

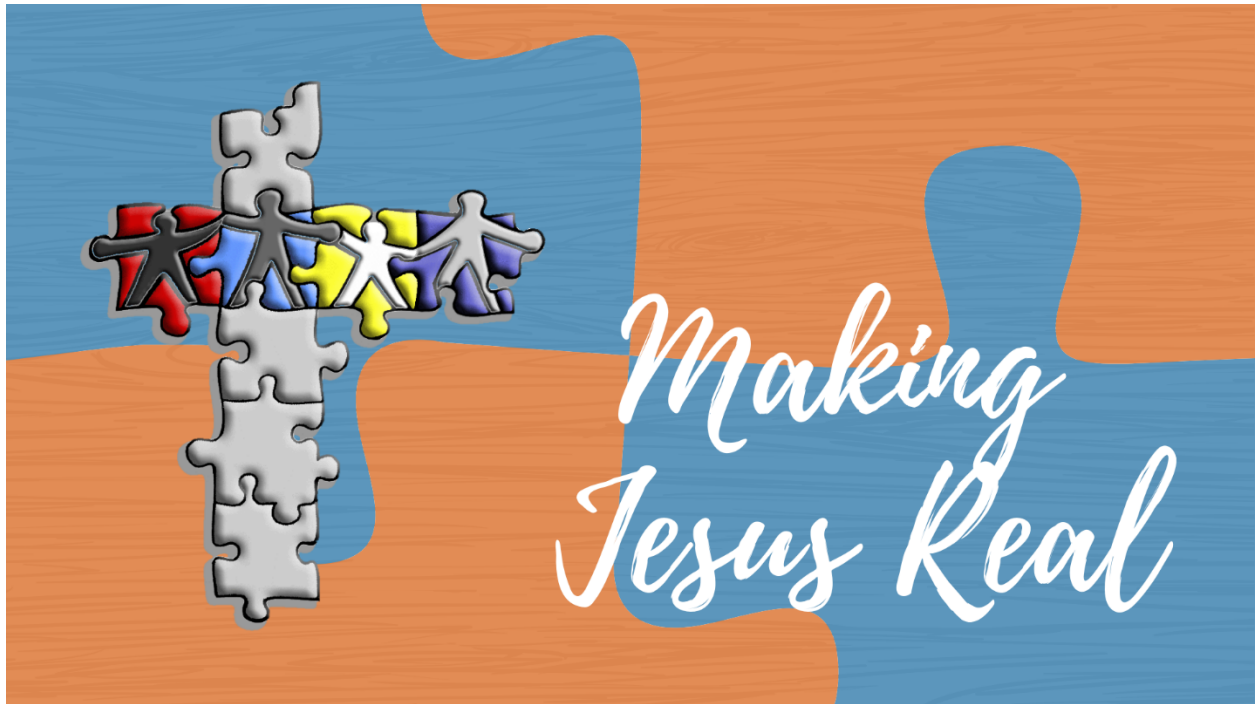


A Course for Lutheran Early Childhood Educators



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Discussion Guide - Session 4 Holy Spirit and Christian Living



Session 4: Holy Spirit and Christian Living

Session Objectives:

1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18

Opening Prayer:

Psalm 143, Hymn (LSB 497)

Prayer: Holy Spirit, I give You thanks that You have called me to saving faith in my Lord Jesus Christ through His Gospel, for without You I could never come to Him. By Your words, which are spirit and life, keep me united with my Savior in true faith, always enlightening me with Your gifts, and sanctifying me in body and soul to live for Christ alone; through my Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Father, forever one God. Amen.



Lutheran History and Readings:

Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation shares the following on the Holy Spirit:

The Third Article (Part 1)

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

What does this mean?

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith.

In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.

In this Christian church He daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers.

On the Last Day He will raise me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ.

This is most certainly true.

The Central Thought

"I believe ... that I cannot believe."

As fallen people, we are unable to find God on our own, let alone choose to entrust our lives to Him.

Which is harder to accept—that I choose to believe or that I am brought to saving faith apart from my own efforts?

