

LEADER

PRAYERFULLY
CONSIDERING
FULL-TIME
CHURCH WORK
SET APART TO SERVE
AT CAMP

SET APART TO SERVE
LCMS CHURCH WORK RECRUITMENT



Overview

Set Apart to Serve AT CAMP is a four-session, interactive experience for middle and high school youth that gives them the opportunity to prayerfully consider a full-time church work vocation in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS).

THE FOUR SESSIONS INCLUDE:

1. Godly Vocations
2. The 8 LCMS Church Work Vocations
3. Overcoming Obstacles
4. How to Get from Here to There

Answers are printed in red italics.

SESSION 1: GODLY VOCATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Say: We're going to talk about "vocation," and especially "church work vocations." However, the things we'll discuss really apply to any vocation you are pursuing. So, while I'd really like you to think and pray about going into full-time church work, if you're not interested in that, think about how these things might apply in pursuing what you want to be or do in your adult life.

Supplies needed: *Bibles, piece of paper for each group, markers, whiteboard or easel pad prepared with the heading, "Roles and Responsibilities," and a copy of Luther's Small Catechism (specifically the Table of Duties). Optional: "How do I serve and obey God?" poster — see the quote from Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation below.*

1 Theme Activity: "Roles and Responsibilities"

Note: If time is limited, instead of breaking into smaller groups, you can ask participants to voluntarily share their various vocations with the whole group.

- Count off the participants by three or four (depending on the size of the group). Have them form groups with their group number. Have them determine the person who has the next birthday in the group — he or she will be the group leader.
- Have participants in each group take turns sharing the various roles/ responsibilities they fulfill by completing this sentence: "I am a ..." Each participant is given 30 seconds to respond. Answers will vary and may include son, daughter, brother, sister, student, etc. The group leader will write down the answers on a piece of paper as they are spoken without duplicating answers.
- Ask the leader of each group to name one role/responsibility they heard in their group without repeating what has already been stated. Repeat with each group until no more new answers are given.
- Write each role/responsibility on the whiteboard/easel pad as the answers are given.
- Show Luther's "Table of Duties" from the Small Catechism and explain how this exercise reflects what it says. Many roles and responsibilities that the group shared fit under Luther's last category: "Everyone."

2 Godly Vocations: As Christians, we call these roles and responsibilities "godly vocations." Does anyone know what the word "vocation" means? Define "vocation." What do each of the following Scripture passages say about godly vocations?

- Read Matthew 22:36–40. *When Jesus is asked which is the greatest commandment, He responds, “Love God and love your neighbor.” This is a summary of the Ten Commandments. Living out God’s commandments as His baptized children is our godly vocation.*
- Read Romans 6:3–11. *In our Baptism, our sins are buried with Christ. We also rise in newness of life in Christ in our Baptism. Our baptismal life is our sanctified life, our life of good works, living out our godly vocations every day.*
- If time allows, read Galatians 2:20–21. *As baptized children of God, we are given new, resurrection lives. In our new life in Christ, we live out our godly vocations. This is how Paul puts it: “It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me” (Gal. 2:20).*
- If time allows, remind the participants of this question and answer in the explanation to the Small Catechism (see *Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation*, p. 160):

How do I serve and obey God?

I serve and obey God when I use all [His] gifts within my various walks of life (vocations) for my well-being and that of my neighbor and the wider creation. God puts me into a network of relationships with people around me whom I am called to serve. God gives me freedom to pursue my vocations in accordance with the skills and aptitudes He has given me.

(*Note:* The leader may have these words pre-written on poster paper to hang on the wall).

③ What do you want to be when you grow up?

On a white board or easel pad, write: *“What do you want to be when you grow up?” Say to participants, “When you were a child, people may have asked you this question. How did you answer? Has your answer changed? If so, how would you answer this question today?” Solicit answers and write them down on the whiteboard or pad. Forego writing the answers if short on time.*

- Pointing to the list, ask, “Are these godly vocations?” Yes. (The leader will use his/her judgment for those vocations named that are not godly vocations (for example, bank robber).
- What are some steps you must take to get there? (Answers will vary, but may include prayer, research, save for college tuition, enroll in tech school or college, study, graduate.)

④ Share Your Story:

- If there are any camp counselors/participants present who are currently in a church work program, ask them to share their story. **How did you decide to pursue full-time church work? Which Concordia university or seminary are you attending? Please share your Concordia experience with us.**

⑤ Q&A: What questions or comments do you have about godly vocations?

Prayer:

Dear heavenly Father, give us Your mercy and grace in our many and various callings in life as Your baptized children. Give us patience and love as we serve our neighbor each day. Strengthen us in our Christian vocation of witnessing our faith to those around us and of serving our neighbor in Christ's name. We pray this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

SESSION 2: THE 8 LCMS CHURCH WORK VOCATIONS

Supplies needed: *“The 8 LCMS Church Work Vocations” booklet* (either copy booklets from the SAS website or order them from SAS), eight cardstock pieces of paper.

① Theme Activity: “Guess the eight LCMS church work vocations”

- Prepare eight cardstock pieces of paper with the symbol of one of the eight LCMS church work vocations on each one. (Symbols can be downloaded [here](#)). Have the name of the church work vocation printed on the opposite side of the paper. Lay them on the floor with the symbol facing up.
- Post the list (without the symbols) of the eight LCMS church work vocations on the wall. Ask the participants to guess which church work vocation each symbol is depicting. When a participant gives a correct answer, turn the paper over with the name on it and have a participant stand on it. Note: The person who stands on “pastor” must be male. The person who stands on “deaconess” must be female.
- When all eight vocations have been revealed, have everyone speak them out loud together, one vocation at a time (to reinforce remembering all eight vocations).

② What does the Bible say about full-time church work?

