

# Confirmation Rewind

Leader's  
Guide

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A Second Look at Our Faith

## Rewind?

The truth is that teens don't rewind anything. Rewinding is a behavior restricted to obsolete technology. We rewind the VCR. We rewind a projector. We don't rewind a CD, DVD or iPod. It just isn't done! So we have a problem.

The image we want to use to communicate a review of past learning doesn't communicate a review of past learning to our youth. What to do?

The problem is the solution! Use the history of sound reproduction as the memory hook for the faith that's been reproduced by the Means of Grace in the hearts and minds of our youth.

It's so digital!

## Leader Preparation

Confirmation was not that long ago for the youth in your class; however, a lot has changed since they donned white robes, knelt at the altar and made their public profession of faith.

Two processes have been at work, maturation and learning. An expanding knowledge base inevitably brings youth face to face with ideas and concepts that don't fit easily into the categories they memorized (or failed to memorize) through catechesis. Simultaneously, their maturing minds are enabling them to think about familiar concepts in new and more subtle ways.

The teachings which they may have accepted and professed without much thought in junior high begin to take on new meaning. This may not look like intellectual growth to an adult, but intellectual growth is exactly what is taking place. High School students not only take tests, they test everything around them, parents, friends and you.

They test what they were taught with finely honed truth detectors looking for what is genuine and trustworthy. Teens can be merciless when they discover hypocrisy. Conversely, none are as committed as teens when they locate someone or something they can trust.

The purpose of these studies is to guide youth through a review of key doctrines learned in confirmation instruction, recognizing that many of the youth will be using their newly acquired intellectual capacities. The youth are coming from a different place than when they were catechized and their questions are of a different order.

The following goals intend to help youth, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, recommit themselves to God's truth as presented to us in God's Word, as they live out their lives in a world eager to challenge their faith.

## Goals

When we have completed these lessons we want our youth to be able to...

### Session 1 - The Age of Vinyl - Matt. 10:32-33

- Reconsider in a more mature way the promises they made at their confirmation and their commitment to Jesus Christ
- Recognize the authority that Scripture has as the Holy Spirit provides strength and encouragement for them through the Word

### Session 2 - The Age of Tape - John 16:12-15

- See themselves as "Means of Grace" Christians who expect the Holy Spirit to be where He has promised to be
- Rely on their Baptism and value the Lord's Supper for bringing them into community and giving them forgiveness and faith

### Session 3 - The Coming of Digital - 2 Cor. 5:16-21

- Provide examples of Law and Gospel functioning in their own lives as they reflect on sin and salvation
- Exhibit the joy and certainty that is theirs in justification by grace through faith while avoiding the pitfall of self-righteousness

### Session 4 - I-Pod, You-Pod, We All-Pod - Eph. 4:11-16

- View the Six Chief Parts into which Luther divided the catechism as a lifetime curriculum for growing in the faith
- Count on the Divine Service as a place where God's blessings can be found through Word and Sacrament

Sessions are divided into four basic parts in order to reach the variety of learning styles among youth:

FOCUS - INFORM - CONNECT - VISION

Each session provides you with instructor guidelines and a reproducible handout for the youth. The guidelines provide you with suggestions for activities and a list of materials that you might need.

# Session 1: Confirmation Rewind - The Age of Vinyl

## Introduction

Session 1 introduces the thematic structure for each of the four sessions. The surface topic is a series of history lessons on audio reproduction technologies. The intention of the surface topic is to engage the youth in something in which they have an interest, in this case the music and recording industry. The surface topic provides an idea, a framework, on which the deep topic can be attached. It also serves as a memory cue. If the link between the surface and deep topic becomes firmly fixed, the youth will make the connection in later settings and draw a faith-oriented understanding into their daily life environment.

The deeper subject matter for these sessions is an examination of how the Holy Spirit reproduces and sustains faith within the hearts and minds of believers. Each session reviews basic doctrines taught in confirmation instruction. The first session reviews the experience of confirmation while touching on the challenges of living a Christian life as a witness to Jesus Christ. The second session reviews the Means of Grace and how they function in our lives. The third session reviews what we believe about Law and Gospel, Justification and Sanctification. The final session explores what it means to be part of a Christian congregation that confesses the six chief parts, and closes by emphasizing the importance of the live performance of the Divine Service.

