



In Christ Alone
We Serve

Devotions | Bible Study | Worship
[LEADER GUIDE]



In Christ Alone We Serve

Table of Contents

Daily Devotions	3
LEADER'S NOTES	
DAY 1: JOY IN COMMUNITY	
DAY 2: JOY IN SUFFERING	
DAY 3: JOY IN HUMILITY	
DAY 4: JOY IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES	
DAY 5: JOY IN CHRIST JESUS	
SONG SUGGESTIONS	
Bible Studies	14
LEADER'S NOTES	
HERE IN THE LOVE OF CHRIST ... WE SERVE	
HERE IN THE DEATH OF CHRIST ... WE SERVE	
BOUGHT WITH THE BLOOD OF CHRIST ... WE SERVE	
HERE IN THE POWER OF CHRIST ... WE SERVE	
IN CHRIST ALONE ... WE SERVE	
BIBLE STUDY GAME DIRECTIONS	
Worship Service	29
Commissioning Service	34



In Christ Alone
We Serve

Daily Devotions [LEADER GUIDE]

Our theme this week is “In Christ Alone ... We Serve.” We will spend our devotion time each day looking into the book of Philippians, which is the biblical basis for this theme. Each day, as we join with each other in devotions, we will listen to what Paul writes to these friends of his and to each of us.

In Christ Alone We Serve

Leader's Notes

About the Theme

The theme for the 2016 LCMS Youth Gathering, “In Christ Alone,” is based on the apostle Paul’s book to the Philippians. The 2016 theme selection process began by first considering the LCMS’ triennial theme, “Stand,” in preparation for the upcoming celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017.

As LCMS Servant Events began planning for 2016, the decision was made to continue the tradition of carrying a single theme throughout the events of the LCMS Youth Gathering year. To that end, “In Christ Alone ... We Serve” came to be the overarching theme for the 2016 National LCMS Servant Events.

“In Christ Alone ... We Serve” is an important reminder to all of us, as servant event leaders and participants in faithful service, of the true work of Christ. All that we have, all that we believe and all that we are comes only through Christ alone. Because of God’s great love for us, He sent His Son Jesus to die for us. This precious gift inspires us to live each day through the love, power, grace, mercy and joy that come in Christ alone.

Each person who attends your servant event comes with a different story — they are young and old, veteran servants and newbies, rejoicing and despairing, long-time Christians and those who haven’t heard the Gospel, strong and struggling, excited and scared, etc. It is our prayer that every participant will experience the gift of serving in Christ alone!

Daily Themes

The daily themes for this series of devotions are taken from the book of Philippians. Philippians serves as the main scriptural basis for the “In Christ Alone” theme. Here we explore the sub-themes of community, identity and humility. We also engage in the great joy that is an overarching theme in Philippians and in our lives in Christ.

Day 1: Joy in Community

Main Scripture: Phil. 1:3–11

Day 2: Joy in Suffering

Main Scripture: Phil. 1:12–26

Day 3: Joy in Humility

Main Scripture: Phil. 2:1–11

Day 4: Joy in All Circumstances

Main Scripture: Phil. 4:10–13

Day 5: Joy in Christ Jesus

Main Scripture: Phil. 3:7–14

About the Devotions

OBJECTIVE: It is our prayer that these devotions would help participants to find joy in every circumstance and to share that joy as they serve God’s people each day.

GOALS: It is the goal of these devotions to:

- Start each day in God’s Word.
- Encourage participants to see the love of Christ in their service and in their lives, both at the servant event and at home.
- Assist participants in finding the joy which comes from living in Christ alone.

INTENT:

- These devotions are written so that they may be led by the participants themselves or by an adult leader. These could be used by the participants at their worksite or at the host site before heading to the worksite for the day.
- These devotions are meant to be a starting point for the day. They should move along quickly. There is a lot of information/study that is possible from these devotions; they could be used as an alternative Bible study series.

All that we have, all that we
believe and all that we are
comes only through

Christ alone.

Devotion Parts

OPENING PRAYER: It is important for each devotion time to begin with prayer. This prayer serves to connect with our Heavenly Father, focus us on His Word and ask Him to be present with us throughout the day.

WHERE IS THE JOY? We begin by reading God's Word and looking at the life of Paul.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN? We look at the definitions of each theme.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO PAUL? We look at how each theme played out for Paul.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR US? We look at how each theme plays out for us.

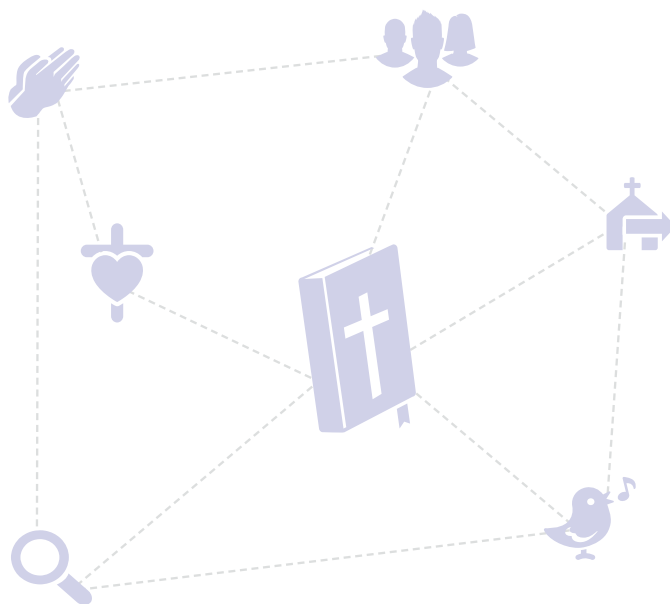
HOW DO WE USE THIS JOY TODAY? We are issued a challenge to find, share and/or give thanks for the joys of today.

CLOSING PRAYER: We take time to thank God for the joys that come from Him alone.

SONG: We express our joy through song.

We are inspired to live each day
through the love, power, grace,
mercy and joy that come in

Christ alone.



In Christ Alone We Serve

[DAY 1] Joy in Community

Opening Prayer

Where Is the Joy? READ PHIL. 1:3–11

What Does It Mean? com•mu•ni•ty

noun

1. a group of people who live in the same area (such as a city, town or neighborhood)
2. a group of people who have the same interests, religion, race, etc.
3. a group of nations

What Does It Mean to Paul?

Q: Where does Paul find his joy in this reading?

Q: What is it about these specific people that is so meaningful to Paul?

Q: What does Paul pray for these people?

What Does It Mean for Us?

The people of Philippi are very dear to Paul. He truly loves and cares about them. They are a community of believers. Paul feels as though he is a part of this community even though he is living far from them.

Q: What communities are you a part of? How do they work?

Q: We are building a community here this week. What kind of characteristics/actions do we want our community to have?

Q: Paul prays that his community would continue to grow in love and in the knowledge of Christ. Are those prayers that we need too?

How Do We Use this Joy Today?

Paul shares his joy in being a part of the community of believers.

Let's challenge ourselves to share the joys we see in each other throughout our serving, studying and living together this week.

Closing Prayer WE PRAY TOGETHER:

Dear Jesus, we thank you for this new day. We are excited to begin this week of serving Your people. Be with us, we ask, as we begin to build a community here in this place. Help us to seek You first, to be partners in sharing the Gospel, and to work together in all we do this week. We pray that Your love would flow through us to all those we serve. Touch their lives as they become part of our community as well. We give You thanks for Your death and resurrection, which give us life in You. Be with us, we pray. Amen.

