudes, and inner intentions reflect a joyful confidence in God's presence.*



## Step by Step...following and leading

An effective Christian leader is first a disciple. A disciple-leader is one whose actions, attitudes, and inner intentions reflect a joyful confidence in God's presence. A disciple-leader endeavors to reflect Christ's behavior by intentionally engaging in practices of the faith such as prayer, worship, study, encouraging, inviting, giving, and serving. A disciple-leader regards the path toward spiritual maturity as a life-long journey inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Yet, being a disciple doesn't begin or end with the *individual*. By the waters of baptism, we are drawn into active participation in God's ongoing story of salvation. The Holy Spirit provides us with gifts for ministry and opportunities to use them. And by Christ's own words, our job description is made crystal clear, *"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"* (Matthew 28:19–20).

True discipleship is lived out in community, first in our relationship with Jesus Christ and then in our relationship with others. As Christians, we are responsible for one another's spiritual wellbeing. Amid the many informal relationship-building occasions in the congregation, the following list suggests opportunities intended to encourage disciples to nurture other disciples.

## Mentoring

Faith mentoring is an intentional pairing of two people. Ordinarily one person is "apprenticed" by another in a deeper, fuller faith journey. Mentors almost always are quick to suggest that the relationship is never one-sided. They realize the relationship is always mutually rewarding as their own faith is strengthened and enriched. Most often a mentoring relationship involves

an adult and a child or youth but need not be limited to cross-generational partnerships. Based on trust and respect for one another, a mentoring relationship might involve prayer, caring conversations, faith journey stories, shared service projects, and even a degree of accountability. Consider:

- an afterschool program for children which includes mentoring/tutoring
- mentoring in the years before, during, and after confirmation
- as an aid in assimilating new members into the congregation

## Coaching

Coaching is a one-on-one relationship, similar to mentoring but with a more focused intent and often with a specific goal in mind. Christian coaches are trained to build upon the individual's potential and will help that person develop discernment practices, behaviors, skills, and action plans to equip them for ministry. Active listening plays an important role in coaching; probing questions serve to "draw out" what already lies within the individual. Sometimes coaching is done by telephone but face-to-face encounters are preferred. Consider:

- training in coaching for the congregation council or committee chairs
- coaching as a next-step aspect of teacher training for Sunday school teachers, lay catechists, or small group leaders
- pairing "empty nesters" with new parents

Many synods across the ELCA are beginning to offer coaching seminars and training. Contact your synod to learn more.



## Peer Ministry

There is not one magic age when a person is equipped to be a leader. We each have something to contribute at every stage of life. Leadership is a growing, building, developing, transformational process that is especially effective when nurtured at an early age. Peer ministry generally refers to youth and young adults who are trained to use their own unique gifts and life experiences in ministering to others of their generation at church, school, work, or even at home. That same premise can easily be adapted to children or senior adults. Consider:

- training high school youth to serve as peer ministers for confirmands
- gathering adults who have endured specific challenges and life transitions to “walk” with adults who are currently encountering them.

## Small groups

Small Group Ministry typically refers to groups of four to eight participants meeting regularly for a specific length of time around a shared interest and spiritual growth such as Bible study, mutual support and recovery, prayer, confirmation “huddles,” midweek children’s ministry snack-time table groups. The leader serves as a facilitator, guiding the conversation and ensuring everyone has opportunity to contribute. Small groups are intended to offer a trusting, caring environment where each person feels nurtured, challenged to grow in faith, and senses their identity within the group and the congregation. Small groups offer a place where a person can reveal themselves—their joys, dreams, fears, and doubts—to God and to one another. The Greek word synago (to come together) challenges us to ensure our small groups are indeed open and inviting. Effective

small groups are careful to balance the strong interpersonal bonding within the circle with action outside, seeking to reach out to one another and to others in Christ. Consider:

- a health and wellness small group grounded in scripture and prayer and dedicated to a holistic spirituality of mind, body, and spirit
- home-groups for senior high Bible study
- a midweek small group ministry for neighborhood children

*Small groups offer a place where a person can reveal themselves—their joys, dreams, fears, and doubts—to God and to one another.*



For suggested resources and organizations related to this section, visit

[www.elca.org/christianeducation/  
programplanners/2005CE  
ProgramPlanner/](http://www.elca.org/christianeducation/programplanners/2005CEProgramPlanner/)



## ENGAGING LEADERS OF ALL AGES

In the Rite of Holy Baptism, even the youngest babes are called to join the priesthood of all believers in discovering the unique combination of talents, spiritual gifts, and abilities they have been given to enrich and expand God's church on earth. As we welcome them to be "workers with us in the kingdom" it becomes our privileged task to provide age-appropriate opportunities for them to do so.