## Overview

Session 1 encourages the youth to revisit their confirmation/catechetical experience and to reflect on their thoughts and feelings at that time. Youth are directed to think about the major influences on their beliefs, thoughts and behaviors, and to place what they have learned about their Christian faith into the mix of influences. Is it a strong influence or a weak influence? To what degree do they find themselves influencing others, based upon their own Christian faith? To use the image of a needle on a record, how well do their lives vibrate to the frequency of the Holy Spirit? How do they sound?

Such questions inevitably lead to recognition of success and failure, opportunities gained and opportunities ignored. As fallen human beings, the youth will see themselves as scratched records, poor recordings indeed. Therefore the lesson concludes with an emphasis on God's power to restore and renew His people, even when the imprint of their Baptism has become scratched and worn. Through His forgiveness for Jesus' sake, God makes all things new.

## Preparation

- Review all the Scripture passages used in the session handout. Use them in your personal devotional time. As you study the verses, consider the impact they have on your own life and your own mission as a follower of Jesus Christ.
- Explore your own confirmation experience. How were you catechized and brought into the adult participation in the congregation? Not everyone goes through a Rite of Confirmation but everyone does receive instruction. Remember, looking for things that might be helpful to share with your youth.
- Locate a turntable, an old record player or stereo unit. Find some records that you can play. Perhaps a child's record player with children's records, or an old portable stereo. Be ready to "amaze" the youth by explaining the difference among 33<sup>1/2</sup>, 45 and 78 records. If possible, find a record that gets stuck or skips.

## Focus

Begin the session by asking the youth their favorite way to listen to music. Where do they listen? Do they have a CD player or an iPod? Ask them to imagine what it might have been like to live before sound was able to be recorded and reproduced. How important was music in the lives of ordinary people then? Now?

Share with the students the handout. Describe the story of the first sound recordings. If you have the equipment available, demonstrate how the different speed records worked. Try playing a 33<sup>1/2</sup> record at 78 speed, and vice versa. Have fun with the old technology.

Emphasize that there was nothing electronic about this sound reproduction at the beginning. The grooves were created by sharp edges carving into softer material. The softer material was then hardened, enabling a needle to recreate the sound. Some early experiments in sound reproduction used tin-foil rather than wax. Tin-foil was a poor material to use, however, because the recording could only be replayed three or four times before the foil would tear, making the recording unusable.

TRANSITION: Confirmation is a formative influence on the lives of youth. Ask the youth to think about what confirmation meant to them.

## Inform

### Remember Your Confirmation?

Explore with the youth their perceptions of confirmation instruction and the Rite of Confirmation. Questionnaires used with recently confirmed youth have shown that many youth are confused about confirmation.

*What did you think the Rite of Confirmation meant for you? For your family?*

See if your youth give any of the responses received by the survey taken ten years ago. Let them know that misunderstanding confirmation is quite common. Share with the youth the definitions given by the 1997 Task Force on Confirmation and First Communion in the LCMS:

“Confirmation: A rite of the church in which a confirmand publicly affirms or confesses the faith into which he or she was baptized. This rite follows a period of instruction in the basics of the Christian faith.”

“Confirmation Ministry: Youth confirmation ministry is a nurturing, educational and relational ministry of the congregation to help baptized children identify more fully with the Christian community and participate more fully in its mission, celebrated in a public rite.”

ASIDE: A survey taken ten years ago revealed the following percentages responding “Yes” among recently confirmed youth:

- Confirmation is a sacrament = 42%
- Confirmation is full reception into church membership = 94%
- Confirmation is the renewal of one’s Baptismal covenant = 81%
- Confirmation bestows the gift of the Holy Spirit = 66%
- Confirmation gives one the right to commune = 77%
- Confirmation is the time to make a decision for Christ = 57%

*Read Matt. 10:32-33. Why is this passage read at the Rite of Confirmation?*

Emphasize that the youth had received faith at the time of their Baptism (Matt. 28:10-20, Acts 2:38-39). Their confirmation gave them the opportunity publicly to confess the faith they learned.

*Review the Rite of Confirmation. What promises did you make? How do you feel about those promises now? What helps you to keep them?*

The confirmation questions require the confirmand to acknowledge what happened at the confirmand’s Baptism, including the opportunity to participate in the “exorcism” question: “Do you renounce the devil and all his works and all his ways?” The confirmand also confesses the creed.

