

LutheranTM

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Inside this issue:

*Faith-
building
tips for
every age
and stage*



your faith in the world



Your faith—your identity as a baptized and loved child of God—influences all parts of your life, not just Sunday morning. Every day, you have countless opportunities to share and exhibit your faith to those around you. Wherever and to whomever life takes you, God goes with you and equips you to serve Him and your neighbor.

As you wash dishes, lead worship, file paperwork, coach soccer, sew quilts, drive the carpool, teach Sunday School, lay concrete, solve a math problem, or read the Bible, remember your identity in Christ and recognize your calling to love and serve others.



ASPECTS TO MAKING YOUR FAITH PART OF YOUR ENTIRE LIFE

Why is it so easy to compartmentalize our faith? Because the world presses in on us, tempting us to renounce our faith. Sometimes we try to balance this tug-of-war between church and the world by going to worship on Sunday but not expressing our faith around people we encounter outside of church.

So how can we work toward living out our faith in our daily lives?

1

READ THE BIBLE AND FIND JESUS IN EACH PASSAGE.

When you finish your devotion, ask yourself, “What did I learn about Jesus today?” As we learn more about God’s Word and His Son, we come to understand that we are all sinners and that Jesus lived, died, and was resurrected to forgive our sins. Understanding the purpose of Jesus’ mission helps us also understand our identity as sinners who are forgiven.

2

RECOGNIZE YOUR IDENTITY AND CALLING.

In Baptism, God washes away our sins and welcomes us into His kingdom. Our identity as baptized, forgiven children of God never changes. After God fills us up with His love in His Word and Sacraments at church, He sends us out into the world to serve our neighbors and to share His message of salvation. **Identify specific situations in which you can live out your identity as a child of God.**

3

IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE GOD AND YOUR NEIGHBORS.

We can serve whomever we encounter wherever God has placed us—at church, at home, at school or work, and in the world. Our service to neighbors has two aspects: compassionately helping them and telling them about Jesus. **Identify specific situations in which you can serve or share the Gospel with someone.**

No one can live out his or her faith perfectly (except Jesus). So when you don’t end up doing something the way you want to, look to Jesus and recognize He is bringing His good work to completion. Approach each situation as a learning opportunity and rest in God’s promise of complete forgiveness.

FAITH DEVELOPMENT IN TODDLERS

Toddlers need to feel unconditional love and acceptance. They need to interact with adults in positive ways. As we teach them, we need to show interest and concern for each child. This is how young children begin to understand God's love for them.

WORSHIP

Toddlers like copying simple worship as they begin to learn about church. Learning simple rituals like folding their hands for prayer becomes meaningful to them. Prayers, songs, and Bible stories are learning opportunities, although the process, not the content, might be more meaningful at this age. Toddlers relate to the idea of family and feel like they're a part of God's family too. They can learn to recognize the Bible as "God's book."

MUSIC

Toddlers need opportunities to pray, praise, and sing. They enjoy action songs and acting out Bible stories. The concept of "friend" is beginning to take root at this age, so they respond to the idea that Jesus is their friend. They understand that the Bible is special. They like feeling that they are part of God's family.

STORYTELLING

Dramatic play, with children imitating the teacher's actions, appeals to toddlers. They like "sound" words. "Jesus' friends threw their nets into the lake to catch fish. Splash! Splash!" The children repeat "Splash! Splash!" "When they pulled the nets up (teacher pretends to pull up a net), the nets were full of fish. Flip flop. Flip flop." The teacher flip flops his or her hands, which the children imitate as they say "flip flop." They enjoy interacting with the storyteller.

PRAYER

Toddlers feel comfortable talking to Jesus, although their prayers are egocentric. They will pray for scratched knees or new toys, but once again, it's the process that's important. To enable young children to reach this point, start with short echo prayers. Give them time to pray for what's in their heart. Although they are just learning to put their words together to work for them, the more they are allowed to say, the more their vocabulary grows, and the more comfortable they become praying.

Adapted from *Building Faith One Child at a Time*, pages 113–14, 117–18
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FAITH DEVELOPMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

Early childhood students express their love for Jesus in songs, art, prayers, and worship. They make up their own prayers and are able to ask for forgiveness. They want to love and obey God. Teachers and other adults need to furnish them with frequent reminders of God's love.

