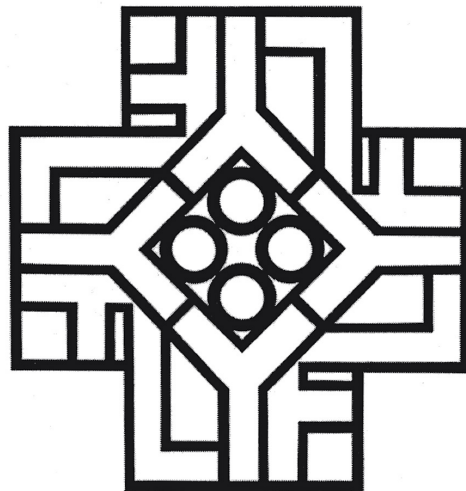


Lutheran Youth Fellowship
Teen Bridge Building Training

TEEN BRIDGE BUILDING TRAINING

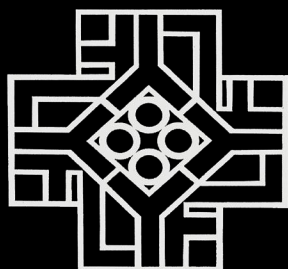


TEEN BRIDGE BUILDING TRAINING (TBBT)
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TBBT was written by Jessica Bordeleau.

Lutheran Youth Fellowship (LYF) is the synodical youth organization of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Through LYF, young people develop an identity in their church, grow in teen leadership skills, address issues of concern, and in general support the mission and ministry of their church body. The youth programs of all LCMS congregations are considered to be “members” of LYF.



PARTICIPANT MANUAL



Lutheran Youth Fellowship
Teen Bridge Building Training

L u t h e r a n Y o u t h F e l l o w s h i p T r a i n i n g 2 0 0 8
BRIDGE BUILDING

**PARTICIPANT
GUIDE**

What's Inside:

I: Eli and Elizabeth

II: The Gap

III: Stumbling Blocks

IV: Bridge Building

V: Practical Tool

VI: Devotion Guide

E L I

“Your Servant Listens”

L *and*

I. Read I Samuel 3:1-21

I

1. What would Samuel have missed learning if he had thought Eli was an outdated old man who had nothing to offer?

Z

2. Why did Eli know God’s voice and how to respond to it?

A

B

3. Eli handled the news of God’s consequences for his sons with deep faith and surprising trust in both Samuel and the Lord. How might he have handled this news in a less positive way?

How would that have effected his relationship with Samuel?

E

T

4. In light of the fact that Eli’s sons neglected his wisdom and advice, what do you think it meant to the elderly man that Samuel was learning and listening to him?

H

5. Have each person in your group share their answer to this question: What is the one most important thing you can take away from this story?

II. Read Luke 1:5-45

“As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears...”

6. Compare Zechariah’s and Mary’s response to the angelic announcement.

7. Even though Zechariah was an experienced, trained priest, his young relative acted with more wisdom. What could he have learned from Mary?

Elizabeth’s response to Mary is amazing. She accepted and reached out to the vulnerable, pregnant Mary with open arms. According to the laws of the time, Mary could have been stoned to death because it would appear that she had committed adultery. God brought these two women together at very extraordinary times in their lives.

8. What do you think Mary gained from this visit with Elizabeth?

9. What do you think Elizabeth gained from her time with Mary?
10. Why do you think God brought them together at this point in their lives?
11. In both of these Biblical accounts we see examples of God's people reaching across generational gaps with humility and openness...and through that vulnerability God worked blessings for them both. (Have each person in the group share their answers to these questions individually) Based on the passages we read today, which character do you relate with the most? Why?
12. Have your experiences with cross-generational relationships been as positive as the ones in these Biblical accounts? Share your thoughts.
13. What have your experiences taught you about relationships with adults?

Time Alone with God

Spend the next few minutes alone in prayer. Find a quiet spot in the room and pray that God would open your heart to His Holy Spirit during the course of this training and that He would enable you to be humble, open to self discovery, and courageous enough to take action. Most of all thank the Lord for sending Jesus to die for you and all generations. Just talk to your Heavenly Father and tell Him what you are thinking.



Differences that divide

*“A **generation gap** is a popular term used to describe wide differences in cultural norms between members of a younger generation and their elders. This can be defined as occurring “when older and younger people do not understand each other because of their different experiences, opinions, habits and behavior.” The term first came into prominence in Western countries during the 1960s, and described the cultural differences between the Baby Boomers and their parents. Although some generational differences have existed throughout history, during this era differences between the two generations grew significantly in comparison to previous times, particularly with respect to such matters as musical tastes, fashion, drug use, and politics. This may have been magnified by the unprecedented size of the young Baby Boomer generation, which gave it unprecedented power, influence, and willingness to rebel against societal norms.”*