What promises are made? Confirmands promise to continue in the confession of the true faith, and to suffer even death rather than to give it up. The confirmand also promises to live his or her life according to God’s Word and to make frequent use of the Sacrament. The blessing given in the service for each confirmand doesn’t give the Holy Spirit; rather, it reminds all the confirmands and those present that the Holy Spirit has been present in their lives working the faith that has been confessed. The same Holy Spirit will help the confirmands to retain and live their faith throughout their lives.

TRANSITION: Confirmation may have been of great significance in the lives of the youth, or it may have had little influence at all. Ask the youth to consider the many things that influence them.

## Connect

### Contemporary Recordings

Youth are very impressionable. There are many sources that work to mold and shape the attitudes and behaviors of youth. Here the youth have opportunity to identify what those sources might be in their lives, and evaluate those sources in terms of their Christian faith. The image of the wax cylinder reinforces the idea that markings are played back sooner or later.

*What are some sources that make marks in your life? Would you want all of them to be played back? Why or why not?*

List the sources given by the youth on a chalkboard, whiteboard or newsprint. Ask the youth how these influences are played back in their lives. Let youth know that the playback may be far into the future rather than something that happens immediately. Be careful to monitor discussion. Some things said may be better left for a personal counseling session or for time with the pastor.

*Who is to make the markings in the recording of our life according to 1 Peter 3:15? Who is benefited by the recording of our life?*

“Setting apart Christ as Lord” means that Jesus Christ makes the markings in our life. Again, continuing the image of a recording, let youth know that the work of Jesus Christ on our behalf overwrites (forgives) the markings made by sources seeking our spiritual destruction. Emphasize that our Christian witness benefits those around us by strengthening the faith of believers and bringing the news of Jesus Christ to those who don’t already have Him.

Make sure that “the hope that you have” is clearly stated. Our hope is in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is a sure hope, one that can be counted on at all times. Don’t overlook Peter’s advice, “Do this with gentleness and respect.” Caricatures of Christians today picture believers as uncaring, self-righteous bigots. Our Christian witness should avoid any behaviors that would support that stereotype.

TRANSITION: Ask youth to consider how they will continue to make profession of their faith in the future.

## **Vision**

### **Scratched Records**

If a scratched record is available, play it now. The session ends with an emphasis on the Gospel, and the forgiveness of sins which we have through Jesus Christ.

In what ways do people get stuck? Skip? Are there ways in which you feel scratched? See 1 John 2:1-2.

Help the youth work with the image of getting stuck, perhaps in a repetitive sin. The skipping record brings to mind the idea of cheating, or doing any illegal thing that takes an illegitimate short cut. All are scratched records in some way. The passage from 1 John provides support when scratches are recognized and confessed.

How can you keep the recording of your life from wearing out? What help does God give you?

The answer to this question brings the discussion to the Means of Grace. Reliance on the Holy Spirit permits us to live Christian lives in “High Fidelity.”

Close the session with prayer thanking God for His fidelity toward us through Jesus Christ, and requesting the Spirit’s aid in being faithful recordings of God’s love, ready to be played back in witness to the world.

## Session 2: Confirmation Rewind - The Age of Tape

### Overview

Session 2 moves the historical progression of audio reproduction to the next level—the audio tape. The audio tape provides several advantages. Tapes are more portable. Tapes not only play back, they also record. Tapes improve the audio quality and they don't scratch. This session balances the added convenience of audio tape with the major difficulty presented by tape—getting to the spot where you want to be.

While the surface topic connects to the hearer's experience of trying to find the right spot on a tape, the deeper topic deals with the issue of trying to find God when you need Him. People look for God when they have trouble or difficulty. Where is He to be found? The answer is "The Means of Grace." God's Holy Spirit works through these means. When we want to be reassured that God is with us, the Means of Grace is where He has promised to be.

Youth can find themselves directed to any number of sources when they are troubled or unsure: teachers, peers, entertainment idols or even themselves. In Session 2, youth are reminded to look to God when they are troubled. Their confirmation instruction taught them to look to the Word of God for guidance, comfort and assurance. They were taught to look to their Baptism as God's promise to be with them always, no matter if their own feelings told them God was distant. They were taught to look to the Lord's Supper as a place where they receive forgiveness of sins and strengthening for their faith. And they were also taught to regard the absolution as "just as valid and certain, even in heaven, as if Christ our dear Lord dealt with us Himself." (Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation, (1991). St. Louis: Concordia, p. 27.)