Song

"They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love"

*"I thank my God
in all my remembrance of you, always
in every prayer of mine for you all
making my prayer with joy, because
of your partnership in the gospel from
the first day until now" (Phil. 1:3–5).*

In Christ Alone We Serve

[DAY 2] Joy in Suffering

Opening Prayer

Where Is the Joy? READ PHIL. 1:12–26

What Does It Mean? to suf•fer

verb

1. to experience pain, illness, or injury
2. to experience something unpleasant (such as defeat, loss or damage)
3. to become worse because of being badly affected by something

What Does It Mean to Paul?

- Q:** What kind of attitude does Paul have?
- Q:** What does Paul say about the reaction of the palace guard and his brothers in the Lord?
- Q:** What does Paul mean when he says, “to live is Christ and to die is gain”?

What Does It Mean for Us?

While Paul is writing this letter, he is sitting in prison, not because he is guilty of a crime, but because he has continued to share the Gospel. Paul has undergone some serious suffering through his life as a disciple. He has been arrested many times, beaten, put into jails on more than one occasion, shipwrecked and treated as an enemy. Yet Paul is not angry or depressed. Instead, he is joyful and encouraged because people have responded to his continued preaching of the Gospel. As he sits in prison, others have come to preach in his place. Paul rejoices and prays that, no matter what happens to him, Christ would be exalted.

- Q:** Have we undergone suffering? How did we react to that suffering?
- Q:** Do we live our lives with an attitude like Paul?

How Do We Use This Joy Today?

Paul is able to find joy in his suffering because it has served to spread the Gospel. He knows that his life is a gift from God and that his death will bring him to everlasting life. We have been given that same gift.

Let’s challenge ourselves to look for chances to share God’s love even when we are suffering.

Closing Prayer

WE PRAY TOGETHER:

Dear Heavenly Father, we give You thanks for this day and for all that will be found in it. Father, You have let suffering come into our lives, not to scare us away from You, but as opportunities to share our faith in You. Many of those we are serving this week, and many of us who are serving this week, know what it is to suffer. We give You thanks that You were willing to suffer persecution and death so that we could be saved. What great love You have shown! Help us today to share that same kind of love with those we serve. In Your name we pray. Amen.

Song

“Shout to the North”

*“Yes, and I will rejoice,
for I know that through your prayers and
the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will
turn out for my deliverance, as it is my eager
expectation and hope that I will not be at all
ashamed, but that with full courage now as
always Christ will be honored in my body,
whether by life or by death. For to me to live
is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:18b–21).*

In Christ Alone We Serve

[DAY 3] Joy in Humility

Opening Prayer

Where Is the Joy? READ PHIL. 2:1–11

What Does It Mean?

hum•ble

adjective

1. not proud; not thinking of yourself as better than other people
2. given or said in a way that shows you do not think you are better than other people
3. showing that you do not think of yourself as better than other people

What Does It Mean to Paul?

- Q:** When we are truly humble, who does Paul say is better/more important?
- Q:** Who does Paul suggest that we model our humility after?
- Q:** What was the outcome of Christ's humility?

What Does It Mean for Us?

Paul finds joy in Christians living and working in unity with one another. He asks us to make our attitudes match those of Christ Jesus. He goes on to tell us again about the message of the Gospel: Jesus, who is God, humbled Himself and came to earth as both God and man. He lived a perfect life and then took on the sin of the whole world. He died and rose again to make payment for every sin. Now He is exalted in heaven and gives us the opportunity to have new life on earth and eternal life in heaven with Him.

- Q:** How can we have the same attitude as Christ Jesus? What will that look like?
- Q:** Our salvation is the greatest joy that comes from Jesus' humility. What do these verses say our response should be (Phil 2:9–11)?

How Do We Use This Joy Today?

Paul shares his joy so that we would model our humility after that of Christ Jesus.

Let's challenge ourselves to be humble today, to put others' needs ahead of our own both in our service projects and in our community of believers, and to rejoice in Jesus' model of humility for us!

Closing Prayer

WE PRAY TOGETHER:

Dear Jesus, we thank You for another day of service. It is easy for us to think we are better than other people because of all that we are doing for others this week. We ask that You would instill in each of us a heart filled with humility. Help us to put others' needs ahead of our pride. Be with us as we look for ways to follow Your example of humility. We thank You that You humbled Yourself to become man and to die on the cross for us. Thank You for winning salvation for us. Please help us to share Your gift of salvation each day. In Your name we pray. Amen.

Song "Humble Thyself"

"So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind" (Phil. 2:1–2).

In Christ Alone We Serve

[DAY 4] Joy in All Circumstances

Opening Prayer

Where Is the Joy? READ PHIL. 4:10–13

What Does It Mean?

cir•cum•stances
noun, plural

1. the way something happens
2. the specific details of an event
3. an event or situation that you cannot control

What Does It Mean to Paul?

- Q:** What is the big secret that Paul has discovered?
- Q:** Ultimately, on what/who does Paul depend?
- Q:** How has that changed his outlook?

What Does It Mean for Us?

As we have seen, Paul faced many trials. He faced times when he was in great need, and he rejoiced in times when he had everything he needed and more. What he learned was that all gifts come from God. He discovered that no matter the circumstances, God was and is constant. God was always with Paul, and so Paul always had hope.

- Q:** Do we know what it is like to be in need?
- Q:** Do we look for and rely on God in our best times?
In our worst times?
- Q:** How should knowing this “secret” change our outlook?

How Do We Use This Joy Today?

Paul’s joy in today’s reading is contentment. His joy came from knowing that no matter what situation he found himself in, God would be with him. God was able to provide whatever Paul needed — and whatever it is that we need. He gives His strength, His power, His hope, His love, His forgiveness and His Spirit.

Let’s challenge ourselves to share this “secret” to being content with someone at our service project today.

Closing Prayer

WE PRAY TOGETHER:

Dear God in heaven, we give You thanks for this day and for all that comes with it. You have shown us that no matter the circumstances, You are with us. When we are thriving, remind us that all we have comes from You. When we are wanting, remind us that You have all we need. In all times, remind us that through Jesus’ death and resurrection we have new life in You and eternal life in heaven. Help us to look for the blessings in this day and to be a blessing to those around us today. In Your name we pray. Amen.

Song “All in All”

“I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, *I have learned the secret* of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me” (Phil. 4:12–13).

In Christ Alone We Serve

[DAY 5] Joy in Christ Jesus

Opening Prayer

Where Is the Joy?

READ PHIL. 3:7–14

What Does It Mean?

Christ Je•sus

proper noun

1. Son of God
2. Savior
3. Teacher
4. Friend

What Does It Mean to Paul?

- Q:** In Paul's opinion, which is more important — worldly possessions or knowing Christ Jesus? Why?
- Q:** What “prize” does God have in store for Paul and for all believers?
- Q:** How can he win that prize?

What Does It Mean for Us?

Paul has come to realize that his true joy comes from knowing and believing in Christ Jesus. His faith in Jesus is worth more to him than any earthly possession. Paul's faith and his trust in Christ Jesus have changed the way he lives in this world and inspire him to “press on” so that one day he will join the saints in heaven.

- Q:** What earthly possessions are valuable to us? What would happen if they all disappeared?
- Q:** How do we get to “know” Christ?
- Q:** How does our faith change the way we look at our time here on earth?

How Do We Use This Joy Today?

Paul's true joy is found in knowing Christ Jesus as his Savior and Lord.

Let's challenge ourselves to be confident in Christ today — to know with certainty that He loves us, that He has forgiven us, that He is living in us. This confidence in Christ will overflow into all we do and all we say, today and always.