-Wikipedia.org

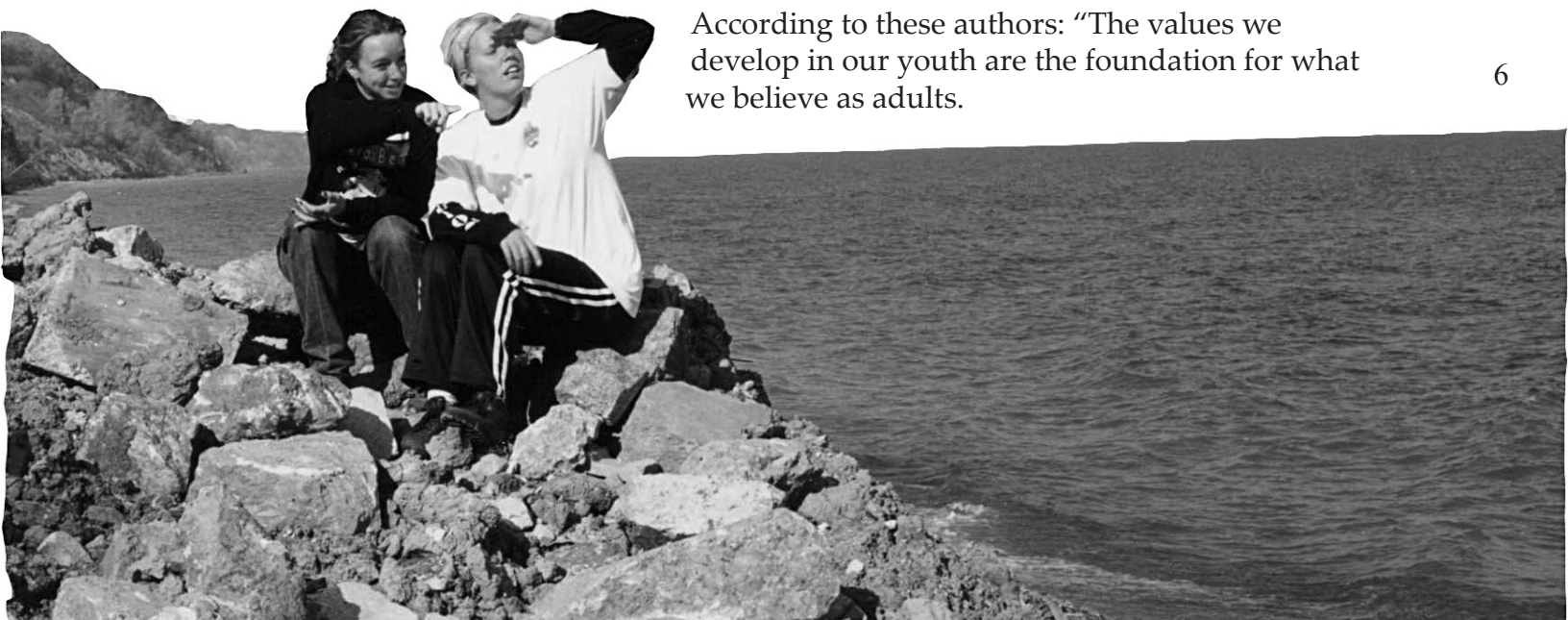
Imagine you are a teenager 500 years ago. You live on a farm with your parents. From the time you were small you learned from them how to run a farm and manage the household. You learned through observation and hands-on experience to make a loaf of bread in a wood burning stove, how to harvest wheat in the rain, and the best way to treat a sick cow. If a condition arose that your parents hadn't experienced (let's say snow came 2 months early) they would go to older farmers who had seen that condition and knew what to do. Perhaps Grandpa would have come over and told you which plants you needed to cover with sod and which wouldn't make it anyway. His wisdom would help you maximize your time before the ground froze and you would still be able to eat that winter because you saved your field. The wisdom and advice of those who had been around for awhile was recognized as important and needed.

Today we might view older generations in a different light. Imagine that your iPhone is malfunctioning and you need help fixing it. Who do you call for help? Probably not Grandpa. If your Dad's iPad won't connect to the network at work and he calls for tech support, chances are it isn't someone his father's age that comes to help. Technology has advanced so quickly that electronics can become completely outdated in a year. With the constant speed of new cell phones, video game consoles, computer software and digital everything, it's not surprising that older generations might not be up-to-date with what are commonly used tools in your world. Our society's view of older people has shifted. The generation gap has always been there, but technological advances have made the gap infinitely wider. All these changes makes communication between members of different generations more difficult.

If you were to travel to another country it would be helpful for you to take some time to study the culture before you get there. It would help you understand what the people of that country value and how they communicate. In the same way, as you work to create connections with other generations, it would be helpful to consider their culture; what they value, how they communicate, and how they perceive your generation.

Dr. Rick and Kathy Hicks, in their book *"Boomers, X-ers, and Other Strangers: Understanding the Generational Differences that Divide Us "* discuss the factors that shape the way we see life based on the world in which we grew up. The book traces decades from 1900 on to study the influences and experiences that shape the values of those that grew up in each decade.

According to these authors: "The values we develop in our youth are the foundation for what we believe as adults.

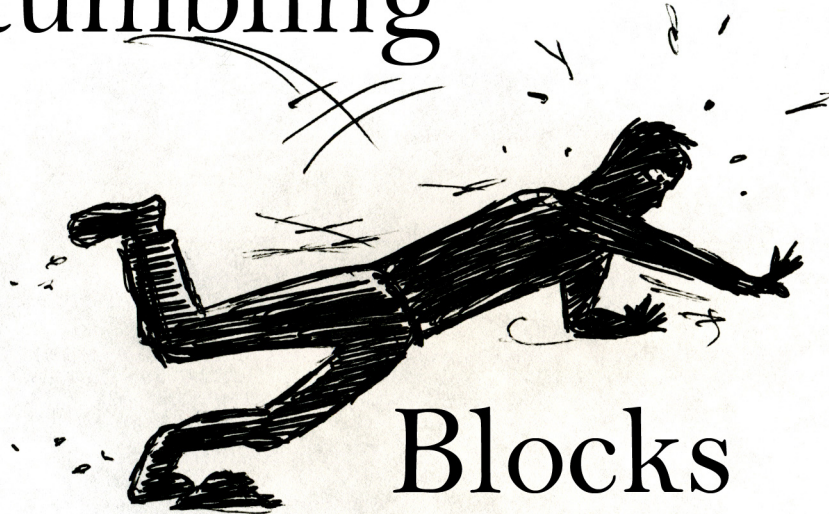


Without an understanding of value development, you're walking into relationships blind to how individuals of other generations think, what they stand for, and why they do certain things." (Page 4-5)

While we aren't going to go into a detailed history lesson as a part of this training, it would be helpful to give some thought to what makes people in different generations think, view life, and communicate the way they do. The culture in which you are raised and become an adult impacts your world view. (A world view is the framework of ideas and beliefs through which an individual interprets the world and interacts in it.) Different generations may have different world views because of the forces that shaped their culture. For example; world events like war, natural catastrophes, or economic depression can shape how you see life and your role in the world. You can see evidence of these differences in popular culture. Each generation has it's own variety of movies, music and heros. Taking these things into consideration while interacting with people from other generations will help you understand their world view. Understanding differences in people's world view can open up windows of understanding to what is important to them, their expectations of others, and how to communicate clearly with them.

1. What are some factors that might make it difficult for someone who is 80 years old to communicate clearly with a teenager?
2. What are some factors that might make it difficult for a teenager to interact with someone who is 10 years old?
3. Why would it be important to consider the world view of people in other generations when you are trying to build connections with them?
4. Based on world events and technological advancement, what kinds of cultural influences might have shaped those who were born in 1940?
5. Do you think that today's younger generations value the contributions of elder generations and treat them with respect and honor? Explain your point of view.