### Preparation

- Review all the Scripture passages used in the session handout. Use them in your personal devotional time. As you study the verses, consider the impact they have on your own life and your own mission as a follower of Jesus Christ.
- Locate several different tape players, perhaps a small hand held recorder, or maybe even a larger unit—an eight track tape deck. Most helpful will be having one tape player with a counter and one without.
- If possible obtain some eight track and cassette tapes. A cassette tape that is mangled and twisted will be helpful. There may be "reel to reel" tapes in a closet somewhere. (If you really want to amaze the youth with ancient technology, bring out a filmstrip projector!)

### Focus

Share with the youth the handout for Session 2. Show the youth the equipment that you have brought, the older the better. Explain that couples that were dating would often spend time making a tape for their girlfriend or boyfriend containing their favorite songs. This could be a time-consuming process, especially if the one recording had to wait for the song to be played on the radio.

Work through the advantages and disadvantages of tape players. See if the youth can add more to the list. The paragraph in the handout provides a simplistic description of tape technology. Ask if any of the youth are able to give a more detailed description of what goes on inside the tape recorder/player.

The quality of audio recordings improved dramatically as a result of tapes. Describe to the youth the classic advertisement for Memorex tape in which a singer reaches a high note, shattering a crystal glass. The commercial then shows a tape player next to the singer, which raises the famous question, "Is it live? Or is it Memorex?" In terms of accessibility, the change from records to tapes was like the change from copied manuscripts to Gutenberg's Bible.

TRANSITION: Tapes were a tremendous improvement, but they did mean a change in how one kept track of songs. New problems came along with the new technology.

### Inform

Remember to Set the Counter

Because of the advent of the tape player, two words became much more prevalent in conversation, the words "fast forward" and "rewind." The words were not entirely new, in as much as they were used with film projectors long before audio players became available. These two words described how to get where one wanted to be on the tape.

If available, show the recorder with the counter mechanism and compare it to the recorder without a counter mechanism. If one without a counter mechanism is not available, describe what happens if the counter is broken. Move the discussion to the difficulty of finding anything when the means for doing it has been lost.

*Have you ever been in a discussion and wanted to use a Scripture passage but you just couldn't remember where it is in Scripture? What did you do? Wouldn't it be great to have some kind of "Counter?"*

After the youth have had a chance to share their experiences, suggest memorizing some key passages with their references. See what passages the youth would suggest for memorization first. Indicate that there are some chapters of the Bible that are particularly helpful, and that recalling just a few of these can make the youth appear to be Bible scholars to their peers.

*Where do you go when you want to be near to God? What does John 16:12-15 have to say about this?*

Some may respond with “getting away to a quiet place” or “being in nature.” Don’t discount those responses, but share that we really need more than just quiet. We need a place where we can hear God speaking to us. The passage tells us that the Holy Spirit is speaking to us. Now, the next question is “how?”

ASIDE: Your youth may be unaware of the tools they have at their fingertips if they have a Concordia Study Bible or Lutheran Study Bible. If no one has ever taught them how to use a concordance, this would be an excellent opportunity. Fragments of verses learned in confirmation may come easily to the youth, but finding the verse is another matter. After explaining the concordance, introduce them to the center column. If they are looking for further support from Scripture on a teaching, and they have found the passage they were looking for by means of the concordance, the center column will guide them to more verses. If time allows, take the youth through a Bible search.

*Through what means does the Holy Spirit make Jesus known?*

Nature, as beautiful as it is, provides us only with natural revelation of God. When we are searching for God we need something beyond knowledge of an all powerful creator. We need knowledge of a loving heavenly father. That knowledge comes only through the Scriptures.

TRANSITION: God’s people don’t always look for God, however, when they ought to be searching for Him. Not only do we fail to set the counter, but our tape gets twisted.

## Connect

Rewind and Fast Forward

How is the tape untwisted? How is the counter reset? To reset the counter one needs to go back to the beginning. As you work through this section emphasize with your youth that their life story not only intersects, but directly relates to God’s Word.

*Rewind to Genesis 3. Why are things so messed up? What hope is offered in verse 15? Fast forward to Gal. 4:4 for support of your understanding of Gen. 3:15.*

The disobedience of Adam and Eve resulted in the breakdown of human relationships to God, human relationship with each other and human relationships with the natural world. Nevertheless, youth need to realize, as do adults, that blaming Adam and Eve doesn’t get anyone off the hook of his or her own sins. The promise of verse 15 is the promise of a savior.

