

New Member Orientation

How Do We Live Our Baptism? Five Gifts of Discipleship

Background

People join the Lutheran church by baptism, affirmation of baptism, or transfer from another Lutheran church. As prospective members gather for an orientation, here is a simple outline which not only introduces your congregation, but uses the Five Gifts of Discipleship of the Affirmation of Baptism to explore what it means to live our baptism. (See Handout #1)

Lesson Plan

Session 1: Called and Gathered

Focus: Inner Gifts of Discipleship

Live among God's faithful people; Hear the word of God; Share in the Lord's supper

Welcome & Get acquainted

As people gather, encourage each person to sign his or her own name (and family members) on a slip of paper. Create a paper chain by connecting the slips of paper by tape or staples.

Opening Prayer Handout #1

Use the Affirmation of Baptism. Introduce Five Gifts of Discipleship

Session 1

90 minutes
(Can be adapted)

Supplies

Slips of paper for
paper chain
Stapler or tape
Pens
Bibles
Small Catechisms

People of The Word ... told through story

Lutherans are part of a story, linked with those of the past, present, and future.

Story of the Bible—The Bible is a library of books which tells the stories of humanity at its best and worst. But more than that, the Bible is a story of God's love. It is where we go to discover the good news of Jesus.

1. *What are some of your favorite stories in the Bible?*
2. *When and where do you have a chance to hear the word of God?*
3. *Add links to the paper chain: persons of the Bible*

Story of Reformation—Martin Luther struggled because he understood himself as both saint and sinner. How could he face God? In reading scripture, Luther discovered God's grace and his own "justification by faith alone." On October 31, 1517, Luther posted his protests against unbiblical practices and teachings of the church, sparking the reformation.

4. *What else do you know about the Reformation? What reforms need to happen today?*
5. *What tips did Luther give about living among God's faithful people? (See Small Catechism)*
6. *Add links so the paper chain: Martin Luther, his wife Katie*

Story of Church—Luther wrote in the Small Catechism that the Holy Spirit "...calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth and keep it united with Jesus Christ in the one true faith."

7. *Add links to the paper chain: names of other churches*

Story of Your Congregation—Share the history and mission of your congregation.

8. *Add links to the paper chain: those who have taught you the faith; Take a tour of the church.*

Conclusion—Prayer in Sanctuary: Take the paper chain with you on the tour. Conclude with a prayer which includes all those on the paper chain. Give thanks for the chance to live among God's faithful people, hear the word of God, and share in the Lord's supper.



Lesson Plan

Session 2: Sent

Focus: Outer Gifts of Discipleship

Proclaim the good news of God in word and deed; Serve all people, following the example of Jesus; Strive for justice and peace in all the earth

Welcome & Get acquainted

Opening Prayer: Gather around the Light of the World

Light a candle and pray

Read: "Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." (John 8:12 NRSV)

Briefly discuss the following questions:

1. *Jesus said, "I am the light of the world." What did he mean?*
2. *What does it mean for us "to never walk in darkness"?*
3. *How does Jesus light our way when we experience grief and troubled times?*

The Role of Worship and Prayer

We gather with other believers for worship and in prayer so we might praise God, be inspired by the word of God, support others on their journey of faith, and be encouraged to live our baptism. Take time to review the order of worship, bulletins, lectionary lessons, and hymnals as tools to grow in discipleship.

Sent to be Light

The following verse is often read at baptism, "Let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." (*Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, p. 231)

4. *What does it mean for a Christian to let his or her light to shine as a way of giving God glory?*

Get Real!

Give examples of how a person in daily life might do the following and identify possible risks:

- **proclaim** the good news of God in Christ through word and deed
- **serve** all people, following the example of Jesus
- **strive** for justice and peace in all the earth

Review the Five Gifts of Discipleship *Handout #1*

In baptism, we have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever. Our future is secured by the grace of God. We are lifelong learners in the living of our baptism as we discover our God given gifts to be used for the sake of the world.

