

STAND

FOLLOW

SERVE

REPEAT



Devotions Leader's Guide



Leader's Notes

About the theme

The year was 1521. Martin Luther had already been excommunicated by the medieval church and was called to Worms to take back his teachings or be declared an outlaw (meaning anyone could kill him without threat of punishment). Even knowing he was facing a death sentence, Luther refused saying:

Unless I am convicted by Scripture and plain reason — I do not accept the authority of the popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other — my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand. I can do no other. So help me God. Amen.

The legendary words attributed to Luther come from this moment: “Here I stand. I can do no other. So help me God. Amen.”

As the 500th anniversary of the Reformation approaches in 2017, The Lutheran Church— Missouri Synod has chosen “Stand” for its triennial theme. The Rev. Dr. Joel Lehenbauer, executive director of the LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations, notes:

While “stand” is not a major theological term in the Bible — at least in terms of quantity and frequency — it is an important one, Paul especially makes good and forceful use of it. Paul teaches that through faith in Christ alone we receive a standing that is grounded in God, not in the world, and that confers fellowship and freedom (Source: A Brief Theological and Biblical Primer on “Stand,” point 1.)

This then is where the Bible studies for the 2015-16 LCMS Servant Events are rooted. The devotions and worship material are tied to the Bible studies and also have their roots in “Stand.”

Daily Themes

In this series, five sections of Scripture from the Old and New Testaments are used to examine the stand, follow, serve, repeat pattern. While there is a good deal of the Law that is revealed, the leader should remind participants that the Law acts as a mirror to show us our sin, serves as a curb to sinful behavior and guides the Christian life. Particular attention also should be given to pointing out that it is the Law that condemns but it is the Gospel that transforms.

Day 1: Stand

“Stand and see the salvation of the Lord” – Ex. 14, The Crossing of the Red Sea

Key Scripture: Ex. 14:13-14

Other passages: Ex. 11-12; Ps. 30:3; Ps. 121; Rom. 8:38-39

Day 2: Follow

When God Calls – 1 Sam. 3, Samuel Answers God’s Call

Key Scripture: 1 Sam. 3:10

Other passages: 1 Sam. 2:27-34; 1 Cor. 7:7

Day 3: Serve

Serve Like Jesus Served – John 12:9-26, The Plot to Kill Lazarus

Key Scripture: John 12:26

Other passages: Luke 12:34; John 3:16-17; John 11:38-44; John 12:34; Rom. 6:3, 5; Rom. 8:37-39; Gal. 3:27; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 3:21

Day 4: Repeat

Follow the Pattern – 2 Tim. 1:1-14, Paul’s Instructions to a Young Friend

Key Scripture: 2 Tim. 1:13-14

Other passages: Matt. 18:15; 1 Cor. 10:31-33, 11:1; Eph. 2:8-10; 2 Tim. 1:1-15

Day 5: Stand

Jesus Stands – Acts 7:54-60, The Stoning of Stephen

Key Scripture: Acts 7:55-56

Other passages: Dan. 7:13-14; Matt. 25:21; Luke 22:66-70; Acts 8:1-3; Acts 9

Some of these stories will be familiar but others might surprise you. God promises His Word never returns empty (Is. 55:11). While the Word of God is timeless and

Stand. Follow. Serve. Repeat.

Day 1: Stand

Something to Think About 

Read by Participant No. 1

Ever been caught between a rock and hard place? It is a phrase that refers to having to make a decision between two things that are equally unpleasant. The 2010 film, “127 Hours,” is based on a book by Aaron Ralston, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*. Aaron tells the story of a climbing accident near Robber’s Roost in Utah, which resulted in him being trapped alone for 127 hours with his arm pinned under a boulder. With rescue unlikely and time passing, he eventually decided to free himself by cutting off his right arm. Once free he was able to stand and walk for help.

Read by Participant No. 2

The story we will dig into later today in the Bible study is the story of the people of Israel fleeing Egypt after the last plague and being trapped between the advancing Egyptian army and certain drowning in the Red Sea. Unlike Aaron Ralston, they would not be able to save themselves.

Key Scripture 

Read by Participant No. 3

Hear the Word of the Lord from Ex. 14:13-14, “*And Moses said to the people, ‘Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.’*”

Gospel Message 

Read by Participant No. ___

Like the people of Israel, we are caught between the demands of the Law and our own sin. There is no place to hide or run and no way to save ourselves. Just as the Lord had a plan for the rescue of His people at the edge of the Red Sea, He had a plan to save the world through Christ. On my own, I sink. I cannot stand. In Christ, I stand firm. “*On Christ the solid Rock I stand all other ground is sinking sand*” (LSB 575).