Stumbling



1. Say a short prayer asking God to bless your time of mediation and to open your heart to hear His Word. Then read Romans 14. What are your reactions to what you just read?

2. Which verses did you find especially interesting or impacting? Why?

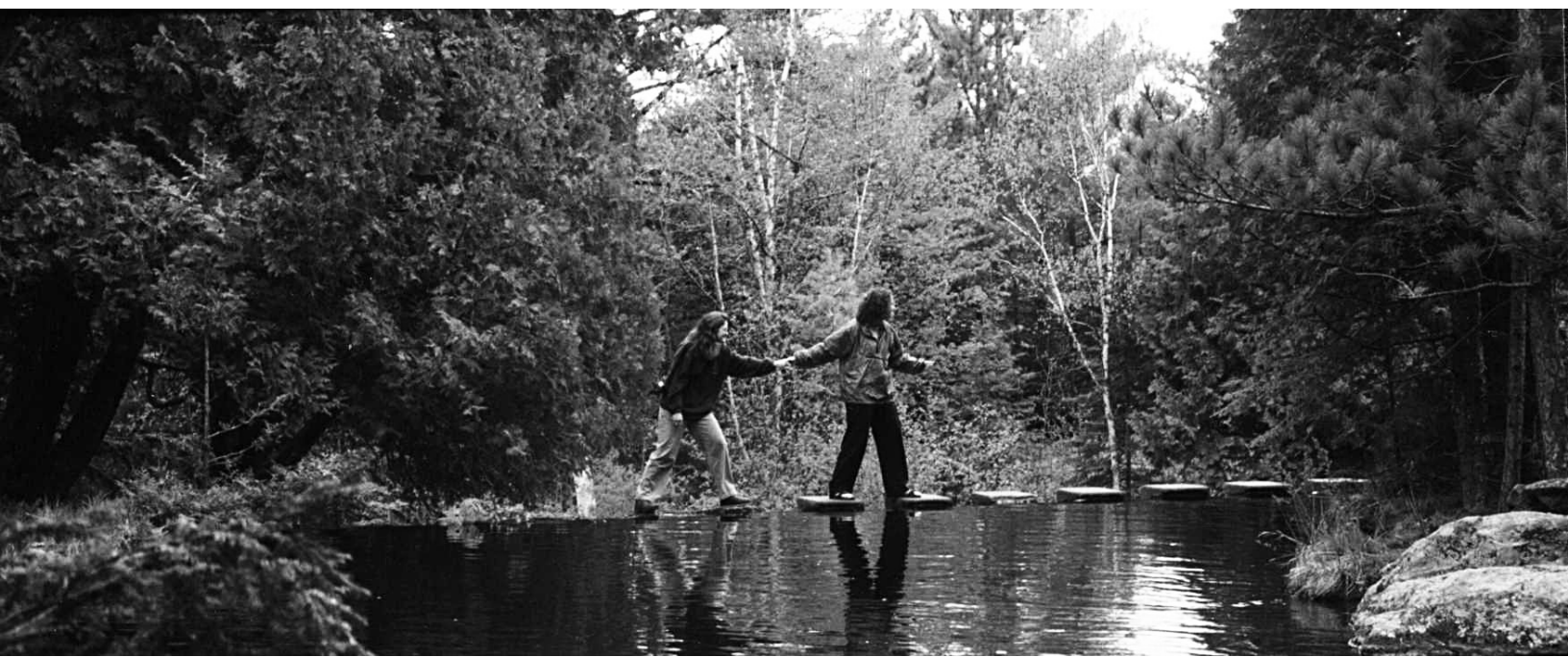
3. Some issues are specifically prescribed in Scripture and show what is right and wrong in that area. (Do not commit adultery, do not murder, etc.) However, there are other issues that aren't as specific. Things that are neither commanded nor forbidden in Scripture are called "adiaphora". Eating meat sacrificed to idols was one of those things. Whether or not we should eat meat sacrificed to idols isn't a big issue today, but there are other issues that cause conflict. For example, in the 1990s it was perceived by some to be radical, maybe even wrong, for a man to have his ear pierced. By the 2010s it wasn't a big deal at all. What are some issues like that today?

4. What are some "adiaphora" issues that might be stumbling blocks as you connect with other generations?

5. Read 1 Corinthians 8:4-13

What does this add to your understanding of stumbling blocks?

6. Make a list of possible stumbling blocks in your own personal witness to other generations. (Things that might cause them to judge you and not listen to your message.)



7. Removing those stumbling blocks might be difficult, unfair, and actually a hardship for you. What would motivate you to bend over backwards in order to build relationships with those in other generations?



BRIDGE BUILDING

“Inter-generational ministry stands in contrast with other modes of ministry more traditionally seen in local churches, such as Sunday schools and youth ministries.

In Sunday school, children, youths, and sometimes adults are instructed by teachers who are typically adults. Classes are usually divided by age groups, as in secular schools. In youth ministries, teens or young adults (especially college age) gather in groups presided over by a “youth minister”. These groups, which are often part of parachurch organizations, focus on peer fellowship and instruction of their members.

These modes of ministry segregate members by age, and presuppose a hierarchical ministry in which more experienced, more educated, and generally older members minister didactically to their charges. Inter-generational activities, by contrast, emphasize a mixture of ages, and de-emphasize formal teacher-pupil relationships.

Inter-generational ministry is one of a number of movements which have arisen in response over concerns that young adults very commonly cease participation in church, and often do not return. Proponents of the inter-generational ministry movement hold that the hierarchical and didactic roles found in traditional church ministries deprive teens and young adults of a sense of purpose and involvement, since their role in these ministries is passive and subordinate, and since they are often kept separate from adult activities. Therefore, they propose that younger

members should take active roles in the ministry of the local church, and that church activities should involve and encourage participation from members across a wide range of ages.

A second thread in the inter-generational ministry movement is that of family involvement. Concerns over divorce, abuse and other family disruptions led to criticism of how traditional church activities typically segregate family members according to age, thus de-emphasizing family relationships. Inter-generational activities were seen as a means to involve families as units, thus reinforcing family bonds.

