

Module 2: Luther's Learning Centers – Communion of Saints

The Communion of Saints activity is designed to be one of six Luther Learning Centers. Participants will grow in their understanding of their identity, role and sense of belonging to the Communion of Saints. Participants will make headbands to signify their membership in the Communion of Saints and create a personal gift strips to weave through a church-shaped loom which is designed to celebrate the variety of God-given gifts, roles and abilities God bestows upon individuals living and growing within the "Priesthood of all Believers."

A musical component has been designed to create a sense of continuity between the theme and individual program offerings. A variety of rhythmic raps have been composed to highlight the key learnings at each Learning Center. A Musical Revue sheet is provided to display the rhythm raps and celebrate the fact that Martin Luther "rocked" the church with his own rhythms and beliefs. In fact, Luther loved music and often wrote songs based on rhythms and melodies that were familiar to the people to help make worship and education more relevant.

Church House Rock "For Here/To Go" packs are provided to transport crafts and other learning materials. The Wittenberg Door Openers or Gathering Activities introduce and distribute these resources for participants to use as they move through the Luther's Learning Centers.

The Leader's Notes for this activity, along with any needed preparations and supplies, are outlined below. A Program Planning Grid (PDF file) is available to assist you in coordinating the many details and tasks involved. Scan through the activity and adapt it to enrich your own schedule and intent. You might also consider using it to enrich other intergenerational or age specific events throughout the year.

Note: You may wish to display signs to distinguish Luther's Learning Centers from the Wittenberg Door Openers.

Approximate time: 10-15 minutes

Equipment and Supplies:

- Strips of cloth, 3" wide and approximately at least 24" long
- A Copy of the pattern for a church-shaped loom (PDF file)
- A copy of the Communion of Saints reference sheet (PDF file)
- Overhead transparency film
- 1 or more sheets of poster board
- Markers, fabric or permanent
- Copies of Rhythm Rap sheet C (PDF file)
- Extra copies of the Church House Rock Rhythmic Revue sheet (PDF file)
- Sheets of adhesive 1 1/3" x 4" labels

Leaders Notes:

You may wish to recruit a few people to partner with you in completing some of the initial steps involved.

Use 1 1/3" x 4" adhesive labels to make copies of the "Life Forever, We're Together" rhythm sheet. Encourage participants to attach a label to their Rhythmic Revue sheet to celebrate faith as integral to following Jesus. Be sure to have a few extra Revue sheets available for participants who may not have received one.

Practice, tapping or clapping, the rhythm identified on the rhythm sheet. Then, incorporate the words to perform the rap. Participants who were involved in the Wittenberg Door Opener Activity: The Church

House Rock Rhythmic Revue may already be familiar with the rhythm. Plan to use this exercise to highlight the primary point of this activity.

Draw a large block print of the letter “I” on poster board with enough space within the letter to write several names.

Use the following directions to make a weaving loom.

Print the church pattern onto a sheet of an overhead transparency (or print onto paper and photocopy the design onto the transparency.) Use an overhead projector to enlarge the design onto the poster board.

Carefully cut along the outline of the church design. Also cut along the center lines to create a “loom.”

Use the following directions to make a sample headband and strip to weave through the loom.¹

Cut two strips of cloth for each participant. Make them long enough to tie a headband around an adult-size head.

Design one strip to wear as a headband. Decorate it with your name and a cross or another symbol of faith.

Prepare another strip to weave through the loom. Write one role you like to play or gift you like to share in your congregation or faith community, e.g. a spiritual gift, service on a committee, involvement in a choir or another activity, worship attendance.

Weave this “gift” strip through the loom to illustrate the wide variety of gifts God gives each person to sustain and strengthen God’s past, present and future church in heaven and earth.

Activity:

Display poster board highlighting the letter “I.” Ask participants to share some “I” statements, e.g. such as “I like ice cream” or “I am twelve years old.” Then, ask them if there is ever a time when the word “I” represents more than one person. Clue them into a time during worship when everybody stands recites a statement that begins with an “I” statement. Recall that it can be found in the creed or a statement of faith. It begins with...(Ask them to fill in the blank) “I Believe.”

Refer to the Communion of Saints reference sheet as you invite them to recite the third article of the Apostle’s Creed. Point out that this is a time when the word “I” is intended to signify more than one person. In fact, it represents more than everyone who goes to your church! Emphasize that it is meant to represent everyone in the past, present and future who has or ever will believe in God, the Creator, Savior, and Holy Spirit.

Invite them to take a moment to write their names inside the letter “I” on the poster board. Then, have them add the names of cousins, grandmas and grandpas and great grandmas and grandpas.

Display the poster board as you define the people within the letter “I” as the “Communion of Saints.”

Define the word “communion” as a gathering of people and the word “saints” as “faithful believers.” Tell them that the “Communion of Saints” is actually a gathering of all the people who believed in Jesus in the past, all the people who believe in Jesus now, and all the people who will believe in Jesus in the future. Ask them to guess how many million people that might be! Point out that they all have one thing in common—a living faith in Jesus Christ.

¹ Headbands were adapted from “The Miracle of God,” *GROUP Magazine’s Best Youth Group Programs*, page 201, copyright ©1986 Thom Schultz Publications, Inc.

Invite participants to make a "Believer's headband to identify themselves as a member of the "Communion of Saints."

Then, proceed to clarify that the Communion of Saints is not just a group of people that just stand around and say the "I Believe" creeds together. They have always been busy sharing God's love and good news with the people all over the world. Children, youth, adults, pastors and parents, kids who believe in Jesus have all been uniquely gifted with God-given talents and abilities to sing, act and share their faith. Tell them, "No one is more important in the communion of saints than (pointing in all directions) you or you or you!"

Encourage participants to make a gift strip to weave through the church-shaped loom. It is designed to celebrate the wide variety of gifts, roles and opportunities that God gives individuals to sustain and strengthen God's past, present and future church on earth. Display your loom and share the guidelines for completing this project.

You might also visualize the special connection you have with people who already have gone to be with Jesus by making gift strips to celebrate their inclusion in the communion of saints and weaving them through the church-shaped loom.

Distribute copies of the rhythm rap as you highlight the key learning for this activity center. Invite participants to attach the labels to their Church House Rock Rhythmic Revue sheets. Then, encourage them to tap out the rhythm with you before adding the words to perform the rap.