### **Leadership identification and development can never begin too soon!**

Giving people occasions to discover roles and responsibilities they feel most drawn or gifted to play will bring clarity and a deeper sense of confidence in a call to lead or serve. The more varied and empowering the occasions you offer, the greater the potential will be to discover the spiritual gifts they've been given for leadership and service.

### **Everyone has been called and equipped to take initiative!**

Though many roles and responsibilities in our congregations adhere to the common definition of a leader and uphold the adult as the most equipped or experienced to accomplish them, the concept of the "priesthood of all believers" challenges us to level the playing field and find ways to welcome, nurture, and engage people of all ages in age-appropriate opportunities for leadership and involvement.

Keep in mind that even as some of the tasks may be defined as "at your service" ministries, most observers will perceive the servant to be the leader in that context. For instance, someone one who serves on the stewardship committee may be perceived as a leader in tending this area of ministry and, one who volunteers to serve a

congregational meal is actually taking the lead in accomplishing this task.

### **We are led to lead!**

Essentially, we all interchange the role of leader and follower many times throughout our day. We may take initiative in one activity and follow in another. Sometimes our roles are defined by the context we are in. For example, a child may follow a teacher's lead in the classroom and take the lead in coordinating a playground activity. Ultimately, we are called to follow Jesus and as we do, we are wired to watch for ways we can take initiative in helping others to do the same!

### **It's not about the task—it's about God's ministry!**

The "Lists of Things and Jobs to Do" in a congregation or faith community is more than the tasks involved. They are entry points for nurturing a sense of call to do God's work or ministry. They are designed to deepen a sense of identity and belonging to God's family and inspire a sense of confidence and commitment to serve God and others. We must consider every opportunity for involvement an occasion to nurture a stronger sense of call or vocation. And, we must take every opportunity to affirm this reality as we engage people of all ages in opportunities for leadership and service, acknowledging each endeavor with an appreciation for the unique and vital gifts offered.

### **I'm A Helper! Just Ask Me!**

Establish a climate for service in your faith community that is committed to empowering everyone to grow in their confidence and ability to take the lead or initiative. A detailed listing of age-appropriate possibilities for leadership and service is available on-line. Age-appropriate assessment tools for discerning spiritual gifts in children, youth, and adults is also available to appreciate the many God-given talents and abilities they've been given within the context of the faith community.



*Empower everyone to grow in their confidence and ability to take the lead or initiative.*

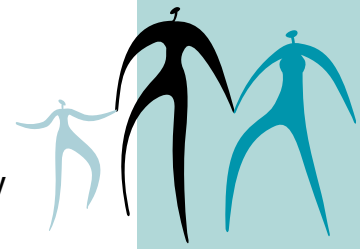


*Explore the characteristics of all ages. Send them on a Faith Trek!  
See page 7.*

# GIFTED OF THE COMMUNITY: AFFIRMED AND EQUIPPED

## VOLUNTEERS ARE VITAL

Volunteers are vital to Christian ministry. They bring a “vital-ity” rich with diverse gifts and opportunities for fully living out God’s intention for the Body of Christ. When a congregation pays attention to using the spiritual gifts, abilities, dreams, and interests of each individual, it’s like hitting the “refresh” button on the computer. Ministry is fresh, vibrant, and maximizes the gifts of God’s family working as a holistic, integrated body, discovering “new life,” together. The following is a simplified look at the V-I-T-A-L ministry of volunteers.



### VOLUNTEERS

- Respect that volunteers are stimulated to serve for numerous reasons including:
  - guilt
  - self-fulfillment
  - security and identity
  - to serve as a catalyst for change and growth
  - to engage in something new or different
  - a desire to contribute to the whole
  - to live out their sense of God’s call
- It is critical that volunteers understand the v-ision of the congregation and see their contribution as an alignment with the mission of the church.
- Celebrate the v-arious and overlapping ways volunteers are engaged in ministry:
  - as a family, individually, on a team, with a partner, ecumenically, or anonymously
  - from home, at church, in the community, at work/school, outdoors, or on the synod, regional, or churchwide level
  - daily, weekly, monthly, seasonally, annually, or occasionally
  - short-term, long-term, or interim commitments
  - self-initiated, recruited through careful strategic planning, invited by another volunteer, or as the need arises

### INVITED

- Pray first for God’s guidance and wisdom.
- Help potential volunteers discover their spiritual gifts.
- Give opportunity for individuals to self-identify their abilities, interests, and dreams through

“time and talent” forms, informal conversations, and the appreciative interview process.