*Rewind to Is. 7:14 for more detail on the Galatians verse. Fast forward to Matt. 3:13-17.*

Moving back and forth in Scripture is like moving back and forth on a tape. An underlying truth exhibited in this process is the unity of Scripture. These are 66 separate books, but one unified message coming from a single source, God Himself. Whereas Galatians tells us what would happen at the right time—the Son of God born of a woman—the Isaiah passage tells us this would be a virgin birth. Already we see the two natures of Jesus Christ being displayed. Fast forwarding to Matthew lets us know that the person being baptized by John is the child prophesied by Isaiah and interpreted as such by Paul.

*How does the cross of Jesus get you back on key?*

This question guides the discussion to the resolution to the original inquiry. Why are things so messed up? Confused lives need to be reset. Faith in Jesus Christ resets counters and refocuses lives on God.

TRANSITION: The traditional Sunday School answer of “Jesus” seems to have worked again. But how does one connect with Jesus? The counter is reset, but where do I find Jesus? What should I record?

## Vision

God’s Counter System

Ask the youth where they will look for God in the future. Reinforce by use of the Bible passages listed that God has provided a counter system that gets His children to Him immediately: the Means of Grace.

God’s Word

Fast Forward >> 1 Peter 1:23 - We are born again through the Word of God

Rewind << Rom. 10:14-17 - Faith comes through the message about Christ

Fast Forward>> 2 Peter 1:21 - The Word of God was received through inspired writers  
Rewind << Heb. 4:12 - The Word of God gets straight to the heart

#### Holy Baptism

Fast Forward>> Matt. 28:19-20 - The command to teach and to baptize

Rewind << 1 Peter 3:21 - Baptism “now saves you.”

Fast Forward>> Acts 2:38-39 - Baptism gives the gifts of the Holy Spirit and faith

Rewind << Rom. 6:1-7 - Baptism connects us to the death and resurrection of Jesus

#### Holy Communion

Rewind << Matt. 26:26-28 - Holy Communion gives the forgiveness of sins

Fast Forward>> 1 Cor. 11:26-29 - Holy Communion gives the body and blood of Christ

Rewind << 1 Cor. 10:16-17 - Holy Communion gives us bread and wine as visible elements

Fast Forward>> 1 Peter 2:3 - We receive what God intends to give us in the sacrament.

End by asking the youth to envision moments in the future when they will find themselves challenged and needing the reassurance that comes to us by faith. Then provide them opportunity to explain where they will find that assurance, comfort and strength.

Close the session with prayer thanking God for providing a sure place where He can be found, and that all present can find the gifts the Holy Spirit gives where He has promised to be.

# Session 3: Confirmation Rewind: The Coming of Digital

## Overview

Session 3 arrives at the computer age of audio reproduction. For the music industry it is the best of times and the worst of times. Reproducing sound has never been easier nor has music ever been as accessible—the best of times. Nevertheless, pirating of information and theft of music in violation of copyright law has never been so easy—the worst of times from the industry’s perspective.

The surface topic for this session plays off the extreme complexity of computer technology contrasted with the extreme simplicity of the same technology. As the first box in the handout explains, to be digital means to be constructed around nothing more complicated than an on/off switch. One is either “0” or “1” and nothing more. The deeper topic for consideration takes into account both the “best of time/worst of time” idea and the “on/off” simplicity. Law and Gospel—a key Lutheran teaching—functions in a digital manner. The Law, working as a mirror, puts us off, resulting in the worst of times in relationship to God. The Gospel, working to make us alive in Christ, turns us on to God’s love, resulting in the best of times in relationship to God.

Confirmation instruction taught the youth the important concept of paradox—a contradiction, or apparent contradiction, that provides a deeper truth. The paradoxical nature of Law and Gospel is that they are opposite messages, yet from the same God. As different as these two messages are, human beings need both. Law without the Gospel leads to despair or self-righteousness. Gospel without the Law leads to trivializing the cross or elevating human works. As opposite as Law and Gospel are, the Christian needs both, and yet the two messages are never to be mixed.