STORYTELLING

Some children this age are ready to predict what will happen next in a story. They can discuss what a story is about and relate it to their own lives. "Jesus loved the little children. He loves and blesses me too!" Dramatizing stories is an especially effective way to teach children this age. Some children feel comfortable being a main character in the story; others can be rocks or trees. They are capable of echo pantomiming the teacher's words and actions. Dressing up for their part in the story adds to the fun.

ART

Many children can listen to a Bible story and then draw a picture about it. They are still mastering their art skills, but they think about their drawing before they begin and plan what they want to include. Children like adding words to their pictures and use inventive spellings to tell a story. They also evaluate their work, sometimes becoming so disgusted with unacceptable work that they crumple it up and throw it away before anyone else sees it.

MUSIC

Singing is a pleasing activity for early childhood students. Songs are beginning to make sense to them, and they can talk about the truths that are found in songs. Children this age have a repertoire of memorized songs. They quickly learn new songs, especially those with repeated choruses. Their sense of rhythm is improving, as is their response to the tempo of a song. They enjoy making up their own songs and melodies.

PRAYER

Early childhood students express their love for Jesus and identify that He died on the cross. They use the names Jesus and God interchangeably. They know that wrongdoings are sins, and because of their cognitive and moral development, they believe that God loves good people and hates bad people. They recognize sin but, like many of us, they see it more readily in others than in themselves. They pray their own prayers, but more in imitation than felt need. The felt needs they pray about tend to be very concrete and self-centered: "Help me find my cat."

Adapted from *Building Faith One Child at a Time*, pages 121, 124–25
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FAITH DEVELOPMENT IN EARLY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Younger children in this age group trust God in the same way they trust adults in their lives. They talk about God as their Father and Jesus as God's Son, but they still confuse God and Jesus. Older children begin to understand the difference between God the Father and Jesus; some add the concept of the Holy Spirit to their base of knowledge.

SIN AND FORGIVENESS

Children in this age group express their love for Jesus and know that He died on the cross to forgive their sins. However, they often have trouble identifying the sin in their own lives and lack true repentance. They consider actions to be wrong only when punished. Because they think in concrete terms and not abstract, they can apply the "letter of the law" but not the "spirit of the law." Therefore, we focus on simple, clear messages from God's Word, messages that do not require complex thought.

PRAYER

Model prayer so students feel comfortable praying aloud. Don't limit prayer time to just one or two specific times during your class. Pray as the need arises. Silent prayer, group prayer, memorized prayers, and popcorn prayers can all be utilized to make children aware of the variety of ways we can talk to God.

Younger children are more egocentric than older ones. Older children often pray for others first and then pray for themselves. Although early elementary children have trouble recognizing their own sinfulness, when they do see their sin they pray for forgiveness and ask others to forgive them. They need to hear that they are forgiven for their wrongs. They pray for those who don't know Jesus, especially for those who are family members.



BIBLE READING

With their love of information, some students might possess almost as much Bible knowledge as the teacher. For others, the teacher might be their first introduction to God and His love in Jesus.

Early elementary students ought to have access to Bibles and learn how to look up specific passages. They need opportunities to read from the Bible itself. Encourage them to read their Bibles at home with their families as well.

Adapted from *Building Faith One Child at a Time*, pages 139–40, 145–46
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FAITH DEVELOPMENT IN UPPER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Upper elementary students like to talk about their faith and discuss issues that bother them. They are adept at listening to the opinions of others, and peers can often answer their questions as clearly as the teacher is able. They want to know how to apply their faith to everyday situations.

WORSHIP

Meaningful worship is important to upper elementary students. When congregations offer children's sermons, these students often see themselves as too old for that message. They are aware of those who don't know Jesus, and they demonstrate concern for their salvation. They are eager to learn ways they can comfortably share their faith with others.

SIN AND FORGIVENESS

Although students still have a need for fairness in their lives, they are becoming better able to grasp the concept of Law and Gospel. They like to identify ways God works in people's lives today, and they can apply basic Law and Gospel concepts to national and local news stories. They are better able to see their

own sin than when they were younger. Because of this, forgiveness becomes more meaningful.