- Be open to the gifts all generations and all abilities bring. There are many volunteer roles that can equally be carried out by children, youth, older adults, and those with disabilities.

### TRAINED

- Create an environment where a sense of anticipation and enthusiasm is celebrated as new volunteers offer their gifts to the faith community. The Greek words that produce our word *enthusiasm* are *en*-within and *theos*-God. Let God’s presence be known as relationships are built in the midst of volunteer ministries.
- Use creativity and flexibility in training volunteers:
  - host mini-training events on specific topics
  - consider mentoring and apprenticeship opportunities
  - train in small “bytes” with e-mail messages providing helpful tips, ideas, and procedural information.
- Develop a quick-reference “handbook” for volunteers with information regarding classroom schedules, supplies and equipment, safety and security procedures, who to contact with specific questions, a calendar of events (see page 20), or protocol for a variety of situations such as inclement weather or substitute teachers.
- Provide scholarships or assistance (such as child care) so volunteers may attend synodical leadership events, workshops, or other training opportunities.

*“...for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.”*

*Romans 11:29*





*Volunteers are vital to Christian ministry.*



## **A**FFIRMED

- Commission leaders, affirming the Holy Spirit's action in their calling and sending (see page 6).
- Set volunteers on a path for success by clearly stating expectations and procedures (see page 19).
- Communication is critical in helping volunteers feel affirmed and supported. Regular e-mail messages or mini-newsletters offer timely information, planning details, and point out the interconnectedness of various congregational and community ministries.
- Value volunteers by ensuring they have the tools, materials, equipment, and connections with other leaders needed to maximize the gifts they bring to the ministry.
- Offer regular two-way feedback. Volunteers often resign when they are unsure their contribution is making an impact or when they do not feel challenged.
- Closure (exit) interviews allow volunteers the occasion to reflect on their experience and to offer suggestions and ideas that might benefit the ministry and support future volunteers.

## **L**ED TO LEAD

- Encourage volunteer leaders to model discipleship by regularly engaging in prayer, worship, personal spiritual growth, and other practices of the faith.
- Establish patterns and networks for accountability.
- Invite volunteers to apprentice, mentor, or train other leaders.
- Foster ownership. Let volunteers sense that their skills and opinions are valued. Empower leaders to take initiative in shaping the contours of effective Christian education in your congregation.
- An individual or a group of leaders may see a need in the congregation and self-initiate a way to address the situation. In cases like this, stand aside and allow the seeds of a new ministry to take root. Empower leaders to take initiative in shaping the contours of ministry in your congregation.
- In your identification and acknowledgement of leaders, don't overlook children and youth.





# GIFTS OF THE COMMUNITY: CALLED, GATHERED, AND SENT

## Reimaging Ministry

Those who plan for educational ministries in the congregation often find it an overwhelming task to identify, recruit, train, and coordinate leaders for the many tasks involved in carrying out dynamic, engaging, challenging, faith-nurturing opportunities for growing disciples of all ages. Sometimes they fall back on the 20/80 syndrome described on page 10 and either do it themselves, find a few volunteers who can be relied upon to do the bulk of the work, or simply abandon the task.

Unfortunately, this scenario rarely produces enduring, creative, engaging Christian education experiences. More importantly, when we overlook the gifts of the community, we are not only dishonoring God's intent for the church but we set speed bumps in the way of those equipped to serve God and others. The way volunteer leaders are called, gathered, and sent IS a ministry set in motion by God's creative and redemptive activity on earth.

- Each of us is created as a unique and wonderfully-made child of God. We come bearing a richly diverse abundance of gifts, abilities, experiences, passions, and a need to belong and contribute to the congregation, and to make a difference in the world.
- At baptism, we are welcomed into the family of God and embraced by the congregation—a community of spiritual formation.

- As Jesus called the disciples and others he encountered, Christ showed us how to build upon the gifts of the individual and celebrate the unique contribution each made to the community and the ministry.
- The gifts of the Spirit “inspired” in each Christian call forth and empower us to do our part in making Christ known. (see pages 9–11)
- Volunteers and other leaders in the congregation deserve the opportunity to respond to God's gracious love and abundant gifts.
- Volunteer ministry meets many of the needs of the congregation. It also enriches one's discipleship journey as the individual is called alongside others to prayer, study, worship, invitation, encouragement, service, giving, and other faith practices.