Something to Talk About 

In groups – explained by Participant No. ___

Within your discussion group (four-six people), start with the person closest to the exit door.

All participants should introduce themselves by first and last name to the group (go to the right) and then repeat their name every time they answer one of the questions below.

1. When you face a problem how do you respond? Do you fall apart? Go into super-planning mode? Try to avoid the situation? How would you respond if someone said to you, “The LORD will fight for you and you have only to be silent?”

Leader’s note: This will be hit harder in today’s Bible study. For now, first listen to participant answers and wait until last to give yours. Carefully weave in how this story in Exodus foreshadows the greater salvation story at work. In the end, we rely fully and completely on God’s action for us on Christ’s righteousness.

2. Ps. 130:3 reminds us, “If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?” How might the Lord work through you as His physical representative to help others know that they too can receive the certainty and peace of knowing the Lord has fought for them and won the victory of forgiveness, life and salvation in Christ?
3. **Standing in the Need of Prayer:** Take a note card. On one side of a note card write your name and one or two prayer requests for this week that you feel comfortable sharing. Gather the cards and take turns drawing one. Make sure you do not get your own. At least once today, take out your card and pray for that person. Let him or her know that you did.

Something to Sing About 
Standing in the Need of Prayer (AGPS 220)
Explained by Participant No. _ (with some back-ground music or someone who can sing a little. If this person cannot snap his or her fingers then he or she will need help from another participant who can.)

Have you heard the song *Standing in the Need of Prayer*? It's a good servant event prayer, reminding us that sometimes we think others need prayer. THEY need help not me. But in truth we are the ones in need of help. God sent us the way out of the certain destruction we faced because of our sin in the person of and work of His own son, Jesus.

We're going to close with this song at the end of every morning, which could be a little boring if we don't get some help from the group. So get ready. First: I need a nice steady 4/4 beat and I need everyone to snap his or her fingers to set the beat. Then we're going to sing to that beat. (Get the rhythm going.) Everyone should stand. Then sing the four verses and refrains.

*Not my brother, nor my sister, but it's me, O Lord,
Standing in the need of prayer; Not my brother, nor my
sister but it's me, O Lord,
Standing in the need of prayer.*

*Refrain:
It's me, it's me, O Lord standing in the need of prayer it's
me, it's me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer.*

*Not the preacher, nor the deacon but it's me, O Lord,
standing in the need of prayer; Not the preacher, nor the
deacon, but it's me, O Lord
standing in the need of prayer*

Refrain

*Not my father, nor my mother but it's me, O Lord,
standing in the need of prayer; not my father, nor my
mother, but it's me, O Lord,
standing in the need of prayer.*

Refrain

*Not the stranger, nor my neighbor, but it's me, O Lord,
standing in the need of prayer; not the stranger, nor my
neighbor, but it's me, O Lord,
standing in the need of prayer. Refrain Refrain*

Tomorrow's Challenge: 
Come up with some "locally found" percussion instru-ments we can add to our song.

Something to Remember 
Read by Participant No._
Stand firm in the salvation of the Lord today. Be safe as you serve. The Lord fights for you. He will help you as you serve. Go in peace, serve the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God!

Stand. Follow. Serve. Repeat.

Day 2: Follow When God Calls – 1 Sam. 3

Something to Think About

Read by Participant No. 1

Do you use different ringtones to help you know who is calling? Talk to anyone over age 60 and he or she just might remember “party lines” on home phones growing up. The name might sound fun but in truth, the “party” in party lines stood for “multi-party shared telephone service line.” All phone service was “wired” and it was costly to run all the extra wires or lines needed for private service. So, multiple houses shared the same “party line” for their telephone service.

Read by Participant No. 2

If you picked up your phone while somebody else on your party line was talking, you’d overhear their conversation and could join in. When a call came in and rang at your house, you could not be sure it was for you. You had to listen for your ring pattern. When you recognized your “ring,” you knew the call was for you.

Key Scripture

Read by Participant No. 3

Later, we will read a Bible story about a boy named Samuel who wasn’t sure the “call” he was receiving was for him.

Hear the Word of the Lord from 1 Sam. 3:10: “*And the LORD came and stood, calling as at other times, ‘Samuel! Samuel!’ And Samuel said, ‘Speak, for your servant hears.’*”

Something to Talk About

In groups – explained by Participant No. ____

Within your discussion group (four-six people), start with the person wearing the heaviest footwear.