BIBLE READING

Many upper elementary students are motivated to read the Bible on their own. Some teachers design at least part of the Bible time for silent Bible reading for both students and teacher. Other teachers assist students in organizing a reading plan to do on their own time. It's helpful for students to choose a book of the Bible they'd like to read—best to start with a short one that lends itself to success—and divide it into manageable sections. The children need to hear that everyone can get distracted from this goal at times and that failing to meet a Bible reading goal doesn't make them a failure. It provides an opportunity to attempt it again!

PRAYER

The prayers of upper elementary students are less egocentric and materialistic than those of younger children, but they still expect a quick answer to prayer. Most can identify that God answers prayers with *yes*, *no*, or *wait*, but they have difficulty accepting a *no* or a *wait* response to their own lives. Those who come from a praying background can pray extemporaneously; others prefer a printed prayer when it is their turn to lead the class.

Adapted from *Building Faith One Child at a Time*, pages 159–60, 165–66
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FAITH DEVELOPMENT IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

Middle school students need to be loved and valued. They need to know that they are important to adults, even though they often communicate that adults are not particularly important to them.

SIN AND FORGIVENESS

Students need to know that their importance doesn't depend on their achievements or abilities. Jesus died for all of us while we were yet sinners. That means we don't have to earn God's love; we have it because of His goodness, not our actions. God loves us enough to say no when a yes would endanger us. God loves us enough to tell us in His Word what He expects of us. God loves us with a love that allows us to suffer natural consequences. In the classroom, when teachers love with God's unconditional love, students know they have value.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH GOD AND OTHERS

Teenagers typically conform to the attitudes and behavior of their peers. Teens in Christian settings often grow closer to God as God's Word comes to them through Christian friends and parents. They do not analyze why they believe as they do; they come to believe as those around them do. Relationships are critical, both with God and with their fellow believers. The perceptive teacher uses many relationship-building activities.

SERVICE

Adolescents need opportunities to show their love for God by loving others. Encountering new situations through service opportunities can be threatening and cause teens to be anxious; serving others with a group of peers makes it less intimidating. Many teens discover they enjoy helping others and continue their service activities throughout their lives.

Teens have a need to believe in something larger than themselves, as this guides them on their search for identity. If we hope to nurture our youth for greater spiritual maturity, they must interact with Christian adults who actively live their faith, and we must then provide them with opportunities to express their faith. We need to listen and honestly answer their questions. We need to challenge them to live their faith in a hostile world. We need to share our successes and failures and always let them know how God uses us in spite of ourselves.

Adapted from *Building Faith One Child at a Time*, pages 183–84
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FAITH DEVELOPMENT IN HIGH SCHOOL

Teenagers will discard some aspects from their previous experiences of faith, moving on to new ideas and beliefs that make sense to their ways of thinking. Discussion of theology and what God says about the issues teenagers face are important to them.

SEARCHING FAITH

As teens search their faith, they move toward spiritual maturity, even though it may appear they have lost their faith. They are looking for personal meaning, and sometimes it seems they are looking for it everywhere but the church. The process of searching one's faith involves experimentation and challenging the status quo. Church bodies often have trouble supporting people at this stage in their life, but support and understanding are crucial if we don't want to drive older adolescents away. Searching individuals still need to be included in the faith community; they need to feel wanted and valued.

OPEN COMMUNICATION

Open communication is essential with teens. If Jesus is the Word, then the organized church cannot be afraid of words. Working through this process of discovering God's stand on issues motivates teenagers to "put their money where their mouth is" when it comes to their faith. The church must foster an environment where this can happen.

SERVICE

Teenagers need to be a part of their church's ministry, not just a presence that implies the congregation has a future. Just as adult members of a congregation have a variety of gifts and an assortment of ways they're involved in the local parish, teens don't want to be pigeonholed into one or two areas of involvement. Do youth have a voice in how the congregation is governed? Do they have voting privileges or at least speaking rights at voters meetings? Do they teach or assist in Sunday School classes or Vacation Bible School? What about ushering? When they're included in the total ministry of the church, teens tend to stay involved in congregational life.