*The way volunteer leaders are called, gathered, and sent IS a ministry set in motion by God's creative and redemptive activity on earth.*



*When a congregation pays attention to using the spiritual gifts, abilities, dreams, and interests of each individual, it's like hitting the “refresh” button on the computer.*

## Gifts of the Community Called, Gathered, and Sent

Imagine what might happen if 50 people were empowered to actively be involved in the educational ministries of the congregation by offering *just one gift or skill*. It's not about getting the job done. Instead, it is about fulfilling God's desire for the Body of Christ and giving opportunity for gifted leaders to live out their call to ministry. Consider the 50 roles below as a jump-start for reimagining a new way of being open to the gifts those in the congregation can offer educational ministry.

**Now take your imagination one step further.** Beside each descriptor, jot the name or initials of someone in the congregation who is interested and skilled to carry out the task. Chances are, you were able to think of at least one child, youth, adult, or senior adult perfectly suited for that ministry.

**Imagine 50 people, from all generations and all abilities empowered to use their gifts as a/an...**

- actor
- artist
- A.V. "techie"
- baker
- "buddy"
- bulletin board artist
- carpenter
- choir member
- Christian clowning/mime
- Christian coach or mentor
- community service coordinator
- computer whiz
- costume constructor
- craft leader
- curriculum manager
- decorator
- devotional writer
- driver
- evangelist/outreach
- games/sports coordinator
- gardener
- global mission educator
- health/wellness coordinator
- home visitor
- instrumentalist
- meal/snack expert
- CE newsletter editor
- nursery attendant
- office assistant
- peer minister
- photographer/videographer
- poet/lyricist
- pray-er
- publicity/communicator
- puppets leader
- "rainbow-bag" coordinator
- record keeper
- retreat leader
- safety/screening coordinator
- scavenger/shopper
- scrap book/archivist
- small group shepherd
- song leader
- special events planner
- spiritual mentor
- storyteller
- supply closet "angel"
- teacher
- telephone tree initiator
- trainer



...it is about fulfilling God's desire for the Body of Christ and giving opportunity for gifted leaders to live out their call to ministry.



# SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION

A ministry description may include information as in the example below. Adapt and reformat it to suit your particular needs and context:

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

**Ministry Position Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Gifts and Abilities Required:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Basic Responsibilities:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Time Required:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Length of Service:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Working Relationships:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Accountability:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Training and Support Provided:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Review and Evaluation:** \_\_\_\_\_

For information on these topics and suggested resources, go to

[www.elca.org/christianeducation/  
programplanners/  
2005CEprogramplanner](http://www.elca.org/christianeducation/programplanners/2005CEprogramplanner)



## ENSURING A SAFE AND NURTURING ENVIRONMENT

Our Christian mandate in proclaiming the dignity and sacredness of each child of God prompts us to enable all people to live full and abundant lives in Christ. The congregation has a responsibility to ensure a safe, and nurturing environment for children, youth, and (in some cases) those with disabilities, while attending church activities. It also has a responsibility to those providing its ministries to clearly articulate policies and procedures designed to safeguard all those involved and to foster consistent and loving application of these principles. Congregations are urged to intentionally develop policies and procedures regarding:

- selection and screening of paid and volunteer staff who work with children, youth, and those living with disabilities
- implementing healthy and safe practices for all those engaged in ministry activities involving children and youth
- articulating ways parents, leaders, and the congregation share responsibility in upholding the principles of safety, dignity and well-being for all
- reporting and responding to suspected incidences of child abuse
- designing, sharing, and implementing medical or other emergency procedures
- positive and pro-active, loving and respectful discipline procedures
- guidelines for acceptable media use (movies, music, magazines); transportation, “off-campus” activities or retreats, consent forms
- alignment with state and local regulations and insurance requirements

*Utilize these pages to plan and schedule your congregation's activities and offerings in Christian education and discipleship. The right side of the calendar is a place for thematic notes, reminders, and connections to other areas of congregational life.*

**DATE**

*Notes, Reminders, and Connections*

**SEPTEMBER 2005**

4

**11**

14: Holy Cross Day

18

25

**OCTOBER 2005**

2

9

16

23

**30**

Reformation Sunday

**NOVEMBER 2005**

**6**

All Saints Sunday; **10:** Martin Luther's Birthday

13

**20**

Christ the King Sunday

**27**

1st Sunday in Advent

**DECEMBER 2005**

4

11

18

**25**

The Nativity of Our Lord

**JANUARY 2006**

**1**

6: The Epiphany of Our Lord

**8**

The Baptism of Our Lord

15

22

**29**

February 2: The Presentation of Our Lord

**FEBRUARY 2006**

5

12

19

**26**

Transfiguration of Our Lord; **March 1:** Ash Wednesday





# 2005-2006 PLANNING CALENDAR

DATE

Notes, Reminders, and Connections

Complete the calendar before distributing it to teachers, staff, and other congregational leaders.