1. Share with others in your group: What brought you here this week? Were you responding to a call from God? Just wanted to be with friends? Somebody made you come? Today’s theme is “Follow When God Calls.” How would you recognize it if God called you?

Leader’s note: This question intentionally leaves the door open to reveal our culture’s misguided dependence on “feelings” or “following your heart.” The Word reveals Jesus and His will to us. Listen for this as participants respond and be ready to gently reveal the danger. While this is fleshed out more fully in today’s Bible study, this may be the perfect moment to mention the Lutheran doctrine of vocation.

1 Cor. 7:17 says, “*Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him.*”

John T. Pless explains it as follows:

Luther understood that the Christian is genuinely bi-vocational. He is called first through the Gospel to faith in Jesus Christ and he is called to occupy a particular station or place in life. The second sense of this calling embraces all that the Christian does in service to the neighbor not only in a particular occupation but also as a member of the church, a citizen, a spouse, parent, or child, and worker. Here the Christian lives in love toward other human beings and is the instrument by which God does His work in the world. (Source: Taking the Divine Service into the Week: Liturgy and Vocation, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind., ctsfw.net/media/pdfs/PlessTakingTheDivineServiceIntoTheWeek.pdf)

2. **Standing in the Need of Prayer:** In your service yesterday, what did you learn about yourself? How can we pray for you? Take a note card. On one side, write your name and one or two prayer requests for this week that you feel comfortable sharing. Then place the card face down on a surface between you and your group. Take turns drawing a card just as you did yesterday. Make sure you do not get your own. You now have two people/cards to pray for. Sometime today, maybe more than once, take out your two cards and pray for them. Let them know that you did.

Something to Sing About 
Standing in the Need of Prayer (AGPS 220)
Explained by Participant No. _ (with some music background or someone who can sing a little. See day one.)

Yesterday's challenge was to come up with some "locally found" percussion instruments we can add to our song. Pull those puppies out. If you didn't bring one, then you have to use your body to add a beat. You can clap, snap, beat on a table top, etc.

Allow time for everyone to figure out their instrument (including you). Ready? First: I need a nice steady beat and I need everyone to set the beat with their instruments. Then we're going to sing to that beat. (Get the rhythm going.) Follow my lead ...

*Not my brother, nor my sister, but it's me, O Lord,
Standing in the need of prayer; Not my brother, nor my
sister but it's me, O Lord,
Standing in the need of prayer.*

*Refrain:
It's me, it's me, O Lord standing in the need of prayer it's
me, it's me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer.*

*Not the preacher, nor the deacon but it's me, O Lord,
standing in the need of prayer; Not the preacher, nor the
deacon, but it's me, O Lord
standing in the need of prayer*

Refrain

*Not my father, nor my mother but it's me, O Lord,
standing in the need of prayer;
not my father, nor my mother, but it's me, O Lord,
standing in the need of prayer.*

Refrain

*Not the stranger, nor my neighbor, but it's me, O Lord,
standing in the need of prayer; not the stranger, nor my
neighbor, but it's me, O Lord,
standing in the need of prayer. Refrain Refrain*

Tomorrow's Challenge 
Think of some new verses we could add. Example: "Not my leader, not the driver ..." Every group will need one to sing for us. We'll join in on the refrain.

Something to Remember 
Read by Participant No. _
Go and serve the Lord today with a joyful and merciful heart knowing that in Christ, "*The Christian seeks to live in love toward other human beings and is the instrument by which God does His work in the world.*" Go in peace, serve the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God!

(Source: Gene Edward Veith, "Something to Remember," modernreformation.org/default.php?page=articledisplay&var2=881.)

Stand. Follow. Serve. Repeat.

Day 3: Serve Like Jesus Served – John 12:9-26

Something to Think About 

Read by Participant No. 1.

Are you a fan or a follower? The dictionary says a fan is “an enthusiastic devotee.” That doesn’t sound too bad until you get to the second part, “usually as a spectator.” Fans don’t participate. They watch. Fans choose to be fans. Life as a follower of Christ is very different!

Read by Participant No. 2

Jesus does not appear to be very interested in having fans. He chose His “followers” (Mark 10:45: “*Follow me and I will make you fishers of men*”) not because of their abilities but for His purposes just as we have been chosen by Him and made His own in our Baptisms. As the Holy Spirit empowers us to follow Jesus, it soon becomes apparent we won’t just be sitting on the sidelines!