When Law and Gospel are mixed, two other doctrines are at risk, Justification and Sanctification. Like Law and Gospel, Justification and Sanctification are always side by side, but never mixed. Human participation in Justification is excluded by the Gospel. Jesus has saved us and we do nothing to save ourselves. As soon as one mixes Law into the Gospel by adding our own works or obedience, one has lost the teaching of Justification by Grace Through Faith. Unlike Justification that is accomplished by Jesus Christ outside ourselves, Sanctification is the Holy Spirit working righteousness in our lives, a process with which we are very much involved. We do good works that God has prepared in advance for us to do, but those works have nothing to do with our salvation, forgiveness or status before God.

## Preparation

- Review all the Scripture passages used in the session handout. Use them in your personal devotional time. As you study the verses, consider the impact they have on your own life and your own mission as a follower of Jesus Christ.
- Prior to this session ask youth to bring examples of various ways digital technology is used today. Have room set aside for the youth to place their electronic gadgets, and allow time for them to share how their particular digital driven instrument works.
- Obtain if possible some items made out of old computer parts. Key chains, pill boxes and even table settings have been made using mother-boards from old computers. Look for other ways in which obsolete digital equipment is being recycled.

## Focus

Share with the youth the handout for Session 3. Let the youth display and explain the different digitally based equipment they have brought. Share with them your own computer experience. This part of the focus section will depend on your age. The older you are the more likely you are amazed at what computer technology has enabled people to do. The younger you are the more likely you take it all for granted.

Read through the information in the first box in the handout with the youth. Ask if they have anything to add to the description of how computers work. Let them add to the pool of knowledge available. Talk about the issues of ownership and copyright. Ask them to consider if they have ever violated copyright laws. This may require explaining what a copyright is. Talk about how simple the basic technology is; it’s either “on” or “off.”

TRANSITION: Our relationship with God displays the same digital characteristic: it’s either “on” or “off.” Either we have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ, or we don’t.

## Inform

### Digital Doctrine

In confirmation instruction the youth learned about Law and Gospel. Law and Gospel are more than just a doctrine that is taught in Scripture. Law and Gospel is a tool used to interpret the Scriptures.

Let youth know that when looking at a passage, they will want to know if it is Law or Gospel, or if it is simply informa-



tion that God is providing. Even when it is just information, the information can illustrate the effect of God's commands or the blessings of God's promises

*Discuss how Law and Gospel differ. Why is the Law like an off switch? The Gospel like an on switch?*

Wait for the youth to give examples of the Law and Gospel at work. Then provide the information below.

Law and Gospel are the Same

Origin: Both are divine

Necessity: Both are necessary

Source: Both are found in both testaments

Aim: Both have salvation as their goal

Audience: Both are intended for all people

Law and Gospel are Different

Law written in heart, Gospel written in Scripture

Law - commands, Gospel - promises

Law - keep & live, Gospel - believe & live

Law shows our sin, Gospel shows our savior

Law kills, Gospel makes alive

Law for secure, Gospel for troubled

*Read 2 Cor. 5:16-21. What does it mean to you to "regard no one from a worldly point of view?"*

This means that we do not use worldly standards, such as wealth, prestige, health or honor, to gauge a person's value. Instead, we view people through the eyes of faith, recognizing them either as brothers and sisters in Christ, or as persons for whom Christ died but who have not yet received the benefits of His gift.

*As a Christian, you live in the freedom of the Gospel, not under the curse of the Law. What important function does the Law fulfill for you?*

The Christian still experiences the Law in all of its forms. As a curb in society the Christian is blessed by the Law as it restrains sin. As a mirror the Law continues to show the Christian his or her sin, and reinforces the need for a savior in Jesus Christ. As a guide the Law shows the Christian God-pleasing behavior.

*What are you free to be for Jesus Christ according to Paul?*

We are free to be ambassadors for Jesus Christ to the world. We are free to use the Law and the Gospel for the benefit of those around us, and become tools of the Holy Spirit to bring others to faith in Jesus.

TRANSITION: God's Law and God's Gospel are powerful. They affect our daily lives and our eternal life. But which of the two really changes us?

## Connect

What Turns You "ON?"

This will seem like a silly question, but ask the youth what they like best about being alive. Then ask them what they like best about being alive in Jesus Christ? Prepare the students for a discussion on what it means to be dead and what it means to be alive.

*What were you like before you were turned on to God by the Gospel? See Rom. 5:6-11 and Eph. 2:1.*

Romans 5 provides four significant descriptors: powerless, ungodly, sinners, enemies. Ephesians 2 adds another key descriptor for the human being outside of faith in Jesus Christ: dead.