Read Acts 9:1-22, about Paul's conversion, and Acts 16:13-15, about Lydia's conversion.

What role did they each play in their conversion?

✠ As Christians, we confess that the Holy Spirit has made us new creatures by bringing us to saving faith in Jesus Christ. Such faith is "granted to our hearts by the Holy Spirit through the preaching of the Gospel" (LC II 38).

Say a brief prayer of thanks to the Holy Spirit for the gift of faith.

A Closer Reading of the Small Catechism

How was I brought under the gracious lordship of Jesus?

The Holy Spirit brought me to Jesus by bringing the promise of the Gospel to me and by giving me faith in Christ through that Gospel.

John 6:65 And He said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to Me unless it is granted him by the Father."

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.



1 Corinthians 12:3 Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says "Jesus is accursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Holy Spirit.

Why can I not come to faith in Jesus by my own reason or strength?

A. Apart from the Holy Spirit, I am spiritually blind and dead and thus cannot trust in Christ.

1 Corinthians 2:14 The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

Ephesians 2:1-2a And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked.

1 Corinthians 12:3 Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says "Jesus is accursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Holy Spirit.

B. Apart from the Holy Spirit, I actively resist the Gospel's call to faith in Christ.

Acts 7:51 You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you.

Romans 8:7 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.

Galatians 5:17 The desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

Note: This is why Lutherans do not speak in terms like "making a decision to accept Jesus," instead emphasizing the Holy Spirit's work of calling us and bringing us to faith through the Gospel. When Jesus says, "Follow Me," His Word, by the Holy Spirit, has the power to turn us from our sin and to move us to trust Him and follow after Him. See **Matthew 9:9**; **John 10:27-28**.

What does it mean that the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel?

Through the Gospel, the Spirit both invites and enables me to believe by promising me a new life on the basis of Christ's death and resurrection.

2 Thessalonians 2:14 To this He called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.

Romans 10:17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

1 Peter 1:23, 25 You have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God.... This word is the good news that was preached to you.

Ephesians 1:13 In Him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.

Read also John 17:20; Acts 4:31; 1 Corinthians 4:15; and 1 Thessalonians 2:13.



The Word of God does more than give information; it actually delivers what it says.

What does it mean that I am enlightened with His gifts?

Christ is made known to me by means of the Spirit's gifts of the Word, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper (the Means of Grace).

2 Corinthians 4:6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

1 Thessalonians 1:5 Our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.

Note: The written and spoken Word of the Gospel and the Sacraments are called the Means of Grace. Some of the passages that describe how the Holy Spirit uses these means include **Isaiah 55:10-11; John 17:20; Romans 10:17; 1 Corinthians 4:15; 1 Peter 1:23; Titus 3:5; John 20:22-23; and Matthew 26:27-28.**

What does it mean to be sanctified by the Spirit?

It means that He makes me holy.

A. The Spirit first sanctifies me by bringing me to the Lord Jesus to receive His gifts through faith.

1 Corinthians 6:11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Hebrews 10:10 And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

1 Corinthians 1:2 To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours.

B. The Holy Spirit then sanctifies me by strengthening my faith and increasing its fruit within my life. He gives me new desires so that I strive to overcome sin and do good works.

Psalms 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Titus 2:14 [Jesus] gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession who are zealous for good works.



What are good works in God's sight?

Our activities and works are good in God's sight when

A. they flow from faith in Christ as children of God;

Psalm 51:12-13 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners will return to You.

Hebrews 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him.

John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

B. they are carried out within our callings according to the Ten Commandments (see also the Table of Duties for how we serve in our various vocations).

Exodus 20:9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work.

Colossians 3:17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

1 Corinthians 10:31 So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Read **Psalm 119**, about the Law's goodness; **Mark 12:41-44**, about a widow's offering; **Mark 14:3-9**, about expensive perfume poured on Jesus' head; and **Luke 10:38-42**, the story of Mary and Martha. God places us within a network of relationships where we serve God through our neighbors. Christians are set free to serve those around them according to the stations in life they occupy. See **Galatians 5:1, 16-24**.

What does it mean to be kept in the true faith?