MARCH 2006

- 5
- 12
- 19
- 26

APRIL 2006

- 2
- 9 Palm Sunday
- 16 The Resurrection of Our Lord
- 23
- 30

MAY 2006

- 7
- 14
- 21 May 25: The Ascension of Our Lord
- 28

JUNE 2006

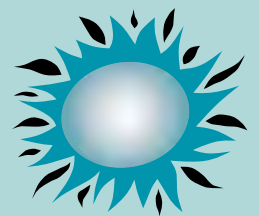
- 4 The Day of Pentecost
- 11 The Holy Trinity
- 18
- 25

JULY 2006

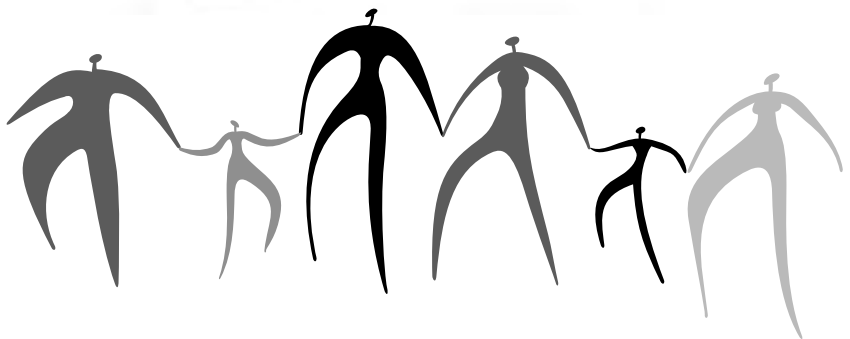
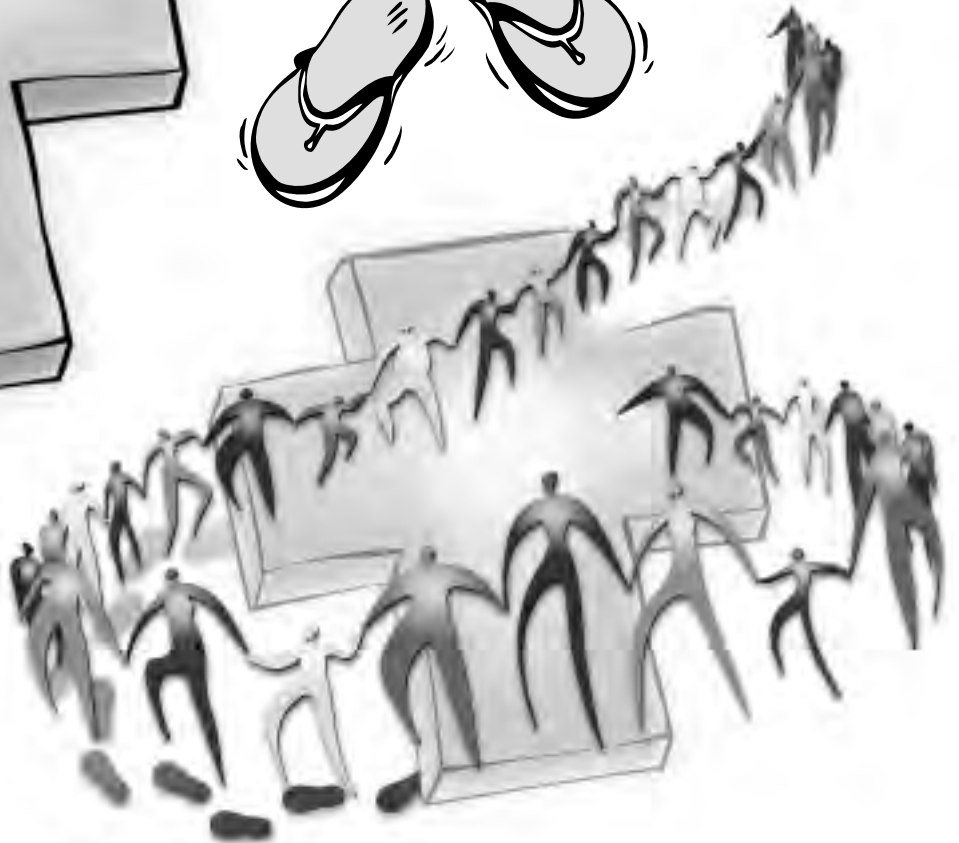
- 2
- 9
- 16
- 23
- 30