Closing Prayer

WE PRAY TOGETHER:

Dear Heavenly Father, we give You thanks that You have given us the gift of faith through the Holy Spirit. We ask that You would continue to strengthen our faith. We pray that You would help us to continue to get to know our Savior Jesus Christ through Your Word. Help us to see that apart from Him we deserve death, but that through faith in Him we have received forgiveness of sins and life everlasting. Thank You for giving us an opportunity to live out our faith through service this week. Be with us as we go back to our homes and communities. Help us to continue to serve others and to share our faith throughout our lives. In Your name we pray. Amen.

Song

“Here I Am, Lord”

“Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that *depends on faith*” (Phil 3:8–9).

In Christ Alone We Serve

Song Suggestions

"They Will Know We Are Christians"

BY PETER SCHOLTES

1. We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord.
We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord,
And we pray that all unity may one day be
restored.

CHORUS:

And they'll know we are Christians by our love,
by our love.

Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.

2. We will walk with each other, we will walk hand
in hand.
We will walk with each other, we will walk hand
in hand,
And together we'll spread the news that God is in
our land. *Chorus*
3. We will work with each other, we will work side
by side.
We will work with each other, we will work side
by side,
And we'll guard each man's dignity and save each
man's pride. *Chorus*
4. All praise to the Father from whom all things come,
And all praise to Christ Jesus His only Son,
And all praise to the Spirit who makes us one.
Chorus

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"Shout to the North"

BY MARTIN SMITH

1. Men of faith rise up and sing, of our great and
glorious King.
You are strong when you feel weak, in your
brokenness complete.

CHORUS:

Shout to the north and the south, Sing to the east
and the west.

Jesus is Savior of all, He is Lord of Heaven
and Earth.

2. Rise up women of the truth, stand and sing to
broken hearts
Who can know the healing power of our awe-
some King of Love? *Chorus*

BRIDGE:

We've been through fire, we've been through rain
We've been refined by the power of His name.
We've fallen deeper in love with You, You put the
Truth on our lips.

3. Rise up church with broken wings, fill this place
with songs again,
Of our God who reigns on high, by His grace
again we'll fly. *Chorus*

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"All praise to the Father from whom all things come,

And all praise to Christ Jesus His only Son,
And all praise to the Spirit who makes us one."

"Humble Thyself"

BY BOB HUDSON

1. Humble thyself in the sight of the Lord (echo)
Humble thyself in the sight of the Lord (echo)

CHORUS:

And He (echo) shall lift (echo)
(together) you up, higher and higher
And He (echo) shall lift (echo) you up.

2. Give yourself to the service of the Lord (echo)
Give yourself to the service of the Lord (echo)
Chorus
3. Love your neighbor as you love yourself (echo)
Love your neighbor as you love yourself (echo)
Chorus
4. Humble thyself in the sight of the Lord (echo)
Humble thyself in the sight of the Lord (echo)

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"All in All"

BY DENNIS JERNIGAN

1. You are my strength when I am weak,
You are the treasure that I seek,
You are my all in all.
I'm seeking You as a precious jewel,
Lord to give up I'd be a fool,
You are my all in all.

CHORUS:

Jesus, Lamb of God, worthy is Your name.
Jesus, Lamb of God, worthy is Your name.

2. Taking my sin, my cross, my shame,
Rising again I praise Your name,
You are my all in all.
And when I fall down You pick me up,
and when I am dry You fill my cup,
You are my all in all. *Chorus*

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"Here I Am, Lord"

1. I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard My
people cry,
All who dwell in deepest sin, My hand will save.
I who made the stars of night, I will make their
darkness bright.
Who will bear My light to them?
Whom shall I send?

CHORUS:

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard You
calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if You lead me. I will hold Your
people in my heart.

2. I, the Lord of snow and rain, I have borne My
people's pain.
I have wept for love of them, they turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone, give them hearts
for love alone.
I will speak My Word to them. Whom shall I
send? *Chorus*
3. I the Lord of wind and flame, I will tend the poor
and lame.
I will set a feast for them, My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide, till their hearts be
satisfied.
I will give My life to them. Whom shall I send?
Chorus

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"You are my strength when I am weak,
You are the treasure that I seek,

You are my all in all."

"In Christ Alone"

BY KEITH GETTY AND STUART TOWNEND

1. In Christ alone my hope is found,
He is my light, my strength, my song;
this Cornerstone, this solid Ground,
firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
when fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My Comforter, my All in All,
here in the love of Christ I stand.
2. In Christ alone! who took on flesh
Fulness of God in helpless babe!
This gift of love and righteousness
Scorned by the ones he came to save:
Till on that cross as Jesus died,
The wrath of God was satisfied —
For every sin on Him was laid;
Here in the death of Christ I live.
3. There in the ground His body lay
Light of the world by darkness slain;
Then bursting forth in glorious Day
Up from the grave he rose again!
And as He stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
For I am His and He is mine —
Bought with the precious blood of Christ.
4. No guilt in life, no fear in death,
This is the power of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath.
Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man,
Can ever pluck me from His hand;
Till He returns or calls me home,
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand.

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"Make Me A Servant"

ALL GOD'S PEOPLE SING 174

Make me a servant
Humble and meek
Lord let me lift up
Those who are weak
And may the prayer
Of my heart always be
Make me a servant
Make me a servant
Make me a servant today

(Repeat three times.)

"No power of hell, no scheme of man,
Can ever pluck me from His hand;
Till He returns or calls me home,

*Here in the power of
Christ I'll stand."*



In Christ Alone
We Serve

Bible Studies [LEADER GUIDE]

Our theme this week is “In Christ Alone ... We Serve.” We will spend our Bible study time each day in God’s Word, led by the words from the song we are using as part of this theme. Each day, as we join with each other in study, we have the opportunity learn more about Christ and His great love for each of us!

In Christ Alone We Serve

Leader's Notes

About the Theme:

The theme for the 2016 LCMS Youth Gathering, “In Christ Alone,” is based on the apostle Paul’s book to the Philippians. The 2016 theme selection process began by first considering the LCMS’ triennial theme, “Stand,” in preparation for the upcoming celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017.

As LCMS Servant Events began planning for 2016, the decision was made to continue the tradition of carrying a single theme throughout the events of the National Youth Gathering year. To that end, “In Christ Alone ... We Serve” came to be the overarching theme for the 2016 National LCMS Servant Events.

“In Christ Alone ... We Serve” is an important reminder to all of us, as servant event leaders and participants in faithful service, of the true work of Christ. All that we have, all that we believe and all that we are comes only through Christ alone. Because of God’s great love for us, He sent His Son Jesus to die for us. This precious gift inspires us to live each day through the love, power, grace, mercy and joy that come in Christ alone.

Each person who attends your servant event comes with a different story — they are young and old, veteran servants and newbies, rejoicing and despairing, long-time Christians and those who haven’t heard the Gospel, strong and struggling, excited and scared, etc. It is our prayer that every participant will experience the gift of serving in Christ alone!

Daily Themes:

The daily themes for this series were taken from the song “In Christ Alone” by Keith Getty and Stuart Townend. Many participants will already know the song. We suggest that the song be used throughout the week to help make it familiar to all participants.

Day 1: Here in the Love of Christ ... We Serve

Main Scripture: *Washing the Disciples’ Feet* (John 13:1–17)

Additional passages: *Rom. 5:8; John 3:16; 13:34–35; 14:9–17*

Day 2: Here in the Death of Christ ... We Serve

Main Scripture: *The Crucifixion* (Matt. 27:45–54)

Additional passages: *Matt. 26:47–56; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21; John 3:16*

Day 3: Bought With the Blood of Christ ... We Serve.