Studies show that children attending Sunday schools and youth programs are less likely to continue church involvement, compared to those who attended worship with parents, and are integrated into a community (eg, Mark de Vries Family-Based Youth Ministry, 2004). Those children who continue church involvement as adults often have a ‘nominal faith’ (e.g. George Barna Transforming children into Spiritual Champions, 2003).

Proponents of this mode of ministry claim it is a Biblical model - particularly when the ministry is located within the family in accordance with the ‘relational’ Hebrew model described in Deuteronomy 6.”

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inter-generational_ministry_\(Christian\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inter-generational_ministry_(Christian))

1. Based on this article, what are some benefits of intergenerational ministry for young people?
2. What possible benefits would there be for older congregational members?
3. Read 1 Timothy 5:1-2 and 1 Peter 5:5-7
What does God say about how we should interact with other generations?
4. What are some practical ways you want to live out the exhortations in these passages?
5. What is the overall attitude you should have towards others?
6. What are three realistic ways you could help build intergenerational connections at your church?

7. Let's say that you tell the Lady's Aid at your church that you are willing to tutor its members in an area of technology that they are interested in, but not familiar with. How could you interact with them in a way that shows respect and isn't demeaning?

8. Let's say you are helping with a 7/8th grade youth event. As you interact with the children what are some ways you could show them respect and not demean them?

9. Which groups at your church would you be willing to serve by leading an opening devotion for their meeting?

10. Write out what you would say to your pastor, DCE or church leader to explain that you would like to lead an opening devotion for a few of the groups you listed above. (Remember to use the attitudes described in the Scripture passage you read for today as you write.)

11. What actions will you take in order to help bridge the generation gap in your congregation and community?

A good first step to show your willingness to create connections with other generations and break stereotypes about teenagers is to be a visible part of your congregation. Leading an opening devotion for a group would allow multiple people to see your willingness to participate and allow you to share your faith publicly. Church board meetings, Sunday school classes, fellowship events and Bible Studies all often start with an opening devotion. Which groups at your church would you be willing to lead with an opening devotion? Will you commit to talking with your pastor or DCE about the possibility?

12. What steps will you take to accomplish those goals?

How to write and deliver a devotional thought

PRACTICAL TOOL

Writing and leading a short devotional thought in front of a group is a good way to interact with various groups at your church. By speaking in front of a group you are a visible example of a young person who is serving in the name of Christ. Sometimes other generations (younger and older) may have certain stereotypes of teenagers that prevent them from forming connections or respecting them. By leading a devotion for one of your church's group meetings (like the Men's Bible Study Meeting, Ladies Aid, 5th grade Sunday School class, or a church board meeting) you are showing them in a practical, real way that you are an active part of today's church. This is a great first step in creating positive connections with other generations. Beyond that, it is a skill that you can use for the rest of your life...great servant leadership preparation!

If you are not comfortable sharing a devotional thought on your own yet, there are other ways to use your devotion. You could have someone present the devotion with you. You could email the written form of your devotion, post it on your blog or FaceBook wall, or even print it in a card and mail it to elderly members of your congregation who aren't able to make it to church.

1. Begin with personal prayer

Ask God to help you communicate His love and be true to His Word in the devotion you are about to write. Ask that the Holy Spirit would lead, guide and work through you despite your weakness.

Spend some time in prayer now.

2. Choose a central topic

What do you want to communicate in your devotion? What spiritual truth or Biblical message do you want to convey? This is the core of what you are saying. Starting with a cool object lesson or story and then trying to find a verse to go with it would be doing things backwards. Start with God's Word and His truth and then think of a way to relate it clearly to your group with good teaching techniques such as an object lesson, personal story or relatable example.

Your central topic should be clear and short. A devotional thought is usually only 3-6 minutes long. That is only long enough for one central topic and only 2 or 3 learning points. Learning points are what you want your participants to walk away having learned or been reminded of. They are short, one sentence long statements. Too many learning points cloud understanding and shorten retention. It's hard for people to remember that much from one devotion! Your learning points, object lesson, and all other part of your devotion should point back to and reinforce your central topic.

Keep in mind the age group of your participants and use examples that they would understand and relate to. Use language that they would be comfortable with and a theme that would be relevant to their stage in life.

For example, let's say you are leading an opening devotion for a 2nd grade Sunday school class. You decide that the central theme will be "Freedom in Christ", based on John 8:36 ("So if the son sets you free you will be free indeed." NIV). Your learning points could be – 1. Our sin traps us. 2. Jesus sets us free from sin. 3. We can't set ourselves free, it was all the work of God.

Now try it yourself.

My participants will be:

(Pick a possible group that you could lead a devotion for)

The central theme is:

Learning points: 1.

2.

3.

3. Pick a teaching aid

Pick a teaching aid to help your participants understand and remember the Biblical truth. You could use an object lesson, short skit, analogy or personal story. Remember your actual devotion should only be 3-6 minutes long so you don't need something huge.

In the previous example, the central theme was “freedom in Christ”. What are some ways to relate that idea to your participants? For example, you could use the analogy of a bird that is caught in a cage. The bird can only get out of the cage if the sliding door is opened from the outside, just like we can only be freed from the punishment of our sin by the work of Christ on the cross. In a sense He opens the door to our cage and reaches in to free us. You could bring in an empty bird cage as an object lesson and visual aid to understand and remember the lesson. Now it's your turn.

My teaching aid will be:

Details:

4. Include both Law and Gospel

God's Word can be divided into two categories: Law and Gospel. Throughout the Old and New Testament we see both. The study of Law and Gospel is a beautifully complex, in depth, layered concept. You could take a 3 credit course just on this subject and barely scratch the surface. There are entire books written about the different uses of the Law, the differences between Law and Gospel, and how to convey the Gospel clearly. For the sake of this study we are only going to touch on the issue, but be encouraged to continue your study on it!

The “Law” is what God demands of us. The 10 Commandments as well as the rule of love (love your neighbor as yourself) are God's law for us. Any “be good” message would be considered law. The Law was given to mankind as a mirror to show us that we are sinful, a curb to keep us safe, and a guide to lead us in a sanctified life. The law is good, but it cannot save us. We cannot get to heaven by obeying the law because we can't do it! No matter how hard we try we fall short. (Romans 3:23).