Adapted from *Building Faith One Child at a Time*, pages 204, 206
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FAITH DEVELOPMENT IN ADULTHOOD

Having finished confirmation, Sunday School, and youth group, some adults feel like their faith lives have plateaued. The demands of maintaining a home, a job, school, and relationships with friends and family can leave adults feeling drained. On the other hand, adults who struggle to find meaning in their daily work can feel restless. Without regular classes or caregivers to guide their faith, adults need support from the church community to keep faith their number-one priority.

YOUNG ADULTS

As they transition out of high school and into work or college, young adults may feel overwhelmed. They may struggle with figuring out what they will do with their lives. Help them identify things they enjoy doing and are good at, and teach them what God says about vocation. Encourage young adults to read about vocation in the Small Catechism and to pray about ways God can use their talents to spread His love.

MIDDLE ADULTS

At the peak of their industry, middle adults may feel busy, busy, busy. Quiet time to themselves can be just what they need to stay connected to their faith. Encourage them to spend regular time in God's Word by themselves; maybe suggest one half-hour period per week. They can also use this time to journal their prayers to focus on self-reflection and bringing their own needs to God, as they spend so much time focusing on the needs of others.

OLDER ADULTS

Transitioning to retirement can leave some older adults feeling restless and in need of an outlet for their energy. Help them identify ways they would like to get involved at church or in the community to serve others, and encourage them to pray that God presents opportunities to serve.

Adults who are homebound may need help meeting their emotional needs. Match up these people with members who can visit them or call them regularly, study the Bible with them, and spend time doing things with them they enjoy.



INTERGENERATIONAL FAITH DEVELOPMENT

When intergenerational learning happens, bonds are formed. Wisdom is shared. Faith challenges are tackled. Most important, these relationships bind people to the church and to one another so the faith can be organically passed down the generations. Here are some principles for intergenerational education.

Keep in mind that process is more important than product. Bringing generations together for a positive relational experience is more important than the activity you are using to do so or the finished product you are trying to create.

Have a clearly defined purpose. Whatever your purpose, be sure to think it through and state it clearly.

Seek understanding. Do research to get to know the expectations people of different generations may have.

Teach relational skills. Teaching the “five finger rule” helps if one person or group dominates conversation. If someone speaks, he is instructed to raise his thumb in his lap. Four other people must speak (raise the other four fingers to count) before that person may speak again.

Identify key influencers. Gather several generations together for a conversation about ideas, challenges, possibilities, and problems (holes) before you begin. Then fill any “holes” they identify.

Do something together. “Doing” builds bridges of cooperation and communication in nonthreatening ways. If an activity is too complicated to be done in one session, parcel it out to two or more.

Understand differing ability levels. An older adult might not be able to kneel on cement to do a chalk drawing, and a younger child might not have scissor skills for cutting felt, but they could work together to accomplish both.

Be prepared to modify time or content. If the group goes off on a tangent but communication and process are working well, let it happen. Be flexible.

Involve learners as leaders. The young and old should be teaching and learning from one another. Design ways for each generation to shine.

Use scaffolding. In education, scaffolding is the support given during the learning process. As competence is achieved, the support structures are removed and more responsibility is given to the student.

Evaluate. Involve participants (and key influencers) in evaluation. Learn from what worked and what didn’t, and listen for other approaches they might suggest.

*Adapted from *Pedagogy of Faith*, pages 167–72*

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grow in faith

DURING EVERY STAGE OF LIFE

We're not done learning about the Bible once we graduate from confirmation. That event is just the beginning! As we mature throughout adulthood, we build on what we have learned and comprehend more of the Bible story each time we return to it. And as our faith matures, we can teach and support the faith of those around us.

Find these materials at cph.org.