Read by Participant No. 3

Eph. 2:8-10 says it well, “*For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*”

Key Scripture

Read by Participant No. ____

Hear the Word of the Lord from John 12:26, “*If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.*”

Something to Talk About 

In groups – explained by Participant No. ____

Within your discussion group (four-six people), start with the person who is wearing the most red.

1. Take a moment for self-examination here. If you were placed on the scale of fan to follower below with fan being 1 and follower being 5, where would you place yourself?

1	2	3	4	5
Fan				Follower
(Spectator)				(Chosen, Serving)

2. The concept of vocation helps to explain the relationship between the gift of faith and how faith is lived out through good works.

God is milking the cows through the vocation of the milkmaid, said Luther. According to Luther, vocation is a “mask of God.” He is hidden in vocation. We see the milkmaid or the farmer or the doctor or pastor or artist. But, looming behind this human mask, God is genuinely present and active in what they do for us.

(Source: Gustaf Wingren, *Exposition of Psalm 147, Luther on Vocation*, Ballast Press, Evansville, Ind., 1994, p. 138.)

As chosen followers, where have you seen God “genuinely present and active” in our service this week?

3. **Standing in the Need of Prayer:** In your service so far, have you had to sacrifice anything? What’s been hard or difficult? What challenged you? How can we pray for you? Take a note card. On one side, write your name and one or two prayer requests for this week that you feel comfortable sharing. Then place the card face down on a surface between you and your group. Take turns drawing a card just as you did before. Make sure you do not get your own. You now have three people/ cards to pray for. Sometime today, take out your cards and pray for those people. Let them know that you did.

Something to Sing About 
Standing in the Need of Prayer (AGPS 220)
Explained by Participant No. ____ (with some music background or someone who can sing a little. See day one.)

Yesterday's challenge was to think of some new verses we could add. Example: "Not my leader, not the driver ..." Every group will need one to sing for us. We'll join the refrain. (Give groups a few minutes to prepare their verse.) Ready? First: I need a nice steady beat and I need everyone to set the beat with their instruments. Then we're going to sing to that beat. (Get the rhythm going.) Follow my lead ...

*Not my brother, nor my sister, but it's me, O Lord,
Standing in the need of prayer; Not my brother, nor my
sister but it's me, O Lord,
Standing in the need of prayer.*

*Made up verses
standing in the need of prayer*

*Refrain:
It's me, it's me, O Lord standing in the need of prayer it's
me, it's me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer*

Tomorrow's Challenge 
You'll see!

Something to Remember 
Participant No. ____
All work, done in faith is how we live out God's call upon our lives, our vocation. He does not need our good works, but He works through them to serve our neighbor. On the surface, you might look like an ordinary human, but beneath the surface God is ministering through you. You are the "mask of God."

Go in peace, serve the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God!

Stand. Follow. Serve. Repeat.

Day 4: Follow the Pattern — 2 Tim. 1:1-15

Something to Think About

Read by Participant No. 1

In Web design, designers often use small, repeating elements to create a patterned background. A small design is repeated hundreds of times to create the desired effect. This repeated pattern brings attention to specific spaces, defining what is important to notice. Artists use repeated designs to create beautiful works of art. A new healthy habit (or a bad one for that matter) also is created through repetition.

Key Scripture

Read by Participant No. 2

Hear the Word of the Lord from 2 Tim. 1:13-14, “*Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.*”

Something to Talk About

In groups – explained by Participant No. 3

Within your discussion group (four-six people), start with the person who joined the group last this morning.

1. Share with others in your group: What “sound words” has someone shared with you? Who have you repeated them to?

Leader’s note: The sound words here are not just wise words from human sources, though God can use those too. The sound words Timothy heard were those of the Gospel, the teaching of Christ.

2. Whose life do you find yourself imitating or wanting to imitate? Why? What have you learned from imitating them?

Leader’s note: 1 Cor. 11:1, “*Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ*” (This verse fits here as do the preceding verses 1 Cor. 10:31- 33). While part of a larger discussion on Christian liberty, the reminder here is that Christ’s example and Paul’s will guide us in the practice of our Christian liberty. (Source: *People’s Bible Commentary*, 1 Corinthians 10:31, 11:1.)

3. Who has the Holy Spirit worked through to help deposit faith in you? How does following or repeating the pattern of God’s sound Word in his or her life make a difference in yours?

Leader’s note: We have benefited from the work God has done through others.

4. **Standing in the Need of Prayer:** Based on what we learned today, how can we pray for you? Take a note card. On one side, write your name and one or two prayer requests for this week that you feel comfortable sharing. Then place the card face down on a surface between you and your group. Take turns drawing a card. Make sure you do not get your own. You now have four people/cards to pray for. Sometime today, take out your cards and pray for those people. Let them know that you did.