We are dependant on God's mercy. God showed us His love and mercy by sending Jesus to die for our sins. This is the heart of the Gospel. The Law is what we are told to do and not do, the Gospel is what God has done for us. On the cross Jesus paid the total price for our sins. That's it, it's over, He did it all. The Gospel's message is that Jesus has forgiven us and earned heaven for us. All the work is God's.

It is important to have both Law and Gospel, even in a short devotion because *we need both*. The Law convicts us when we are comfortable in our sin. The Gospel comforts us when we are convicted of our sin. For example, a child who has been lying to his mother needs to hear that lying is wrong, hurtful and should be stopped. On the other hand, a child who feels terrible because he told a lie and is being eaten alive by guilt needs to hear that he is forgiven and clean because Jesus has taken the punishment for that lie and forgiven him.

Our response to such great love and forgiveness is that we want to live a life that glorifies our redeemer and points others to Him.

The #1 pitfall of beginning devotion leaders (in this author's opinion) is giving a Law heavy devotion. It is very easy to give a Law heavy devotion, however writing a devotion that has balanced Law and Gospel takes focus! There are many laws we should follow, but only one Gospel truth. Presenting the Gospel in ways that the listener will understand is a challenge, but it is vitally important. We are saved by the message of the Gospel. ("By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures," 1 Corinthians 15:2-3 NIV) The Gospel is a life and death matter...much too important to be skipped or just an afterthought.

Have you ever used a wheelbarrow? You have to grab both handles or it will tip over. When writing a devotional thought, you must use both Law and Gospel so that the meaning of your message doesn't topple over. Purposefully write down what part of your devotion is Law and which is Gospel. This will help you make sure that you have included both Law and Gospel and that the Gospel is clearly stated.

What is the Law in your devotion?

What is the Gospel in your devotion?

5. Write a devotion outline or devotion text

If you are sharing the devotional thought verbally, write an outline of what you are going to say, and in what order. This will help you keep your thoughts organized and stay away from devotion pitfall #2 – rambling. Don't let it happen to you! You have heard speakers that just talk and talk and say nothing...don't be one of them! Each sentence you say should be purposeful, focused and point to the central theme of your devotion. Stay on track and keep it simple! Practice saying your devotion out loud before sharing it in a group. Be prepared!

If you are writing a devotional thought to be shared in a newsletter, email or website, have someone else look it over before submitting it. Even professional authors wouldn't dream of submitting a manuscript that hasn't been checked for grammar, spelling, and content by a trusted editor. You should do the same. In fact, even if you are sharing the devotion verbally, you should have someone look over your outline. The advice of a pastor, teacher, or parent can not only help your devotion be the best it can be, it will also help you learn and grow as a devotion author and leader.

Write your devotion outline:

6. Create a time outline

Plan an outline of the entire devotional time, including some key items: A prayer, a Bible reading, the devotion itself...and optional items such as a song, activity, or other teaching tool. Again, make sure each item points back to your central theme in some way! Good teaching technique reinforces the central topic in different ways. Write your devotional time outline:

7. Prepare!

Arrive early, make sure you have everything you need, and spend some time in prayer. Pre-prayer is the best way to prepare. (Ha! Pun.) Take the time to calm yourself, take some deep breaths and give all your worry to the Lord. Ask Him to work through you despite your weaknesses. Ask Him to bless your devotion and help you keep your focus entirely on serving your participants and bringing glory to God. It can be easy to get caught up with feelings of pride, looking good, and making an impressive show... but that is not the goal. Your goal is to serve your participants by teaching or reminding them of God's Word. The glory goes to God, not you. Ask the Lord to help you truly realize that.

8. Delivery

You have put a lot of work into the development of your devotion, it would be a tragedy to put up any stumbling blocks by your delivery.

If your devotional thought is being shared verbally make sure you have practiced saying it a couple of times before hand. Use good public speaking skills. Dress respectfully; speak loudly, slowly and clearly. Use a written outline if you need it, but don't read your devotion. Keep your head up and make eye contact with your participants. Smile. Stick to your outline (no rambling please!), and use a respectful, humble tone of voice.

If your devotion will be shared in a written form, make sure your final draft is free of errors (typos, spelling, grammar...), presented in a pleasing, clear layout (make sure it looks nice), and submit it on time.

9. Rest in the Lord

After you have delivered your devotion you may have any number of emotions. You could feel embarrassed because you don't think it went well, proud and pleased because it was delivered smoothly, or even confused because you couldn't gauge your participant's response. While all of these responses are normal and understandable, don't let them get out of control. Take what you can from the experience to learn from and improve for the future, and leave the rest in God's hands. It is His Word that works faith, points to salvation, and convicts of sin. He has allowed you to work hard to point to His Word through your devotional thought, but it is His Holy Spirit that does the real work. You can't feel like too much of a failure because His Word works despite our weaknesses, and you can't get too puffed up with pride because all the glory goes to Him as He enabled your act of service. ("For, "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever." And this is the word that was preached to you." 1 Peter 1:24-25 NIV) We can rest in that knowledge and leave it in His hands.

DEVOTION GUIDE

Central Theme:

Bible Reference:

When participants leave this devotion they should walk away having learned (or been reminded of):

1.

2.

3.

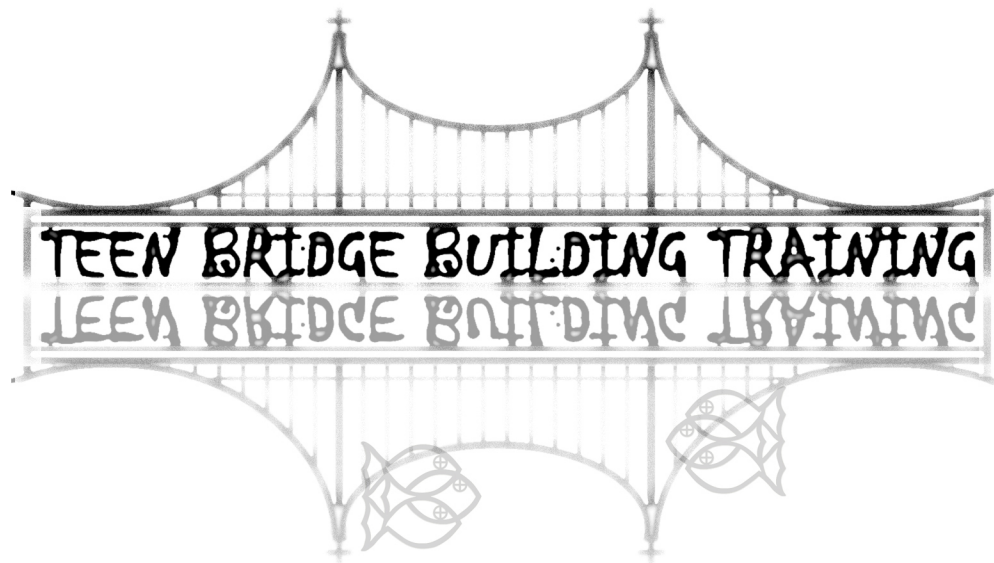
LAW:

GOSPEL:

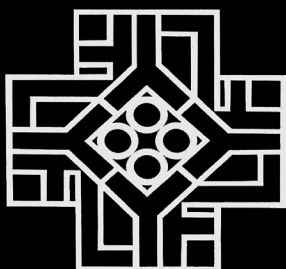
Object Lesson/Skit/Story:

Prayer:

Outline:



LEADER MANUAL



Lutheran Youth Fellowship
Teen Bridge Building Training

L u t h e r a n Y o u t h F e l l o w s h i p T r a i n i n g 2 0 0 8
BRIDGE BUILDING

**LEADER'S
GUIDE**

What's Inside:

I: Eli and Elizabeth

II: The Gap

III: Stumbling Blocks

IV: Bridge Building

V: Practical Tool

VI: Devotion Guide

LUTHERAN YOUTH FELLOWSHIP 2008
“BRIDGE BUILDING”

LEADER’S GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

This training is intended to equip youth to facilitate discussion and learning in the area of intergenerational ministry. It is the author’s hope that youth will begin to see how they fit into the church community and form sensitivity to the perspectives and expectations of other generations.

All participants should have a copy of this booklet. After a group of youth have experienced each session as a participant, they are able to use the leader’s guide to facilitate the study with another group of youth. (Each participant has the potential of leading the training with a new group of participants...think ripples in a pond.) The format of the leader’s guide walks the leader through the session with italicized, bold portions to guide what the leader says. These passages should not be read verbatim, but phrased in the leader’s own words.

- Session I – Eli and Elizabeth (approx 1 hour 30 min)
- Session II – The Gap (approx 1 hour)
- Session III – Stumbling Blocks: Move Those Rocks (approx 1 hour)
- Session IV – Bridge Building: Tips and Tactics (approx 1 hour 15 min)
- Session V – Practical Tool: How to Write and Deliver a Devotion (approx 1 hour 15 min)

Some of the sessions are discussion based, some are designed for personal discovery during time alone with God, and others involve interactions with articles and charts...in this way multiple teaching techniques will be incorporated into the training.

It is my sincere prayer that the Lord will bless your time in His word and enable to you show His love to people from other generations with patience and respect. May God’s love shine through you!

In Christ,

Jessica Bordeleau
Study Author

ELI AND ELIZABETH LEADER'S GUIDE

In Preparation

Read all of the Bible verses included in this study. Become familiar with them and the verses around them. Make sure there are Bibles available for each participant. Arrange the room so that participants have space to break into small groups and can return to a space that allows them to interact as a large group.

Begin by leading an opening prayer.

If your group hasn't already had a chance to learn each other's names, be sure to begin with a name game and an ice breaking activity.

As the ice breaker finishes, divide participants into groups of 4 or 5. Make sure they have Bibles!

Say: ***You are not alone. Since the time you were born, you have been surrounded by people whose involvement in your life determined your survival. When you were a baby you depended on others to feed and care for you. As a toddler you needed guardians to keep you safe and teach you to walk and speak. Adults in your community taught you what you needed to survive.***

Things shift when you become a young adult. You no longer need the influence of adults in the same way you did as a baby, yet they remain a part of your community with something to offer you. In addition, a whole new generation of children have grown up around you, observing your every move. Relationships with people in other generations, older and younger, aren't always easy, yet the benefits of those relationships can be outstanding.

Let's start by taking a look at two intergenerational relationships in the Bible and see what we can learn from them.

Say: ***In Samuel chapter 1, we read about Hannah and Elkanah. Although they had been married for years they were unable to have children together. Hannah wept and prayed in the temple, asking the Lord to give her a child. Eli, the priest saw her praying and spoke with her. As she left the temple he gave her his blessing and asked that the Lord would answer her prayer. He did. Hannah had a son, named him Samuel, and gave him to the Lord's service for his entire life. When he was very young she took him to the temple and he lived there, learning from and serving with Eli. Let's turn to 1 Samuel 3:1-21.***

Allow time for everyone to find the verses.

Then ask: ***Who would like to read this passage?***

Feel free to split the passage up between two people. Choose volunteers and thank them when they have finished reading.

Say: ***This is just a single event in the relationship between Eli and Samuel, yet we see something significant. In groups of 4 or 5 discuss the first section of questions. Make sure to write notes about what was said so that you can share them with the large group.***

Give the groups 10-15 minutes to discuss the following questions listed on their handout:

1. What would Samuel have missed learning if he had thought Eli was an outdated old man who had nothing to offer?
2. Why did Eli know God's voice and how to respond to it?
3. Eli handled the news of God's consequences for his sons with deep faith and surprising trust in both Samuel and the Lord. How might he have handled this news in a less positive way?
How would that have affected his relationship with Samuel?
4. In light of the fact that Eli's sons neglected his wisdom and advice, what do you think it meant to the old man that Samuel was learning and listening to him?
5. Have each person in your group share their answer to this question: What is the one most important thing you can take away from this story?

Gather the whole group and facilitate a large group discussion by encouraging a person from each small group to share their answers with the large group. Affirm each reasonable answer, redirect answers that show a misunderstanding.

Say: ***Let's jump ahead hundreds of years to the New Testament. God's people have been waiting for the Messiah for so long that many generations of people have been born and died...still waiting to see how God would redeem them. God's people have suffered under the Assyrians, Babylonians and the Romans...still waiting. Then twice in the same year the Lord sent His angel, Gabriel, to two people in the same family to announce that things were about to change. Let's turn to Luke 1:5-45..***

Allow time for everyone to find the verses.