AUGUST 2006

- 6
- 13
- 20
- 27



# LED TO LEAD



# ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

For additional leadership information and resources visit the following Web sites:

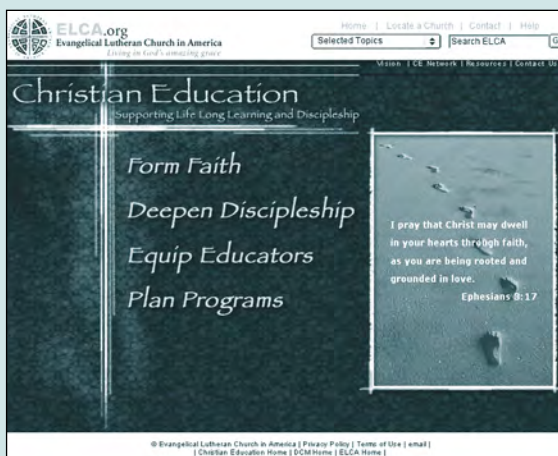


- Alban Institute  
[www.alban.org/](http://www.alban.org/)
- Augsburg Fortress  
[www.augsburgfortress.org/](http://www.augsburgfortress.org/)
- ELCA Division for Higher Education and Schools  
[www.elca.org/education/](http://www.elca.org/education/)
- ELCA Division for Ministry  
[www.elca.org/ministry/](http://www.elca.org/ministry/)
- Leadership Network  
[www.leadnet.org/](http://www.leadnet.org/)
- Search Institute  
[www.search-institute.org](http://www.search-institute.org)
- Women of the ELCA  
[www.womenoftheelca.org/](http://www.womenoftheelca.org/)
- Youth and Family Institute  
[www.youthandfamilyinstitute.org/](http://www.youthandfamilyinstitute.org/)



## *Please visit*

the ELCA Christian Education Web site where you will find the full contents of this resource and supporting materials; former annual Christian Education planners, assessment tools, and many other resources for leaders in educational ministry.



[www.elca.org/christianeducation/  
programplanners/  
2005CEProgramPlanner](http://www.elca.org/christianeducation/programplanners/2005CEProgramPlanner)



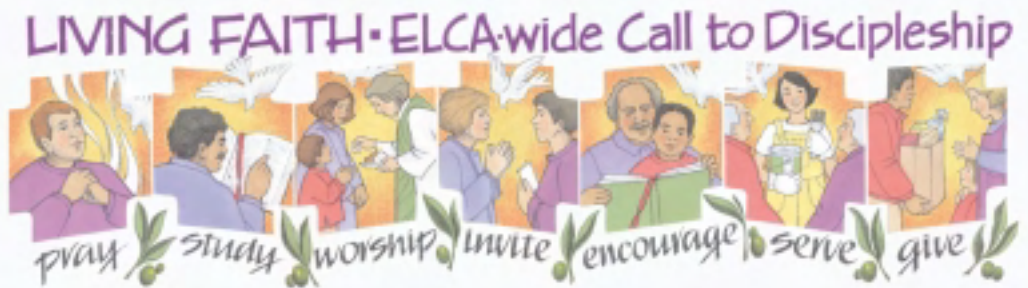
PLEASE ROUTE TO  
*your primary  
Christian  
education leader:  
Sunday school  
superintendent,  
Director of  
Christian  
Education or  
Pastor.*

# LED TO LEAD

AN ONGOING EXPRESSION OF THE CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP

2005–2006

## Christian Education Planning Guide



Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America

*Living in God's amazing grace*

Copyright © 2005 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.  
Permission is granted to photocopy this resource, provided  
copies are for local use only and each copy carries all  
copyright acknowledgments found in the publication.

Manufactured in USA

Additional copies can be ordered by calling 800/638-3522  
ext. 2594. The full contents of this resource can be found at  
[www.elca.org/christianeducation/programplanners/2005CE  
ProgramPlanner/](http://www.elca.org/christianeducation/programplanners/2005CEProgramPlanner/)