Something to Sing About 
Standing in the Need of Prayer (AGPS 220)
Explained by Participant No. ____ (with some music background or someone who can sing a little. See day one.)

Today is a surprise: We're going to change the song again. Replace the word "NOT" with "FOR" and "BUT IT'S ME" with "YES INDEED." Examples are provided.

We're going to sing with you calling people in the group we should sing for. We'll do a few practice rounds. Ready? Let's get that nice steady beat and any percussion additions (Get the rhythm going). Make sure we get everyone in your group. The refrain won't change. Follow my lead ... (might take some practice).

Leader calls out: "James and Meghan" (names of two participants)

*FOR James and Meghan YES indeed, O Lord,
Standing in the need of prayer;*

Someone calls out: "Mr. H. and Pastor Hansen"
(names of two participants)

*For Mr. H. and Pastor Hansen Yes indeed, O Lord,
Standing in the need of prayer.*

*Refrain:
It's me, it's me, O Lord standing in the need of prayer it's
me, it's me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer*

*For _____ and _____ Yes indeed Oh Lord
Standing in the need of prayer;*

Tomorrow's Challenge 
Explained by Participant No. ____
We'll be praying and singing for people or projects we served this week. Using the new wording, every group will need one to sing for us. We'll join in on the refrain.

Example
For the playground and the fence Yes indeed Oh Lord
Standing in the need of prayer;

Something to Remember 
Read by Participant No. ____
Today, remember to "follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard" from God's Word, from your faith family and all who have reminded you of "the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you." Go in peace, serve the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God!

Stand. Follow. Serve. Repeat.

Day 5: Jesus Stands — Acts 7:54-60

Something to Think About

Read by Participant No. 1

Etiquette has changed over time, but the practice of standing to greet someone who enters a room is still a standard. “Why does it matter? What does it show? Standing up sends a signal from across the room that you’re willing and eager to greet and welcome the other person into your current situation. Whether it’s a social conversation, a business meeting or a meal, without you having to say a word, it sends the message that you’ve noticed the person and that he or she is worth you rising from your comfy sitting spot to spend time together.” (Source: *mannersmentor.com/only-at-work/when-to-stand-and-why.*)

Key Scripture

Read by Participant No. 2

Hear the Word of the Lord from Acts 7:55-56, “*But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he said, ‘Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.’*”

Something to Talk About

In groups – explained by Participant No. 3

Within your discussion group (four-six people), start with the person whose birthday is closest to today’s date.

1. Were you ever taught the etiquette of standing when someone entered the room? Maybe you wouldn’t practice this in the informality of your own home, but in public, who would be important enough that you would stand if they entered?

2. What good news is there for Stephen and for us that Jesus Christ is standing at the right hand of God?

Leader’s note: Be sure to reference the day five Bible study as you prepare for this devotion. Stephen is given a glimpse of heaven with the victorious and glorified Savior standing at God’s right hand. He has accomplished all that God has promised and Stephen is being welcomed home as we too one day will be.

3. **Standing in the Need of Prayer:** Pull out your prayer cards. How did your praying go? How did it feel to be told you’d been prayed for? How did it feel to tell someone you had prayed for them? Did anyone see any prayers answered yet this week?

Leader’s note: It is to be hoped that the model of regular and fervent prayer might have been well-modeled this week and might continue. It is another pattern to “repeat.”

Something to Sing About 
Standing in the Need of Prayer (AGPS 220)
Explained by Participant No. ____ (with some music background or someone who can sing a little. See day one.)

Today we're going to change the song again. Replace the word "NOT" with "FOR" and "BUT IT'S ME" with "YES INDEED." Examples are provided.

Then we're going to sing with you calling people served or projects we completed. We'll do a few practice rounds. Ready? Let's get that nice steady beat and any percussion additions. (Get the rhythm going). Make sure we get everyone in your group. The refrain won't change. Follow my lead ...

Call out: "the homeless and the hungry"

*FOR "the homeless and the hungry"
YES indeed, O Lord,
Standing in the need of prayer;*

Call out: "the playground and the fencepost"

*For the playground and the fencepost
Yes indeed, O Lord,
Standing in the need of prayer.*

*Refrain:
It's me, it's me, O Lord standing in the need of prayer it's
me; it's me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer*

*For _____ and _____ Yes indeed Oh Lord
Standing in the need of prayer;*

Prayer for the Day 
Read by Participant No. ____
Let's join in praying the Lord's Prayer.