Main Scripture: *The Lord’s Supper* (Luke 22:7–20)

Additional passages: *Gen. 9:8–17; 15:9–21; Ex. 24:1–8; Jer. 31:31–34; 1 Peter 1:18–20; 2:9; Col. 3:12–17*

Day 4: Here in the Power of Christ ... We Serve

Main Scripture: *Calming the Storm* (Mark 4:35–41)

Additional passage: *2 Cor. 12:9–10*

Day 5: In Christ Alone ... We Serve

Main Scripture: *The Great Commission* (Matt. 28:16–20)

Additional passages: *Matt. 20:28; Rom. 12:3–8; 1 Cor. 12:4–11*

About the Bible Study:

OBJECTIVE: It is my prayer that by the power of the Holy Spirit working through His Word, participants would better understand and appreciate the person of Christ Jesus and the love of God that has been given to each of us.

All that we have, all that we
believe and all that we are
comes only through

Christ alone.

GOALS: It is the goal of these studies to:

- Connect participants to Christ through His Word.
- Encourage participants to see the love of Christ in their service and in their lives, both at the servant event and at home.
- Assist participants in finding their identity in Christ alone.

INTENT:

- These Bible studies are written so that they may be led by the participants themselves. A Bible study leader could facilitate for all the groups, assist groups in staying on track, gather information through group reporting, highlight main points and share insights. A Bible study leader would help with monitoring the time and discussions within the groups as well.
- These studies are written to be used with minimal setup and materials, making them easy to use in any setting (camp, church, worksite, etc.). There are ways to add to each with props, costumes, etc., but those things are not necessary.
- These studies are meant to be personal. The conversations, questions and reflections will connect to the real lives of participants. These may be hard for participants to share in larger groups, so having a small, consistent group for all the Bible studies is important. Groups could be participants who already know each other or mixed groups. Depending on the age of the participants, groups of the same gender or from the same church could work well.

Bible Study Parts:

IN PRAYER: It is important for each Bible study session to begin with prayer. This prayer should be led by the Bible study leader and used to help focus participants for the important part of the day.

IN MOTION (10 minutes): This time is set aside to get participants moving, interacting and talking with one another. These often-silly games and activities help to break the ice, wake kids up and begin a discussion about the topic for that day's Bible study. It is important to have this time. If you have a different activity or game that you would prefer, feel free to substitute that instead. This time can be shortened if necessary, but should not be eliminated. Directions for each activity are included in this leader's guide.

IN THE WORD (10 minutes): This is designed for small groups of four to six people. This time is devoted to being in God's Word. During this time, participants will read the Bible passages, talk with their small group about what they have read and write a short summary. Reading aloud is preferred; participants can take turns or appoint one person to read. If reading aloud is uncomfortable, groups can read silently. Since many of these stories will be familiar, leaders should encourage participants to read/listen not just for the story but also for new insights.

IN THEIR PLACE (5 minutes): This time is important to personalize the Bible story. This would be a great time to use leaders or participants who enjoy drama and acting. Have those participants/leaders dress for the part and tell "their story." If you don't have people to do that, these can just be read by the small group. Give small groups a few minutes to talk about the questions that follow each monologue.

IN DISCUSSION (15 minutes): This time is the meat of the Bible study. Like earlier sections, it is designed to be used in a small group format. This is written to be led by a member of the group itself. The Bible study leader can then monitor groups and assist where needed. The questions are personal and participants may need a little encouragement in order to go deeper. There will be participants who are not comfortable sharing in this way. Remind groups that the information shared in their group stays only in their group.

IN CLOSING: This is simply an overview of the study in a sentence or two. These sentences can be used throughout the day, posted somewhere participants will see them or used as you see fit.

IN PRAYER (5 minutes): This prayer time is for the small groups, giving them time to pray together about whatever is on their hearts. Encourage all participants to make this a meaningful time. A few options of prayer types are listed.

IN RESPONSE (5 minutes): This is an opportunity to connect the Bible study topic to the servant event happenings. It is important that participants have the time to do this part of the study. Once the cards are completed, attach each to a metal binder ring, place in affirmation bags or use in another way so that participants can keep them and take them home.

In Christ Alone We Serve

Here in the LOVE of Christ ... We Serve

In Prayer



Begin your time together in prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to fill each participant so that we might truly hear God's Word and take this time to "read, learn and inwardly digest" all that He has for us.

In Motion



We begin today with a game of "Do You Love Your Neighbor?" (See directions on p. 28.) If your group has fewer than 30, you can play all together; otherwise, break up into smaller groups to play. As you finish playing, let's talk about love.

- Q:** How did you decide whether or not you "loved your neighbor"?
- Q:** In your everyday life, how do you "decide" whether or not you love someone? Do you feel like you control this decision? Is it an easy decision or is it hard?
- Q:** Love is the ultimate identifying characteristic of Christ! It is who He is! As followers of Christ, is love our ultimate identifying characteristic?

In the Word



The Bible is full of examples of love. Let's explore just one of them. Read John 13:1–17. This is the story of Jesus washing His disciples' feet. Take a minute to talk in your small group about the story, and write your summary here:

- Q:** Have you ever paid attention to the first verse in this story? Reread John 13:1. What does this verse tell us about Jesus' relationship with His disciples?

Jesus spent years walking with, talking with, living with and teaching His disciples. He didn't just know them; He truly loved them!

In Their Place



Let's keep going: Read John 13:2–9. Can you picture this part of the story?

What a great night! We finally got to spend some time with just Jesus and the rest of the disciples. So, I'm not really sure how it started. We were sitting in the room that had been prepared for us, just relaxing and talking with one another. One of the guys saw Jesus get up from the table, but we thought He was just getting more to drink. When He came back to us at the table, He was carrying water and a towel. I think we were all a bit confused. And then it got really crazy: Jesus knelt down on the floor in front of one of my brothers and asked him to take off his sandals. He looked around a little, but did as Jesus asked, and Jesus proceeded to wash his feet and dry them with the towel. Jesus went to each man and eventually came to Peter. Peter got kind of weird about it and said "no," but Jesus convinced him. After Jesus explained why He was washing our feet, I think we all saw His example of love and humility. He is an incredible teacher. What would you have done if you were with us?

- Q:** How would you feel if Jesus knelt at your feet?

- Q:** How would you react?

- Q:** Would you feel His love through this act?

Answer these questions for yourself, then take some time to share with your small group.

In Discussion

Jesus shows what love looks like as He meets His disciples in this way. He has humbled Himself; He has loved them in a quiet way; He has loved them in a meaningful way; He has loved them as they are. True Christlike love is not about big gestures, it's not about making sure everyone sees the love, and it's not about loving only those who are worthy. Christlike love is humble, kind and for all people.

In this account we see men who were sinful, including one who would deny Jesus just a few hours later! And yet Jesus loved them and wanted to share that love with them before He died. Jesus shares this same message with us.

Rom. 5:8 says, "But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Our God know us just as He knew the disciples. He knows our weaknesses, He knows our unworthiness and He knows our sinfulness, but that doesn't keep Him from loving us. Instead, it increases His love to the place where He is willing to sacrifice Himself to save us. Jesus lived, suffered, died, descended into hell and was raised again because of God's great love for us! Remember this? "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

Q: Read these words again: "But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." How do these words make you feel?