Then ask: Who would like to read this passage?

Feel free to split the passage up between two people. Choose volunteers and thank them when they have finished reading.

Have them go back to the same small groups to discuss the questions in the second section. Give the groups 20-25 minutes to discuss the following questions listed on their handout:

6. Compare Zechariah's and Mary's response to the angelic announcement.
7. Even though Zechariah was an experienced trained priest, his young relative acted with more wisdom. What could he have learned from Mary?

Elizabeth's response to Mary is amazing. She accepted and reached out to the vulnerable, pregnant Mary with open arms. According to the laws of the time, Mary could have been stoned to death because it would appear that she had committed adultery. God brought these two women together at very extraordinary times in their lives.

8. What do you think Mary could have gained from this visit with Elizabeth?

9. What could Elizabeth have gained from her time with Mary?

10. Why do you think God brought them together at this point in their lives?

11. In both of these Biblical accounts we see examples of God's people reaching across generational gaps with humility and openness...and through that vulnerability God worked blessings for all. Have each person in the group answer the next questions individually: Based on the passages we read today, which character do you relate with the most? Why?

12. Have your experiences with cross-generational relationships been as positive as the ones in these Biblical accounts?

13. What have your experiences taught you about relationships with adults?

Gather them back together as a large group. Encourage the small groups to share their answers with the large group. Facilitate sharing and conversation about the verses. Affirm each reasonable answer, redirect answers that show a misunderstanding. When opinion or personal experience questions are answered, make sure to thank them for sharing. Plan to share your own answer to the last two questions after others have shared.

Say: ***Often our relationships with people in older generations can be difficult. Parents, teachers, and other mentors may care about us, but sometimes it is hard for both sides to communicate clearly and with humility. This kind of consistent frustration can lead to bitterness and hardness of heart towards other generations. The Bible accounts we read today lay a foundation for building cross generational connections. UbX'Zf'h Jg'training. Spend about 5 minutes on your own in prayer. Find a quiet spot in the room and pray that God would open your heart to His Holy Spirit during the course of this training."5g_ <Ja lc'YbUV'Ynci 'lc'VY\ i a V'YŽcdYb'lc'gYZXJgVtj YfnžUbX'Vti fUj Yci g'Ybci [\ to take action. Most of all thank the Lord for sending Jesus to die for you and all generations.***

THE GAP: DIFFERENCES THAT DIVIDE LEADER'S GUIDE

Open with prayer

Say: ***It isn't always easy to relate to people who are different than we are. Communication can break down and connections can fail, not because of lack of motivation, but because of misunderstanding and "talking around" each other. Acknowledging that challenge and understanding the elements that contribute to the generation gap will help you develop the skills to show God's love to others in a way they can understand.***

Take 15 minutes to read the article in your handout and answer the questions on your own.

After 15 minutes divide the group into small groups of 2 (and one group of 3 if needed).

Say: ***Discuss your reactions to the article with your partner. Take the time to truly understand your partner's views on the matter. In about 15 minutes we will gather together as a large group and you will be asked to share and defend what your partner said about the topics...not what you said. You will need to understand your partner's point of view very carefully to accomplish this.***

Give the group 15 minutes to discuss. Gauge your time: if they are still going strong after 15 minutes give them more time. If the conversation dies out early then call them back together sooner.

Say: ***I want each of you to think of the two most insightful or interesting things your partner said during your discussion. You have one minute to decide what those are before we go around the room and have each of you share them.***

Give participants a minute to think before continuing. Go around the room and have each person share. Depending on the size of the room this could take a while. If the group is very large, have each person share one thought each. Make sure to respond to each person and validate what they said. You will be surprised how this creates a more open and honest atmosphere.

After participants are done sharing say: ***Things change. Fashion, hair style, music, attitudes, values, lifestyles....it seems nothing lasts for long. While things might be changing faster in the last 100 years, a look at the Bible, history books, and nature shows us that things have been changing as long as the Earth has been spinning. This instability can leave us reeling...but it helps us see the incredible relevance of our changeless God. All generations need a changeless anchor, a solid rock. God is that changeless rock that gives our lives stability.***

Divide the large group into 4 groups. Assign each group one of these verses: Hebrews 13:8, Malachi 3:6-7, Isaiah 40:6-8, or 1 Peter 1:20-25. Have each group do the following:

- 1. Read the verse.
- 2. Discuss the verse.
- 3. Pick someone to read the verse out loud to the whole group.
- 4. Choose another person to share the verse.

Give the groups only 5 minutes to prepare before gathering them back together and having each group take a turn reading and sharing.

After all 4 groups have finished, close the session with a prayer for God to help them understand generational differences and to help them live out their faith.

STUMBLING BLOCKS: MOVE THOSE ROCKS!

LEADER GUIDE

Say: *Have you ever stubbed your toe on a rock or smashed your shins on something that was in your path? Obstacles in your walkway or road blocks*
cb'h Y' [\ k UmWub'a U_Y'nci 'fUj Y'g'ck Yf'UbX'gca Yh'a Yg'a U_Y'nci 'fi fb
around altogether.

There are also stumbling blocks in our faith journey that can make us falter or slow down our spiritual growth. In Romans 15 we read about some stumbling blocks the early Christians were facing. At that time some meats were ceremonially offered to idols before they were sold in the market place. Some Christians thought that such meat was unclean and that it was sinful to eat it. Others thought that since the idols weren't real it was superstitious to worry about it. The matter grew into a big deal.

Find a quiet place in the room where you can be alone, read the passages, and answer the questions on a Yhandout. In 20 min we will gather back together to discuss.

After 20 min (adjust time based on your observations of the group) put participants in groups of 3-4 to discuss what they wrote. Make sure to join a group yourself.

Say: *Take the next 10 minutes to discuss the answers you wrote in your small groups. Make a note of any questions* *nci 'k Ubhlc 'X]gW g'k]H 'H Y`Uf[Y[fci d"*

After 10 minutes of small group discussion call the group back together as a whole. Ask groups to share any issues they would like to discuss as a large group. Gauge the group's understanding of the topic and aid their learning by asking multiple groups to share their response to specific questions. After the group seems satisfied with the content, challenge them to apply it personally by discussing these questions:

If you were leading an opening devotion for the women's quilting club at your church, what kind of clothing would you wear to remove any stumbling blocks in your relationship with the older women? (Look for answers that would show respect to the accepted norms and culture of the older women and what they feel is appropriate attire for young people).