Take a minute to review the five gifts of discipleship:

5. *Which of the gifts will be the easiest to discover and integrate into your life?*
6. *Which of the gifts will be the most challenging?*
7. *How can we support one another as we follow Jesus Christ?*

Concluding Prayer

Use the Affirmation of Baptism (Handout #1) or Affirmation of Baptism prayer (See page 4.) For a keepsake, print prayer on cardstock or create a magnet.

Session 2

90 minutes
(Can be adapted)

Supplies

Copies of Handout #1
Candle, matches
Bulletins
Hymnals

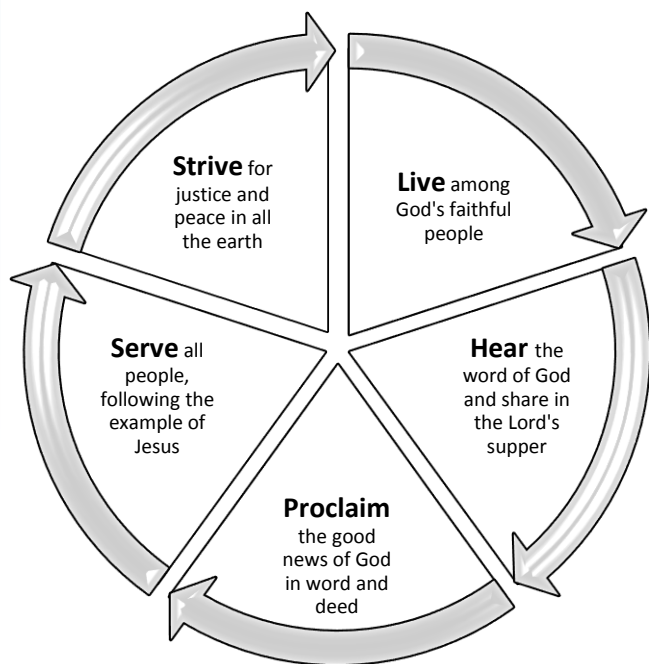


Affirmation of Baptism

Handout #1

Do you intend to continue in the covenant God made with you in Holy Baptism:
to **live** among God's faithful people,
to **hear** the word of God and share in the Lord's supper,
to **proclaim** the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,
to **serve** all people, following the example of Jesus,
to **strive** for justice and peace in all the earth?

RESPONSE: I do, and I ask God to help and guide me.



FIVE GIFTS OF DISCIPLESHIP

Inner Gifts:

LIVE among God's faithful people

HEAR the word of God and **SHARE** in the Lord's supper

Outer Gifts:

PROCLAIM the good news of God in Christ through word and deed

SERVE all people, following the example of Jesus

STRIVE for justice and peace in all the earth

How are these gifts to be used?

Each of the five gifts of discipleship has the potential to deepen our understanding of what it means to follow Jesus. The Holy Spirit provides these gifts of discipleship with each of the five gifts flowing and overlapping with the others.

On a daily basis, we are invited to live, hear, share, proclaim, serve, and strive—in the name of Christ. God guides and shapes us in the living of our baptism in the newness of life in Christ as we practice our faith each day. These five gifts help us to practice our faith and serve as a reminder of who has claimed us in baptism.

If we do not practice faith, it is easy to get confused, complacent, chase other dreams, lose focus, and wander away from God's calling—not reflecting our new life in Christ and the love of God. It is God's work, but our hands as we are sent out into the world to be a visible witness to the love of Christ.



LIVING OUR **BAPTISM**...*Five gifts of discipleship*

Gracious God,
Send your Holy Spirit. Awaken in me the gifts of discipleship:
to live among God's faithful people,
to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper,
to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,
to serve all people, following the example of Jesus,
to strive for justice and peace in all the earth. Amen.



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



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

Living our Baptism: New Member Orientation, written by Robin McCullough-Bade
May be reproduced for local, non-sale use provided the copyright notice is included.
www.elca.org/faithpractices Copyright © 2017 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America