Let's go back to the story of the disciples. After Jesus washes the feet of His friends, He continues to talk to them. Look at these verses and listen to what He is telling them and us:

JOHN 13:12–15:

JOHN 13:34–35:

JOHN 14:9–17:

Q: So how will we follow His example and His command?

In Closing

Jesus' example of love moves us to love others through our acts of service. Love comes to us through Christ alone!

In Prayer

Take a few minutes in your small group to pray together.

LEADER PRAYER: You can ask one person in the group to lead the prayer for all.

POPCORN PRAYER: A leader from the group starts the prayer, then pauses so each person can "pop" in a prayer. When the "popping" slows, the leader will close the prayer.

SQUEEZE PRAYER: The group forms a circle, holding hands. One person starts the prayer, then squeezes the hand of the person to the right when finished. As each person finishes, he or she continues to pass the squeeze. The last person will close the prayer. Note: If someone doesn't want to pray aloud, that person can just pass the squeeze instead of speaking a prayer.

In Response

How has God's great love touched your life today? Take a few minutes to write or draw those moments on the index cards provided. Attach the completed cards to your metal ring, and save to use tomorrow.

In Christ Alone We Serve

Here in the DEATH of Christ ... We Serve

In Prayer



Begin your time together in prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to fill each participant so that we might truly hear God's Word and take this time to "read, learn and inwardly digest" all that He has for us.

In Motion



We begin today with The Frog Game! (See directions on p. 28)

- Q:** Who had the most dramatic death scene in this game?
- Q:** When you hear the word "death," what do you think of? How do you react?

Death is the reason Jesus was sent to earth in the first place! Sounds crazy, doesn't it? But it's the truth: God sent His Son to earth as the plan for salvation.

In the Word



The Bible records Jesus' death in a few places. Let's take a look at one account of Jesus' death. Read Matt. 27:45–54 aloud. Take a minute to talk in your small group about the story, and write your summary here:

In Their Place



We join the disciples again today. To put ourselves in their shoes, we need to back up to some of what has happened before the account of Jesus' death. Read Matt. 26:47–56.

Now put yourself into their story:

What a day it's been! Jesus met us for the Passover meal, a celebration, and while we were there, He showed His love for us by being an example of a humble servant. When that shock wore off, He gave us bread and wine and talked about how it was His body and blood and that through it we would gain forgiveness of all our sins. Just when we thought things were getting back to normal,

He started talking about how some of us were going to do terrible things to Him. I couldn't believe that one of my brothers would betray or deny Him! Was He sure? We went with Him to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray, and some of us really just couldn't stay awake to pray. And then Jesus was back with us and Judas was coming with soldiers and Jesus just let them arrest Him! We were so afraid that they were coming for us too that we all ran! And now Jesus is with Pilate and people are yelling to crucify Him and we don't know what to do. How could we have run away? How can we help Him now? How can we watch Him die?

- Q:** How are you feeling at this point in the story?

- Q:** Is there anything you can do?

In Discussion



Back to the story: Read Matt. 27:45–46. The most difficult part of Jesus' crucifixion and death happens in these verses. Jesus, the innocent Son of God, feels His separation from God the Father. Jesus must experience the pain of death and separation from God. Jesus' willingness to suffer in this way brings believers the promise that we will never be separated from God. Even in our earthly death, He is with us.

- Q:** How have you experienced separation from those closest to you (death, divorce, loss, anger, etc.)?

- Q:** How does God's promise that He is always with us make you feel about that separation?

In Matt. 27:50 we read that Jesus “yielded up his spirit.” In this verse, we live Jesus’ death. The apostle Paul wrote, “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me” (Gal. 2:20). When Jesus gave up His spirit, He died, and with Him died all of our sins, all of our shortcomings and all of our fears.

Q: Jesus willingly gave Himself for us. What does that say about His love for us?

Paul expresses his faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus in these words: “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phil 1:21). Paul knows that both his life on this earth and his eternal life come to him only through Jesus’ death. To that end, he has dedicated his life to sharing the Gospel and looks with joy at his death because it will be his eternal life in heaven.

Q: Can you truthfully say those words?

We can only truthfully both say and believe those words when we are living in Christ alone.

Let’s finish up the story. Read Matt. 27:51–54. Until this point, this crucifixion had looked like so many others to those soldiers and the unbelievers of the city. They had seen crucifixion many times. What happens in these verses, however, shows everyone that this death is different.

Q: What happens at the moment Jesus dies?

Q: How did those who were witnessing this event react?

The declaration that “Truly this was the Son of God!” is a powerful part of the story of Jesus’ death. Those who watched Jesus die that day saw in His example and in His words that He was God.

Q: We walk by faith and not by sight. We were not physically there to watch Jesus’ death, and yet through that one death we all have new life. What should our new lives look like?

Jesus’ death is not the end of the story. In just three days we witness His resurrection! We rejoice that God loved us so much that He would give His only Son to die for us so that all who believe in Him will not die but will have everlasting life (John 3:16).

In Closing

Jesus’ death and resurrection secure our salvation. We have died with Him so that we can live with Him forever. Jesus’ death brings us to life through Christ alone.

In Prayer

Take a few minutes in your small group to pray together.

LEADER PRAYER: You can ask one person in the group to lead the prayer for all.

POPCORN PRAYER: A leader from the group starts the prayer, then pauses so each person can “pop” in a prayer. When the “popping” slows, the leader will close the prayer.

SQUEEZE PRAYER: The group forms a circle, holding hands. One person starts the prayer, then squeezes the hand of the person to the right when finished. As each person finishes, he or she continues to pass the squeeze. The last person will close the prayer. Note: If someone doesn’t want to pray aloud, that person can just pass the squeeze instead of speaking a prayer.

In Response

How has Jesus’ death touched your life today? Take a few minutes to write or draw those moments on the index cards provided. Attach the completed cards to your metal ring, and save to use tomorrow.

In Christ Alone We Serve

Bought with the BLOOD of Christ ... We Serve

In Prayer



Begin your time together in prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to fill each participant so that we might truly hear God's Word and take this time to "read, learn and inwardly digest" all that He has for us.

In Motion



We begin today with an activity: We are headed to a desert island. Who and what do you choose to take with you?

Q: What did you consider before choosing items or people?

Q: What was one of your best or worst choices?

In the Word



Jesus' blood is an integral part of the story of our salvation. Let's take a look at one example of Jesus sharing His blood. Read Luke 22:7–20 aloud. Take a minute to talk in your small group about the story, and write your summary here:

In Their Place



Today we meet the disciples as they are preparing for a day of celebration and relaxation. They are getting ready for Passover.

Can you put yourself into their story?

These last few days have been so busy. I think we were all excited to get to spend some time celebrating Passover quietly with our teacher Jesus. Just a few days ago, we entered the city of Jerusalem with Jesus. We got Him a donkey to ride on and it was like a royal parade! People were laying their cloaks in the road and waving palm branches, and we all were praising God at the top of our lungs. It was so exciting! Then we spent a few days going with Jesus as He taught at the temple and among

the people. We haven't had a minute of downtime. No matter where we go, people follow. Jesus sent a few of us disciples into town with directions to get everything ready for the Passover meal. We finally got a chance to just sit with Jesus and each other and relax. We had a great meal and then Jesus started to share with us. He took some bread and gave it to us. He called it His body and then asked us to eat. He did the same with the cup of wine. He called it His blood and talked of a covenant. He asked us to remember Him. What does He mean? Should we be worried? Does He think we will forget?

In Discussion



Q: In Luke 22:20, Jesus says, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood." What do you think that means?