If you were leading games for the 7th and 8th grade youth group what kinds of music, TV or movie references would you use? (Look for answers that would show an attempt to relate to media that younger children enjoy and the exclusion of media that would not be the best for children of that age. This attitude shows respect to the parents of those children and removes stumbling blocks from the children's view of you.)

If you were going to an elderly care facility what kinds of precautions could you take to make sure that nothing in your appearance, speech and behavior would be a stumbling block? (Possible answers to look for: **Remove facial piercing or at least use smaller, less distracting rings. Queue hair styles in ways less distracting to those not used to them. Use language that shows them that you respect them and their cultural values: like using fewer slang terms or technological terms they might not be familiar with. If you don't know their name, address them as "Sir" or "Ma'am". Don't forget "Please" and "Thank you"...older generations place a high value on those kinds of verbal manners.**)

Say: *Sometimes giving up a freedom for a short time can go a long way in helping to bridge the generation gap and show God's love to others in a way they can understand. They might never know that you are sacrificing for them, but God does. It's not always easy or even fair. Any time that you give up something for another person you learn more about what "loving your neighbor" really means.*

Say: *We may stumble and fail in our attempts to reach others for Christ as well as our endeavors to build relationships with Christians in other generations. As we try, fail, learn, and try again one thing is certain: Jesus has removed all barriers between us and God. His death and resurrection allow us have a relationship with God and forgiveness of sins. Not only is that our motivation to reach others...it is also our rest and security. Nothing stands in the way of God's love for you! No cultural differences or "adiaphora" issues can stop Him from relating to you and loving you.*

God tells us this clearly throughout Scripture and in Romans 8:37-40 He tells you this: *"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*
(Romans 8:37-40 NIV)

Closing Prayer

Say: *Go back to your small groups and pray together – Each person to pray out loud if they are comfortable.*

BRIDGE BUILDING: TIPS AND TACTICS

LEADER'S GUIDE

Welcome the group and open with a short devotion.

In a large group, read the article on the participant's page. Have volunteers read it out loud, one paragraph at a time.

In groups of 5 have participants discuss the first two questions on the handout.

1. Based on this article, what are some of the benefits of intergenerational ministry for young people?
2. Based on this article, what are some of the benefits of intergenerational ministry for older people? (Give groups 10 minutes to discuss the questions and then have them return to the large group. Have each group share their answers.)
3. Read 1 Timothy 5:1-2 and 1 Peter 5:5-7. What does God say about how we should interact with other generations?
4. What are some practical ways you want to live out the exhortations in these passages?
5. What is the overall attitude you should have towards others?
6. What are three realistic ways you could help build intergenerational connections at your church?
7. Let's say that you tell the Lady's Aid at your church that you are willing to tutor its members in an area of technology that they are interested in, but not familiar with. How could you interact with them in a way that shows respect and isn't demeaning?
8. Let's say you are helping with a 7/8th grade youth event. How could you interact with them in a way that shows respect and isn't demeaning?
9. Which groups at your church would you be willing to serve by leading an opening devotion at their meeting?
10. Write out what you would say to your pastor, DCE or church leader to explain that you would like to lead an opening devotion for a few of the groups you listed above. (Remember to use the attitudes described in the Scripture passage you read for today as you write.)
11. What actions will you take in order to help bridge the generation gap in your congregation and community?
12. What steps will you take to accomplish those goals?

After the groups of four have 10 minutes to discuss, call the large group back together and give each individual the opportunity to answer the last two questions. Make sure to affirm reasonable responses and redirect and guide those who seem confused or on the wrong track. Thank the group for sharing.

Say: ***Reaching out to older and younger generations isn't easy, but with God all things are possible. He can guide and lead you as you make a difference for Him. Not only will you grow and develop as a leader and as a Christian, you will also have the opportunity to make an impact for the sake of the gospel.***

Let's close in prayer. Dear Lord, Thank you giving us the opportunity to love others in your name. Please send your Spirit to guide and lead us so that we can build bridges to other generations. Enable us by your power to show others with our lives that you are love and that you offer peace and forgiveness through Christ. Please helps us to be courageous and brave so that we can take action in our congregations and communities for you. Help us to make connections with those who need to experience your love and see your work in us. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

PRACTICAL TOOL: HOW TO WRITE AND DELIVER A DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT LEADER GUIDE

Welcome participants to this session.

Lead an opening prayer.

Say: ***This session is different than the others. It is designed to be a time of personal reflection and focus. Find a quiet spot in the room and read the article in your participant guide carefully. Follow the directions and complete the tasks given to you. In 30 minutes we will gather back together and discuss. Write down any questions you have, things that don't make sense, or points you want to discuss. In a half an hour we will gather back together to discuss.***

Spend the 30 minutes working through the article yourself, even if you have already done so. Your behavior will model to the group what is important. By going through the guide yourself you are showing the group that it is important to you and that you are actively engaged in the topic.

After the group has had a good 30 minutes to work, gather them back together. Lead some active stretches to help them refocus and shift gears. (It may seem dorky, but it works! Just try it.)

Say: ***What questions came up while you were working through the article?*** (Take questions from people and facilitate the group to answer them.)

Say: ***What things didn't make sense?*** (Again, allow opportunity for every one to have their question addressed. Ask the group to respond to the questions and lead them to appropriate answers.)

Say: ***Are there any other issues that came to mind that you would like to discuss as a group?*** (If questions arise that the group can't answer and you don't know what to say, suggest that the question be taken to someone from an older generation that has more experience, or a church worker who has had the opportunity to study God's Word. It's okay if you don't know everything! Just admit it and help point them to resources. Offer to talk to your pastor about it and email them back.)

Share a closing devotion and prayer.

Make sure the devotion you share is one that you have written and is a good example of the guidelines in this study. For the closing prayer allow each person to pray out loud or "pass". If you are holding hands in a circle you can do this by squeezing the hand of the person next to you when it is their turn.