Through His sanctifying Word, the Holy Spirit continually directs my faith to God's works and His promises in Christ.

John 8:31-32 So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Philippians 1:6 I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:5 [We] who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Read **Jude 22-25**.



Connections and Applications

Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is God. He is one of the three persons within the Trinity.

Why do we confess the Holy Spirit as God?

The Bible speaks of the Holy Spirit as the Creator of the universe together with the Father and the Son. He has divine attributes and does divine works (for example, see **Hebrews 9:14** and **Titus 3:5**).

Genesis 1:2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

Psalms 104:30 When You send forth Your Spirit, they are created, and You renew the face of the ground.

Job 26:13 NKJV By His Spirit He adorned the heavens.

What is the special role of the Holy Spirit in our salvation?

By the Law of God, the Spirit brings people to repentance, and by the Gospel (that is, the Means of Grace) He brings them to faith in Christ. We call this conversion or regeneration (new birth).

Psalms 51:13 Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners will return to You.

John 3:5-6 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

John 15:26 But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness about Me.

Acts 26:17-18 [Jesus said,] "I am sending you [Paul] to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in Me."

Does the Holy Spirit want to bring everyone to faith in Jesus?

Yes. The Spirit wants to create faith in everyone and bring them under the gracious lordship of Jesus.

Ezekiel 33:11 Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?

1 Timothy 2:4 [God] desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill His promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.



Why do not all who hear the Gospel believe in Jesus as their Lord?

Many people reject the Gospel and resist the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 23:37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!

Acts 7:51 You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you.

Read **Matthew 22:1-10** or **Luke 14:16-24**, where the guests invited to the feast refuse to come.

Do people believe in Jesus because they decide to follow Him of their own free will?

No. All who come to faith do so because the Holy Spirit works faith in them. If some do not have faith, it is because they have rejected the Spirit.

John 15:16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you.

1 Corinthians 12:3 Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says, "Jesus is accursed!" And no one can say, "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit.

1 Thessalonians 4:8 Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives His Holy Spirit to you.

Did God determine in advance that He would not convert some people?

No. While God chose some from eternity to be brought to faith, He did not select or predestine others to be unbelievers. This scriptural teaching about predestination is a mystery that defies human logic and understanding.

Ephesians 1:3-7 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us for adoption to Himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace, with which He has blessed us in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.

Read **Acts 13:44-48**. Who receives all the credit when people believe? The Lord does, in His Word. Who has to take the blame when someone rejects Jesus? The person who, in St. Paul's words, "thrust it [God's Word] aside" (v. 46). Those who are saved give God all the praise. Those who are condemned have only themselves to blame. Though this seems contradictory, it is what God's Word teaches.

Can we be truly spiritual without the Holy Spirit and the Gospel?

No. "Spirituality" can have different meanings. For example, some refer to spirituality as enjoying nature or contemplating life's deeper meanings, which does reflect that life is more than mere material reality. However, such spirituality, based on human contemplation and imagination, is unable truly to know God and His grace. Human reason or contemplation cannot "figure out what God is,



what He has in mind and does" (LC II 63). Only the Holy Spirit, working through the Word, shows us the incarnate Son and, through Him, the Father. Because God has revealed the truth about Himself in this way, only Christian faith and life is authentic spirituality. Only the Holy Spirit through the Means of Grace moves us to follow Jesus through this life to eternal life.

John 1:18 No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, He has made Him known.

John 3:31-32 He who comes from above is above all. He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way. He who comes from heaven is above all. He bears witness to what He has seen and heard, yet no one receives His testimony.