Webster's Dictionary gives this definition for the word "covenant":

1. a usually formal, solemn, and binding agreement;
2. a written agreement or promise usually under seal between two or more parties especially for the performance of some action; law action to recover damages for breach of such a contract.

Throughout the Bible, especially in the Old Testament, God makes covenants with His people. Have members of your group read these verses and share what agreement or promise God made:

GEN. 9:8–17:

GEN. 15:9–21:

EX. 24:1–8:

JER. 31:31–34:

Q: What covenant/promises has God made with you? (Hint: Rom. 10:9; Matt. 28:20; Jer. 29:11; Matt. 11:28; Phil. 4:19; John 14:27; Is. 43:1)

God specifically chose those with whom He made a covenant. He acknowledged their faithfulness and made a promise to them. God, in His great love for us, chose Christ to die for us and through His blood to create a covenant with us.

Read 1 Peter 1:18–20. In the NIV translation, these verses read: “For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.”

Q: Why was Jesus chosen?

We needed Him to give His blood, His life, for us. Our blood was marred with sin. We could not save ourselves. Our eternal life was given to us through the pouring out of Jesus’ blood and through His resurrection. The same covenant Jesus made with the disciples at the Lord’s Supper, He also made with each of us. The same promise of forgiveness that was given to the disciples was also given to us.

Q: Read 1 Peter 2:9. What does God call us in these verses?

Q: As his “chosen people” and “a people belonging to God,” what does that mean for our lives here and now? Read Col. 3:12–17.

In Closing

Through the blood of Christ we are brought into a covenant with Him. Because of His blood, we belong to Him!

In Prayer

Take a few minutes in your small group to pray together.

LEADER PRAYER: You can ask one person in the group to lead the prayer for all.

POPCORN PRAYER: A leader from the group starts the prayer, then pauses so each person can “pop” in a prayer. When the “popping” slows, the leader will close the prayer.

SQUEEZE PRAYER: The group forms a circle, holding hands. One person starts the prayer, then squeezes the hand of the person to the right when finished. As each person finishes, he or she continues to pass the squeeze. The last person will close the prayer. Note: If someone doesn’t want to pray aloud, that person can just pass the squeeze instead of speaking a prayer.

In Response

How have you seen Jesus keep His promises to you today? Take a few minutes to write or draw those moments on the index cards provided. Attach the completed cards to your metal ring, and save to use tomorrow.

In Christ Alone We Serve

Here in the POWER of Christ . . . We Serve

In Prayer



Begin your time together in prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to fill each participant so that we might truly hear God's Word and take this time to "read, learn and inwardly digest" all that He has for us.

In Motion



We begin today with a familiar game: Tug-of-War!

Q: What do you need to have to feel powerful?

Q: Which people in our current world do you think of as powerful? Why?

Q: What would you do with unlimited power?

In the Word



God is all-powerful. There are examples of His power throughout the Bible. How does power fit into our identities as Christians?

Let's take a look at one example of Jesus' power. Read Mark 4:35–41 aloud. This is the story of the calming of the storm. Take a minute to talk in your small group about the story, and write your summary here:

In Their Place



We are back with the disciples today. Put yourself into their story . . .

It's the end of a long day. We have been traveling with Jesus and have been followed by people all day. We are tired and hungry and really just want a little peace and quiet. Finally, Jesus says that we are going to go over to the other side of the lake. We get in a boat like we've done a million times, but just as I'm starting to relax, I begin to feel the wind. Before I can even talk to the others, I see big black clouds rolling in and realize that we are not going to make it to the other side before this major storm hits. The waves are starting to crash into the boat

and we are doing everything we can to secure the boat. But the waves just keep getting bigger, and the wind is so loud. Oh my goodness, the boat is taking on water! What should we do? Where is Jesus? Why isn't He helping us?

Q: How are you feeling at this point in the story?

Q: What do you really think Jesus is going to do when you wake Him?

In Discussion



BACK TO THE STORY: Read Mark 4:39. Here we see the power of Jesus! All He does is speak three words, and the storm which only moments ago threatened to kill them just passes — it's "completely calm," almost like it never happened!

Now, let's go back a few verses. Read Mark 4:36. Here we read that there were other boats out on the water with the disciples and Jesus.

Q: What do you think the people on those other boats were thinking during this event?

Q: Do you think they knew that Jesus was responsible for this incredible change in the weather? What would you be thinking?

Paul writes in 2 Cor. 12:9–10,

But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

The disciples sitting in that boat were engulfed in weakness. They had done everything they could do to save themselves, and it wasn’t going to be enough. And there Jesus shows His power. We are reminded that He is more than true man; He is also true God. Jesus used the power of God to save all those who were on the sea that day. This is the Gospel — that God has the power not only to calm storms, to heal the sick and to perform miracles, but that through His power our sins are forgiven, and our eternity with Him is secure if we believe.

Q: When you have felt engulfed in weakness?

Q: When have you seen God’s power at work in your life?

Q: Can you really be content in your weakness and sin?

Let’s finish up with the disciples. Read Mark 4:40–41. The storm has been calmed and now Jesus has some words for them.

Q: What does He say?

Q: How do they respond?

Our greatest weakness as human beings is our sin. Our sinful nature causes us to question the power of God just like the disciples did. But God doesn’t become angry with us; instead, He loves us and He uses His power to strengthen us in our weakness.

Shortly after this event took place, Jesus called His disciples to Him and gave them the power to heal, to drive out demons and to do miracles in His name. We too are given power to preach the Gospel, to serve others and to share His love. He fills us with the Holy Spirit, Who gives us power to live as followers of Jesus.

Q: How will we use the power God has given us?

In Closing

Jesus’ power strengthens us for service. Power comes to us through Christ alone.

In Prayer

Take a few minutes in your small group to pray together.

LEADER PRAYER: You can ask one person in the group to lead the prayer for all.

POPCORN PRAYER: A leader from the group starts the prayer, then pauses so each person can “pop” in a prayer. When the “popping” slows, the leader will close the prayer.

SQUEEZE PRAYER: The group forms a circle, holding hands. One person starts the prayer, then squeezes the hand of the person to the right when finished. As each person finishes, he or she continues to pass the squeeze. The last person will close the prayer. Note: If someone doesn’t want to pray aloud, that person can just pass the squeeze instead of speaking a prayer.

In Response

How has God’s power touched your life today? Take a few minutes to write or draw those moments on the index cards provided. Attach the completed cards to your metal ring, and save to use tomorrow.

In Christ Alone ... We Serve

In Prayer



Begin your time together in prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to fill each participant that we might truly hear God's Word and take this time to "read, learn and inwardly digest" all that He has for us.

In Motion



We are going to play a little "Mother May I"!

What are some of the commands that you received during the game? What are some commands that you receive in your day-to-day life?

Q: How do you respond to commands?

Q: In Christ alone we find our purpose. We were created and called by God to be His people and to serve His people! We have the opportunity to ask Him where and how to go, but He is always guiding and directing.

In the Word



The Bible story for today is a command and a promise to the disciples and to us. Let's take a look at the Great Commission. Read Matt. 28:16-20 aloud. Take a minute to talk in your small group about the story. Write your summary here:

In Their Place



We join the disciples once more today. Now put yourself into their story.

Things are finally getting back to normal after Jesus' resurrection and His appearances to us. We were enjoying the fact that Jesus was back with us. We still had questions and wondered what would come next. It was almost like old times: Jesus asked us to come meet Him in Galilee on a mountain. He was already there, and we were really excited to have the opportunity to worship together. Things were going great until Jesus asked us to sit down. He had important news to share, He said. What

could it be? We were pretty nervous considering what had happened recently! It couldn't be something like that again, could it?