*Read Eph. 2:8-10. We didn't turn ourselves on. We didn't go from a 0 to a 2 by any act of our own power. The Holy Spirit, working through the Word, flipped the switch.*

TRANSITION: God has the power to resurrect the dead, both the physically dead and the spiritually dead. Now we are "alive in Christ" (Eph. 2:5), what happens next?

## Vision

Now That You are "ON"

This section takes being alive in Christ to its culmination in a life of sanctification. Much of evangelicalism confuses Justification and Sanctification. Here you want your youth to recall the distinction between the two and why it's necessary that they never be mixed, but never be separated, either.

*Do you recall the words "justification" and "sanctification" from your confirmation instruction? What did they mean to you at the time? How do you understand them now?*

After youth have had an opportunity to respond to these questions, share the definitions provided in the “Overview.”

*What evidence do you see of justification and sanctification in your life?*

Evidence for Justification comes from God’s Word and the promises that belong to the believer through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. God declares us righteous for Jesus’ sake. Therefore the promise given in the Gospel is the evidence of justification. Therefore, the place to find evidence in our lives of justification is the place where the promise was given, Baptism. Sanctification, on the other hand, is the Holy Spirit’s work in us making us righteous. Any good work we do, done in faith, constitutes evidence of sanctification in our lives.

Close the session with prayer thanking God for providing the clear word of Law and Gospel. Ask for the Spirit’s guidance in applying them properly. Likewise, thank God for faith, and ask for the Spirit’s continued evidence of sanctification in the lives of our youth.

# Session 4: Confirmation Rewind: I-Pod, You-Pod, We All-Pod

## Overview

Session 4 addresses the issue of Christian community in an age of individualism. The individualism grows, flourishes and is sustained by the various technologies that make reliance upon one's neighbor unnecessary. Communities continue to be formed, but they tend to be based on interests rather than proximity.

The surface topic for this session works with the individualism afforded through the iPod and other technologies that foster a private experience of the world. Digitalized downloads to iPods and phones give people the ability not only to create their own audio libraries, which could be done with records, too, but also the capacity to take their audio libraries with them anytime, play them anywhere, without disturbing anyone. No longer are people at the mercy of DJs playing songs they don't like.

The surface topic acts as a foil for the deeper topic, which is the relationship of Christians to one another in the body of Christ. Can Christians be isolated from each other? Can Christians live in an iPod existence in Christ, in strong connection to the head but without any connection to the rest of the body? Of course, the answer is no. When called to faith in Jesus Christ, believers are called into relationship with one another as well.

From the affirmation of community, the session moves to a delineation of what the community confesses together. The session goes beyond the Creeds, rehearsing for the youth the six chief parts they learned when they were catechized. Following a review of the catechism's parts, the session closes by having the youth distinguish between the excitement of a live performance compared to the recording, whether or not it's on a vinyl plate, a magnetic tape or a digital disk. The live concert is always better. Likewise, the youth are encouraged to realize that the expression of their faith in Jesus Christ is enhanced and energized by the live performance of the Divine Service, where the gifts of God through Jesus Christ are distributed to His community.

## Preparation

- Review all the Scripture passages used in the session handout. Use them in your personal devotional time. As you study the verses, consider the impact they have on your own life and your own mission as a follower of Jesus Christ.
- Have several copies of Luther's Small Catechism available for use as the youth work through the questions. Since they may have come from a variety of catechetical experiences, don't assume that all the youth are familiar with the "blue" catechism. If that is unavailable, obtain the smaller pamphlet style copies of the Small Catechism, also from Concordia Publishing House.
- Bring an iPod or have one of the youth bring theirs. If quite a few are available, break the group into teams, each with an iPod available.

## Focus

Share with the youth the handout for Session 4. Ask the youth how well they know their neighbors. Do they know their names? Do they spend time together? The answer to this question will vary from community to community. Small town and urban youth may know more about neighbors than suburban youth do. Regardless of what predominates among your youth, present the wide spectrum that is possible, and emphasize how easy it is today to avoid one's neighbors.

Move into a discussion on how digital technology allows distance and privacy, but at the same time may inhibit the development of community. Point out the self-centered nature of the name given to the personal musical juke box everyone wants—the "I" pod. Can Christians be comfortable in a world that so easily centers on the self?

TRANSITION: The progression of individualism in society raises some important questions for us as Christians. Can Christians live in isolation from one another, each doing what he or she finds most appealing?