Romans 10:17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

1 Corinthians 2:9-11 For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

Read **1 Corinthians 1:18-25; Ephesians 3:14-19; and 1 Thessalonians 2:13.**

From the LCMS Life Library on Vocation (Click link to read article)

- [Called by the Gospel](#) — All Christians have a calling in the church. We all have been called into faith, and we all are called to a local congregation, where we each have a part to play in the community of faith.
- [Called to Be Citizens](#) — Christians are called to be citizens: to obey laws, pay their taxes, and honor and pray for their governing officials. Patriotic feelings and acts of civic-mindedness are fitting responses to the blessings God has given this country and the citizenship to which He has called us.
- [Called to Our Work](#) — We don't choose our vocations; God chooses us for them. The Christian can understand the ordinary labors of life to be charged with meaning. Through our labor, no matter how humble, God is at work.
- [God at Work](#) — Every Christian has a particular calling from God. With the doctrine of vocation, ordinary relationships, the 9-to-5 routine, taking care of the kids, the work-a-day world — the way we spend most hours of the day — become charged with the presence of God.
- [Masks of God](#) — Luther puts it strongly: Vocations are "masks of God." On the surface, we see an ordinary human face — our mother, the doctor, the teacher, the waitress, our pastor — but, beneath the appearances, God is ministering to us through them. God is hidden in human vocations.
- [Vocation: Fruit of the Liturgy](#) — In Martin Luther's teaching on the dual existence of the Christian, we observe a connection with the teaching of the two governments or two kingdoms. The Christian does not seek to escape or withdraw from the world as in monasticism, but rather he lives out his calling in the particular place where God has



located him.

- **Your Family Vocation** — Every Christian — indeed, every human being — has been called by God into a family. Our very existence came about by our parents. Martin Luther said, "God has given this walk of life, fatherhood and motherhood, a special position of honor, higher than that of any other walk of life under it."

Reflect:

- What does the Holy Spirit do for us? In what ways does He come to us?
- What is sanctification?
- In Session 2- Law and Gospel, we used the term "response" to apply our Bible Stories to everyday life. How is this an appropriate use of the idea of sanctification? Why is it important to share this third part of Bible Stories with children?
- Will good works get you to heaven? What is the value of good works?
- In the video we learned that we can show our love to God by repenting, worshipping, praying, and serving others. In what ways can you set up your classroom experience each day so that your students can show their love to God in these four ways?
- How can you partner with parents to bring up their children in the faith?
- What can you add to your current evangelism plan to help connect your church with your students and families?

Respond:

- What gifts has God given you including spiritual gifts, values, personality, skills/talents/abilities, and experiences? How might God be uniquely calling you to use these gifts in your center and in your various vocations? You can use some online tools to assist you with this:
 - Spiritual gifts inventory at <https://gifts.churchgrowth.org/spiritual-gifts-survey/>
 - Personality test at <https://www.mint-hr.com/smalley-trent.html> or <http://www.humanmetrics.com/cgi-win/jtypes2.asp>
- Go back to the Introductions Response Exercise where you wrote your personal faith statement. After prayerful review, create a new statement that reflects your growing faith.

*Use the Session 4 Personal Gifts Inventory and My Faith Statement pdf's in your Response.



Closing Prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father,

I thank you for the ministry that you have called me to and given me the gifts to serve in. I ask that you continue to bless me in my vocation as a _____ at _____ Lutheran Church. In Your name I pray, Amen.

Additional Resources:

Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation

<https://www.cph.org/p-32272-luthers-small-catechism-with-explanation-2017-edition.aspx>

How Can I Help? God's Calling for Kids

<https://www.cph.org/p-23250-how-can-i-help-gods-calling-for-kids.aspx>

One in Christ Family Letter Packets

<https://www.cph.org/c-2542-preschool-a-family-letter-packets.aspx?pagenum=1&set=1&sortby=Price&REName=&Lk=0&rlk=0&plk=0>

For further study on Who is the Holy Spirit?

<https://www.lhm.org/godconnects/topicguide.asp?ID=24052>

For further study on Christian Life

<https://www.lhm.org/godconnects/topicguide.asp?ID=24058>

LHM Booklets on your calling and faith development of children:

Help Your Child Have a Relationship with God, Helping Your Child Grow Through Faith Conversations, Parenting with Purpose, Parenting Families Practical Strategies for Family Life, Your Place in God's Plan

<https://www.lhm.org/projectconnect/booklets.asp>

Luthed offers monthly parent pages and devotions in their online mailing

<http://www.luthed.org/school-ministry-mailing/>