So Jesus started talking. He talked about all we had done together and about how God's will had been done. Then He told us about how He had all the authority and power in heaven and on earth. Wow. Funny how sometimes we forgot that part. He looked at each of us, and then He gave us work to do. He said, "Go and make disciples of all nations." What? Then He said, "Baptize them and teach them." He wants us to keep going? He wants us to continue to go to unknown places and to people who don't want to hear about Him? Really?

Q: If you were a disciple hearing these words, how would you feel?

Q: What would your next move be?

In Discussion



BACK TO THE STORY. Before we get too far, take a minute to look back at what is happening in the verses leading up to the story of the Great Commission. Read Matt. 28:16-17.

Q: We hear that some of the disciples are still having some doubts about everything that has been happening. What might be their doubts?

Q: Are there things that cause you to doubt/worry?

Many of us have doubts about ourselves. We doubt our futures, our skills, our relationships with friends and/or family, our decision-making and more.

Even in their doubt, Jesus gives the disciples important work to do. Read Matt. 28:19-20a. God looks beyond their doubts, fears, and sinful nature and sees how each can help to share the message of the Gospel. God does the same with each of us. Even with all of our doubts, fears and sinful ways, He sees in us opportunities to spread the Gospel.

Take a look at Rom. 12:6-8.

Q: What does God say about us?

Q: What gifts has God given you?

Q: How have you had the opportunity to use your gifts this week? (If you have trouble figuring out your gifts, ask others in your group what gifts they see in you.)

Let's look at 1 Cor. 12:4-11. Here we continue to look at gifts, but the first few verses are important. "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone." (1 Cor. 12:4-6)

Q: What things are different?

Q: What things are the same?

These verses are important because they remind us that each of us has been given different gifts to be used. They remind us that we are all created by God to be unique, to be ourselves, as He intended.

More importantly these verses remind us that we are gifted by the same Father, we are filled with the same

Holy Spirit, and we are saved through faith in Christ alone. These verses get to the heart of our service. We serve because Christ served us. Matt. 20:28 reminds us that *"the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve; and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

Let's go back to the story of the Great Commission. We read about the disciples going to meet Jesus. We acknowledge their doubt. We know that Jesus gave them instructions to go, teach and baptize in His name. He gives us those same instructions. In Greek, the word "go" is not as much of a command as it is encouragement. Jesus encourages us to do these things (teaching, baptizing, sharing Christ's love) wherever we go. We are to go into our world and our daily lives and live in such a way that people see Jesus through our words and actions.

Q: How are you following Jesus' instructions to "go" this week?

Q: How can you continue to "go" when you get home, head to college, go to work or whatever comes next?

Be encouraged! God has called us to a big task. "Go"-ing will not always be easy but will always yield what God intends. It's not about us. It is about Christ working through us. It is only in Christ alone that we are truly able to share the Gospel in our world. Be encouraged! God is working!

In Closing

Jesus has called each of us to live in Christ alone. In doing so, we have opportunities to "make disciples" everywhere we go. We have been equipped by God to serve His kingdom.

In Prayer

Take a few minutes in your small group to pray together.

LEADER PRAYER: Ask one person in the group to lead the prayer for everyone.

POPCORN PRAYER: A leader from the group starts the prayer. When he or she pauses, others can "pop" in a

prayer. When the “popping” slows the leader will close the prayer.

SQUEEZE PRAYER: Group forms a circle holding hands. One person starts the prayer, and when finished, squeezes the hand of the person on the right. As each person finishes, the squeeze is passed along. The last person closes the prayer. Note: anyone who doesn’t want to pray aloud can just squeeze the hand of the next person.

In Response

How has God’s call to “go” touched your life today? Take a few minutes to write those moments down on the index cards provided. Attach the completed cards to your metal ring. Save this for use tomorrow.

Bible Study Game Directions

Do You Love Your Neighbor?

If your neighbor loves you, you'll have to be quick or you'll be "it."

OBJECT OF THE GAME: To find a seat before it's too late.

ITEMS NEEDED: Chairs or seats for each player, minus one. (So if six people are playing, you'll need five chairs.) You can use a couch; just clarify how many seats it holds. Or, the game can be played standing up by marking each spot in the circle with a flat item.

PREPARATION: Set chairs in a circle, facing inwards. If playing the game standing up, give each player something to mark his spot.

DIRECTIONS: Choose someone to be "it" and have him stand in the center of the circle of chairs while everyone else takes a seat. "It" then goes up to one of the seated people and asks, "Do you love your neighbor?" The person may answer "yes" or "no." If "yes," then the person's two neighbors (the ones seated directly to the left and the right) have to switch seats before "it" can steal one of their chairs. Whoever is left standing is "it." If the answer is "no," the responder then adds, "But I love people who _____." They fill in the blank with anything pertaining to one or more players. Those players must then leave their seats and try to find new ones before "it" steals their chair.

EXAMPLE: "It" asks me, "Do you love your neighbor?" and I reply, "No, but I love people wearing red." All players who are wearing red, including myself because my shirt has red on it, must get up from their seats. The "it" person takes my seat, I take red-socked Player Two's seat, and Player Two is left standing because no one else was wearing red. Player Two is now "it" and asks Player Four if she loves her neighbor. Player Four says "yes," and the two people seated on the right and left of Player Four must switch seats.

Note: To make the game more exciting for larger groups, you can make a rule that players can't take the seat directly to their left or right, making it easier for "it" to steal a seat.

The Frog Game (Killer Frog)

Watch the tongue!

OBJECT OF THE GAME: To figure out who is the Killer Frog.

ITEMS NEEDED: None.

PREPARATION: Find a clear area where all the players can sit in a circle.

DIRECTIONS: Everyone sits in a circle. One person is chosen to be the detective. He leaves the room or goes to a place where he cannot see or hear what is going on in the circle. All the players in the circle close their eyes. An adult or leader walks around the circle and taps someone's shoulder. That person is now the Killer Frog, but no one knows who the Frog is at first. The detective comes back in. The Frog sticks its tongue out at random people around the circle, trying not to be noticed by the detective. If the Frog sticks its tongue out at you, you pretend to die and fall to the floor. The detective gets three tries to guess the Killer Frog's identity. If he succeeds, someone else is chosen for the next round.

Note: It's okay if other players know who the Frog is. This game is best played with medium-sized groups. The more dramatic the "death," the funnier the game is!



In Christ Alone
We Serve

Worship Service

We join together as the Body of Christ to worship.

In Christ Alone . . . We Worship

(L=LEADER, C=CONGREGATION)

Silent Prayer of Preparation

“Look, Lord, an empty vessel that needs to be filled. My Lord, fill it. I am weak in the faith; strengthen me. I am cold in love; warm me and make me fervent that my love may go out to my neighbor. I do not have a strong and firm faith. At times, I doubt and am unable to trust You completely. O Lord, help me. Strengthen my faith and trust in You. I have insured all my treasures in Your name. I am poor; You are rich and You did come to be merciful to the poor. I am a sinner; You are up-right. With me there is an abundance of sin; with You a fullness of righteousness. Therefore, I will remain with You, from whom I can receive but to whom I may not give. Amen.” (From Luther’s Prayers, *Augsburg*, p. 67.)

Invocation

L: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

L: This is the day the Lord has made!

C: I will rejoice and be glad in it.

L: I will serve His name

C: from the rising of the sun to its setting.

L: All praise, honor, glory, majesty, and might

C: be to His most wonderful name.

