

RESILIENCY: A Parent's Guide

We are living in unprecedented times—a health pandemic filled with economic uncertainty and unresolved racism. This added to the challenges of being a parent.

Grief upon grief.
Uncertainty upon uncertainty.

Where to begin?

Take a breath. This too shall pass.

Remember the words of Jesus, “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.” (John 14:18)

Remember: Jesus comes through the Holy Spirit to comfort, guide and give us strength to face the day, but also the long nights.

Remember: You are not alone. God provides others to be beacons of hope and to help us discern meaning.

Baptism

We, as parents and sponsors, stand at the baptismal font and promise to help our children to grow in the Christian faith and life. This guide is designed to assist parents fulfil those promises by using the same Affirmation of Baptism which our children will recite at their confirmation.

The five gifts of discipleship from the Affirmation of Baptism can be divided into two categories: the inward and outward gifts. These Spirit-inspired gifts overlap and intertwine as one gift flows into another and into faithful living.

Inward Gifts of Discipleship:

- Live among God's faithful people
- Hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper

Outward Gifts of Discipleship:

- 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

Take time to explore and unwrap these gifts with your children. Create family rituals. Be open to the ways the gifts of discipleship can shape your parenting.



OTHERS

Live among God's People

HOPE

Hear the word
Proclaim good news

MEANING

Serve as Jesus
Strive for peace and justice



INWARD GIFTS of DISCIPLESHIP

HEAR THE WORD OF GOD

ADULTS:

- Model the importance of God’s word in your life by setting aside time to read, ponder, and pray. If this is not your current practice, now is a good time to begin.
- Start by reading about the life of Jesus in one of the gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. Or, use the free ELCA Bible studies based on the lectionary. See: elca.org/Resources/Bible-Studies
- Ponder your reading throughout the day.
- Use a journal to record your reflections on God’s Word spoken through the Bible.
- Make a priority to model faith practices, beginning with hearing the word of God.

CHILDREN:

- Read to young children from one of the many beautifully illustrated books which are available in hard-copy or online.
- Provide videos of Bible stories which are age-appropriate for your children.
- Encourage children to dramatize one of the stories of scripture. Involve the whole family!
- Check with your church office for old Sunday School or Vacation Bible School curriculum that you might adapt for your family.

YOUTH:


- Encourage older children to read from an age-appropriate version of the Bible.
- Utilize online resources which make the stories of the Bible come alive.

LIVE AMONG GOD’S FAITHFUL PEOPLE


- Connect (and stay connected) to a faith community.
- Take advantage of the creative virtual worship services provided during the pandemic. Create a pattern of worship, followed by a family-oriented activity. Savor the time together.
- Arrange to worship online with your out-of-state family members—especially on special occasions. Add virtual family time afterwards.
- Contact others in your church to check on them. Allow them to check on you.
- Find a small group of parents who are meeting via the internet. Support each other during these challenging times.
- Have fun with others of your church by planning a virtual game night. This might include a scavenger hunt where families are given a list of items to find items within their own households.
- Find ways to connect your children with others from your congregation for an activity beyond worship. This might include adopting a grandparent for the pandemic.

RESILIENCY tips


OTHERS

 *List those who are part of your family support system. How might that circle be strengthened or expanded?*

HOPE

 *As a family, choose a “phrase” which gives hope to your family. Write it down, decorate the page and post it in your home.*

MEANING

 *Give thanks for each family member as a child of God who has a unique purpose for being.*



OUTWARD GIFTS of DISCIPLESHIP

PROCLAIM THE GOOD NEWS OF GOD IN CHRIST THROUGH WORD AND DEED

- Be real. Children understand a lot! There is much bad news these days, but naming bad news doesn't make it worse. Just the opposite. It releases something deep inside of us. So, go ahead, ask children to name "the bad news" which includes corona virus, death, fear, and much more. Listen! Take seriously their comments.
- Name the good news! That includes God's endless love for each of us and God's promise to get us through tough times. Name stories which describe Jesus bringing good news to someone.
- Conclude with giving one another the sign of the cross on each other's foreheads and saying these words, "Go be the good news of God in Christ!"

SERVE ALL PEOPLE, FOLLOWING THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST

- Hold an official family meeting to plan an afternoon of LOVE! Who needs encouragement from your family? Consider baking cookies, making cards, or helping with a neighbor's yard. When finished, reflect with your family on how it feels to serve others as Christ.
- End each day by asking the following questions to each of your children:
 - How did you help someone today?
 - Who helped you today?
 Remember each of these persons in your prayers as you ask God to watch over them and your family.


STRIVE FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE IN ALL THE EARTH

- Hold a family meeting to openly and honestly discuss "Peace in Our Family." When is it hard to get along? What can be done to de-escalate situations? Seek consensus on moving forward in peace. For the next hour? Day? Month?
- Begin a conversation about bullies. Explore if your children have ever been a victim of a bully. How does it feel? What are options to respond if and when we are bullied? When, if ever, do your children take on the role of a bully? What triggers that behavior? What other actions and behavior could be chosen?
- Discuss the phrase "Black Lives Matter" with your children. Be prepared to describe how blacks have been mistreated in the past—even owned by whites—and continue to be treated unfairly by many today. Explore ways your children can strive for justice and peace in their daily life.




RESILIENCY tips


OTHERS

 List those who need support. How might your family be a strength to others?

HOPE

 Create and decorate symbols or phrases of hope. Share these expressions of hope with those who need encouragement.

MEANING

 Find ways to regularly celebrate the unique gifts of each member of your family.



OUR FAMILY'S PLAN

When life seems uncertain and beyond our control, it is critical to make healthy choices concerning our behavior. Children thrive when they can count on certain patterns to their day. This is especially true during times of stress,

Take time to consider the patterns of your family and how those routines can expand to include the five gifts of discipleship.

OUR WEEK

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

OUR DAY

Morning

Afternoon

Evening

AFFIRMATION of BAPTISM

(Evangelical Lutheran Worship, p. 236)

In your own house, set aside time to affirm baptism. This can be part of your personal devotions or with your family.

When a baptized Christian affirms the faith (often called confirmation) the presiding minister addresses those making public affirmation of baptism and asks the question:

QUESTION:

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,
and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?

RESPONSE: We do, and ask God to help and guide us.

PRAYER

Gracious God,
Send your Holy Spirit. Awaken in me the gifts of discipleship. Guide me to nurture my children to love Jesus and to:

+live among God's faithful people,
+hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper,
+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.
Amen

MORE RESOURCES

More Five Gifts of Discipleship resources are available on the ELCA website: www.elca.org/Faith-Practices