Infant

My First Bible Storybook
Follow and Do Series
My First Hymnal



Toddler

My First Bible Storybook
Follow and Do Series
My First Hymnal



Early Childhood

The Hear Me Read Bible
My First Catechism
My First Hymnal



Early Elementary

The Growing in Faith Bible Storybook
My First Catechism
My First Hymnal



Late Elementary

The Growing in Faith Bible
My First Catechism
All God's People Sing



Middle School

Faith Alive Student Bible
Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation
All God's People Sing



High School

Faith Alive Student Bible
Luther's Small Catechism
with Explanation
Lutheran Service Book



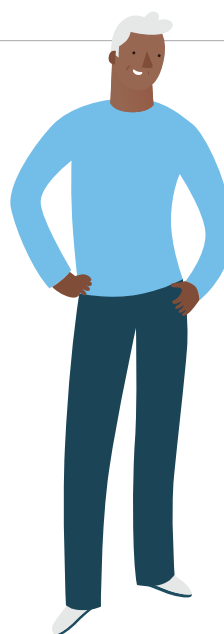
Young Adult

The Lutheran Study Bible
Luther's Small Catechism
with Explanation
Lutheran Service Book



Middle Adult

The Lutheran Study Bible
Luther's Small Catechism
with Explanation
Lutheran Service Book



Older Adult

The Lutheran Study Bible
Luther's Small Catechism
with Explanation
Lutheran Service Book

ENDURING FAITH™

Sunday School • Midweek
Bible Curriculum

Support your church's members at whatever stage of life they are to nourish faith that endures for a lifetime.

Parents & Toddlers
FAMILY MATERIALS

ENDURING FAITH™ Beginnings



BEGINNINGS

Encourage your church's families from the birth of their children to their first day of Sunday School. Children learn about Jesus and watch their parents make church and learning an important part of their life.

Age Levels:

Nursery Roll

Parents and Toddlers

ENDURING
FAITH™
Bible Curriculum

EXPLORE BIBLE GUIDEBOOK

Unit 1: God Creates a World and a Kingdom



BIBLE CURRICULUM

All age levels, including adults, follow the same three-year scope and sequence, which encourages families to talk about the lessons at home. Age-appropriate activities build skills as children learn about the Bible. Use the curriculum during Sunday School, midweek programs, small groups, or homeschool—any time, any day your congregation meets weekly.

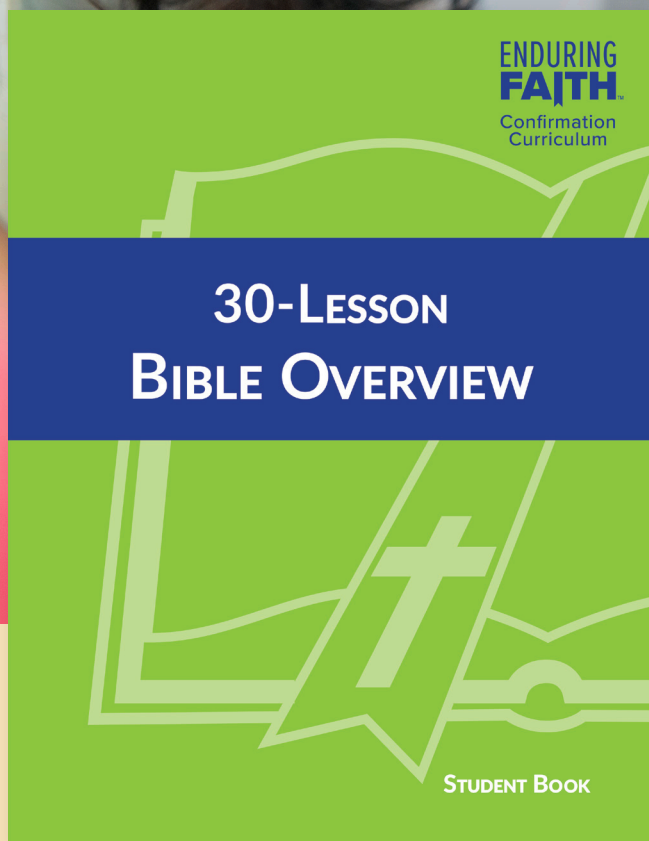
Age Levels:

Early Childhood

Elementary

Youth

Adult



CONFIRMATION

Assemble the right confirmation program for your church with buildable options that fit your students and budget. Combine courses to build a one- to four-year program.

Courses:

Catechism Study (one year or two years)

Bible Overview (one year)

Apologetics (one year)

Preview the Bible Curriculum materials at CPH.org/sample.

LOOK INSIDE TO GET FAITH-BUILDING
TIPS FOR EVERY AGE AND STAGE.

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