## Inform

### Personalized Faith

The paragraph on the handout assumes that one result of individualism will be a fragmented society. This doesn't mean there will be a society without loyalties, but it does mean that the loyalties to which people commit themselves will be narrowly focused on things so close to the person that the loyalty is really a manifestation of self love.

Ask the youth questions about their feelings of closeness or distance from the congregation to which they belong. What events bring them close? What seems to drive them away?

*Is society breaking into smaller groups in your opinion? How much do you feel a part of your congregation? Your youth group?*

Some of the things that divide people, even within a Christian congregation, are generational in nature. Some studies indicate there are generally four different age groupings living at any one time: the young, those emerging into the adult years, those at the peak of their influence and those preparing to exit the stage. As each group passes through the life span, they develop some characteristics that are unique to themselves, and other characteristics that are common to all at the life point. What is most interesting is that the odd and even generations tend to understand and relate to one another better. Ask the youth how well they relate to their grandparents. Are there any conclusions to draw?

*Read Eph. 4:11-16. Is diversity the goal of Christian community? Why or why not? What do you see as your role in the Christian community?*

Ephesians 4 helps define the purposes of the Office of the Public Ministry—that of preparing God’s people for works of service. These works of service have as their goal the building up of the body of Christ, which here means the assembly of believers, the church. There are three things mentioned in verse 13 that can function as a curriculum for lifelong catechesis: 1) reaching unity of faith, 2) in the knowledge of the Son of God and 3) becoming mature in the faith. Diversity is a goal when talking about people, but unity is the goal when talking about faith, faith that is defined by knowing the Son of God and growing in maturity in that knowledge.

Explore further, if you haven’t already done so with previous questions, how the youth you serve see themselves in the Christian community. Are they in the center or are they on the periphery? How do they think adults would answer the question? Share with the youth what you see as their role in the congregation. Emphasize opportunities for meaningful service.

TRANSITION: If the community is striving to attain unity of faith, how can that unity of faith be communicated within the congregation? Within the Community?

## Connect

### Confirmation Downloads

Calling the “Six Chief Parts” the greatest hits of Lutheran Theology is probably a stretch. There are other teachings not mentioned directly in the catechism that also help define our unity of faith and our confession before the world. The “Theology of the Cross” as distinguished from the “Theology of Glory” is one case in point.

Lead the youth through the verses provided, recalling for them that these are the teachings around which the body of Christ—the church—revolves. They bring together generations in a common confession and a common bond.

Challenge the youth to memorize the Bible reference attached to the “Hit” name given to each chief part. If it seems advisable, do the memorizing in teams. Ask the youth to unpack the names given in the chief parts. How do the names communicate the essence of that portion of the catechism?

TRANSITION: Each of the six chief parts relate to our Christian lives in very specific ways, as we have heard. But there is one place where we have an opportunity to give and receive together as Christ’s community—the Live Concert.

SUGGESTION: If you have divided the group into teams and each team has an iPod, ask the teams to examine the recordings available to them. Ask them to choose one song that exemplifies individualism and one song that exemplifies community. If time allows, the teams can play “Charades” with the names of the songs they have chosen. If possible, chose two or more of the songs to play for the entire group. Comment on the choices.

## Vision

### The Live Concert is Always Better

Find out who has been to a live “rock” concert. Have others been to a symphony concert or choir concert? Discover how many of them play musical instruments or sing in a group of some kind, whether at school or elsewhere. Ask for comment on the difference between playing the instrument or singing in the group, and listening. Ask for comment on the difference between being at a concert and listening to a recording.

*For Christians, the live concert is the Divine Service. When you gather for worship (Heb. 10:25) things really happen.*

Use this as an opportunity to explain the term “Divine Service.” The worship service is God’s service for us as He supplies us with Word and Sacrament for the sustaining of our faith.

*You aren’t just singing hymns or being taught (Col. 3:15-16). What does absolution do for you (1 John 1)? What do you receive in the Sacrament (1 Cor. 11:23-26)?*

Colossians reaffirms that we are singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs in worship. But the absolution is the

giving and receiving of forgiveness and the sacrament is the receiving of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. These are realities, not figures of speech or actions done by memory.

Close the session with prayer thanking God for the live concert which is our opportunity to be in worship together to receive His gifts. Ask for the Spirit's guidance in living our lives together in community.

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