(From Kraus, *By Word and Prayer*, Concordia Publishing House, p. 64.)

Opening Song

Confession and Absolution

L: Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your unfailing love;

C: according to Your great compassion, blot out my transgressions.

L: Wash away all my iniquity

C: and cleanse me from my sin.

(Silence for self-examination and personal confessions)

L: You have called us to live in Christ alone.

C: We confess that we have doubted Your strength, questioned Your plan, and tried to live on our own.

L: You have called us to serve others in Christ alone.

C: We confess that we have often been more eager to be served than to serve.

L: You have set us free from sin, death, and the power of the devil through Christ alone.

C: We confess that we have not always used our freedom in ways that please You or benefit those around us.

L: O Lord,

C: Have mercy upon us.

L: O Christ,

C: Have mercy upon us.

L: O Lord,

C: Have mercy upon us, and grant us Your peace and forgiveness.

L: Hear and believe the Good News! In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us and for His sake, God forgives us all our sins. To those who believe in Jesus Christ, He gives the power to become the children of God and bestows on them the Holy Spirit. May the Lord, who has begun this good work in us, bring it to completion in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

C: Amen. Thanks be to God!

Sharing of Christ’s Peace

L: As we rejoice in God’s undeserved love and forgiveness, we share with one another the peace and joy of the Lord, which is ours through faith in Christ alone.

(God’s people may greet one another with these or similar words, “The peace of the Lord be with you.”)

Responsive Verses from Ps. 118: 14–17, 21–29

- L: The LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation.
- C: Glad songs of salvation are in the tents of the righteous: “The right hand of the LORD does valiantly,**
- L: the right hand of the LORD exalts, the right hand of the LORD does valiantly!”
- C: I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the LORD.**
- L: I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation.
- C: The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.**
- L: This is the LORD’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.
- C: This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.**
- L: Save us, we pray, O LORD! O LORD, we pray, give us success!
- C: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD! We bless you from the house of the LORD.**
- L: The LORD is God, and he has made his light to shine upon us. Bind the festal sacrifice with cords, up to the horns of the altar!
- C: You are my God, and I will give thanks to you; you are my God; I will extol you.**
- L: Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!

Song of Praise

Scripture Reading 1

IS. 63:7–9

Scripture Reading 2

ROM. 5:1–8

Scripture Reading 3

PHIL. 3:7–14

Confession of Faith

(Second Article of the Apostles’ Creed and Luther’s Explanation)

L: To God and to each other, and before the whole world, we confess:

C: I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

L: What does this mean?

C: I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.

Song of Response

Message

Offering

Prayers

(If the Lord’s Supper is not celebrated, the service continues with “The Call to Service.”)

Service of the Sacrament

(From Lutheran Service Book, *Divine Service, Setting Four*, p. 208.)

L: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

L: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord

L: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

L: It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all time and in all places give thanks to You, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, for the countless blessings You so freely bestow on us and all creation. Above all, we give thanks for Your boundless love shown to us when You sent Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, into our flesh and laid on Him our sin, giving Him into death that we might not die eternally. Because He is now risen from the dead and lives and reigns to all eternity, all who believe in Him will overcome sin and death and will rise again to new life. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

Sanctus — Holy, Holy, Holy

C: Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth adored; Heaven and earth with full acclaim shout the glory of Your name. Sing hosanna in the highest, sing hosanna to the Lord; Truly blest is He who comes in the name of the Lord.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

L: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, king of all creation, for You have had mercy on us and given Your only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

We give You thanks for the redemption You have prepared for us through Jesus Christ. Grant us Your Holy Spirit that we may faithfully eat and drink of the fruits of His cross and receive the blessings of forgiveness, life, and salvation that come to us in His body and blood.

Hear us as we pray in His name and as He has taught us:

The Lord's Prayer

Words of Institution

Pax Domini — The Peace of the Lord

L: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: Amen.

Agnus Dei — Lamb of God

C: O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God, You take the sin of the world away; O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God, Have mercy on us, Lord, we pray. O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God, You take the sin of the world away; Have mercy on us, Jesus Christ, And grant us peace, O Lord, we pray.

Distribution

Post-Communion Response (spoken together)

Nunc Dimittis — Song of Simeon

C: O Lord, now let Your servant depart in heavenly peace, for I have seen the glory of Your redeeming grace: A light to lead the Gentiles unto Your holy hill, the glory of Your people, Your chosen Israel.

All glory to the Father, all glory to the Son, all glory to the Spirit, forever Three in One;

For as in the beginning, is now, shall ever be, God's triune name resounding through all eternity.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

L: Oh, give thanks to the Lord for He is good.

C: And His mercy endures forever.

L: O God the Father, the fountain and source of all goodness, who in loving-kindness sent Your only-begotten Son into the flesh, we thank You that for His sake You have given us pardon and peace in this Sacrament, and we ask You not to forsake Your children but always to rule our hearts and minds by Your Holy Spirit that we may be enabled constantly to serve You; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen

The Call to Service

(ROM. 12: 1-2, 4-11)

L: I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

C: Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind,

L: that by testing you may discern what is the will of God,

C: what is good and acceptable and perfect.

L: For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function,

C: so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

L: Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them:

C: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith;

L: if service, in our serving;

C: the one who teaches, in his teaching;

L: the one who exhorts, in his exhortation;

C: the one who contributes, in generosity;

L: the one who leads, with zeal;

C: the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

L: Let love be genuine.

C: Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.

L: Love one another with brotherly affection.

C: Outdo one another in showing honor.

L: Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit,

C: serve the Lord.

Closing Prayer

All: Lord God, You have called Your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untaken, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that Your hand is leading us and Your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Benediction

L: The Lord Almighty bless us and direct our days and our deeds in His Peace.

C: Amen.

Closing Song: "In Christ Alone"

The Lord Almighty bless us and
direct our days and our deeds
in His Peace.



In Christ Alone
We Serve

Commissioning Service

As we send participants back to their homes and communities, we pray that God will continue to use them as His servants in the world.

In Christ Alone We Serve

It Starts Now ... We Serve!

Opening Song

"MAKE ME A SERVANT"

Litany of Service

Leader: Today you end this week of service, but you begin your life of service at home.

Leader: Here you have experienced community

Servants: In Christ Alone

Leader: Here you have served humbly

Servants: In Christ Alone

Leader: Here you have found your identity

Servants: In Christ Alone

Leader: Here you have lived in God's love, and now God's love goes with you. He has made you His own:

Servants: Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 3:12-14)

Leader: He will work in you:

Servants: Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. (Phil. 2:12-13)

Leader: He will grant you peace:

Servants: And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4:7)

Leader: He will give you strength:

Servants: I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every

circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me. (Phil. 4:12-13)

Leader: Take with you memories of the people you have met this week, the love shared this week, and the service performed this week. Your life of service starts now! Lord, we commission these Your servants. Help them be a blessing in a special way.

Closing Prayer

Leader: Let us pray.

All: Almighty God, we give You thanks that You send Your people into the world as true and faithful servants. Use the gifts You have given us as we seek to serve You through ministry in our daily lives. Give us opportunities to help our neighbors, to love others, and to live in Christ alone. Give us direction, aid, and the power of the Holy Spirit, that our labors would serve to extend, nourish, sustain, and equip your Church for every good work. Be with us and remind us each day that we are Yours. In Christ alone we pray. Amen.

Benediction

Leader: Now as you go your way, may God go with you. May the blessing of the almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be and abide with you always. Go in peace and serve the Lord!

Servants: Thanks be to God. We serve in Christ alone!

Closing Song

"IN CHRIST ALONE"



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