- The Pastoral Office
 - i. Read 1 Timothy 3:1. *“A noble task” (καλον εργον, kalon ergon). Kalon = good, beautiful, valuable, virtuous. Ergon = task or work. The Greek for “noble task” is in the mind of Christ. Jesus works a noble task in preaching the Word and dying and rising for the sins of all people. A noble task also constitutes works of Christ’s love and mercy. This is a life fashioned by love based on faith in Jesus Christ. The Pastoral Office is not just a good work — it is the good and noble work of Christ to His people.*
 - ii. Read 1 Corinthians 4:1–2. *Pastors are servants of Christ. They are called to be stewards of the mysteries of God: His Word and Sacraments. Through Word and Sacraments, God brings the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ to the individual for life and salvation. Pastors are also called to be faithful and trustworthy.*
- LCMS Commissioned Workers
 - i. Read Acts 6:1–4. *The disciples were increasing. Disciples are believers and followers of Christ and learners of His Word. The word “serve” in the Greek is διακονος (diakonos), which means “helping office.” “Spirit” and “wisdom” refer to the Holy Spirit, as He works faith in Christ through Word and Sacrament.*
 - ii. The LCMS states the following about LCMS commissioned workers: “These offices have been established in love by the Church to support the Office of the Holy Ministry and to assist the

faithful in their God-given vocations” (*LSB Agenda*, p. 155, emphasis added). These offices are sacred, honorable and joyful vocations.

③ “The 8 LCMS Church Work Vocations”

- Give each participant a copy of “The 8 LCMS Church Work Vocations” booklet.
- Review each of the eight vocations in the booklet. Focus on what a person in each vocation does and which Concordia university offers that program.

④ Share Your Story

- If there is another camp counselor/participant present who is currently in a church work program, ask them to also share their story and Concordia experience: How did you decide to pursue full-time church work? Which Concordia university or seminary are you attending? Please have them also focus on this question: **Who encouraged you to consider church work?**

If just one individual is present (and they shared last night), just ask them to add to their story a focus on who encouraged them to consider church work.

⑤ Q&A: What questions or comments do you have about the eight church work vocations in the LCMS?

Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus Christ, You desire all people to be saved. You also said the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few: pastors who will preach your Word and administer your life-saving Sacraments, and teachers, deaconesses, DCEs, directors of church ministries, directors of family life ministry, directors of Christian outreach, and directors of parish music who teach, witness and share Your Word with Your people for life and salvation. Are you calling me, Lord, to be one of these full-time church workers? Move me to prayerfully contemplate one of these sacred and joyful vocations. And if it be Your will, be with me as I pursue this path. In Your dear name I pray, Amen.

SESSION 3: OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

Supplies: something that would represent a visual obstacle (Example: traffic cones, rocks, cardboard boxes, pieces of paper, etc.), a map of the LCMS Concordia universities and seminaries, and a sign that reads “Church Worker” on it.



1 Theme Activity: “So, what’s stopping you?”

- You’re sitting on the couch thinking, “I want to go on a vacation.” To get from the couch to your vacation destination, you will need to overcome several obstacles.
- Ask, “What are four to five obstacles you might encounter to get from your couch to your final destination?”
- As obstacles are named, set out one of the visual obstacles. With each visual, name an obstacle. (Example: can’t decide where to go, don’t know how we’re going to get there, don’t have the funds, don’t have tickets and/or passport, etc.)
- Lightning round (60 seconds): Quickly call out some ways to overcome each of the obstacles/barriers. Answers will vary.

2 Overcoming Obstacles to Becoming a Church Worker

- You’re sitting on a couch at camp thinking, “I want to be a church worker.” To get from the couch to being a full-time church worker, you will need to overcome several obstacles.

- STOP! First, pray about it!

1. Read Philippians 4:5b–7. What is St. Paul encouraging us to do *“In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.” In other words: Pray. This is what Christians do in all circumstances of life, but especially pray if the idea of being a church worker is moving about in your heart and mind.* What does St. Paul promise when we pray to God? *The Lord is at hand. He is present and He hears you.*

2. Read Proverbs 3:5–6. What is God saying to you? *Trust in Me and I will make your paths straight — I’ll lead you through life ... even if it’s becoming a church worker.*

- Have a participant sit on a couch or chair. Make a sign and attach it to the wall across the room with the words “Church Worker” on it. Ask the group: “What are four to five obstacles you might encounter to get from the couch to finally becoming a church worker?” Using the same visual obstacles as above, allow the participants to brainstorm ideas. Set out the obstacles as they are named.

After all the barriers are set out, go back and discuss ideas to overcome each barrier (see red italics below). Remove the obstacle and move the student to the next obstacle until he or she arrives at the “Church Worker” sign. The following barriers are often mentioned by youth throughout the LCMS:

1. I’m not sure I could do it, or if I’m smart enough, or if I’m good enough.

Removing the obstacle: *Church work is not for everyone; But for those who desire it, God strengthens and equips the heart, mind and will to pursue becoming a church worker. Youth often think they are too sinful to become church workers. God forgives all sin through Christ and calls His repentant children to serve Him. Some examples of people God has called are King David, St. Peter and St. Paul, just to name a few.*

Remove the obstacle and have the participant proceed to the next obstacle.

2. My parents are discouraging me from becoming a church worker. They say I won’t make enough money to live.

Removing the obstacle: *Church workers are not in it for the money or to get rich. Remember that God supplies our every need and provides for His people. Ask your parents to sit down and hear why you desire to be a church worker. Ask them to support you and pray for you.*

Remove the obstacle and have the participant proceed to the next obstacle.

3. It costs too much money to go to college and/or seminary.

Removing the obstacle: *All college programs cost money — for sacred and secular vocations. However, the LCMS Concordia universities and seminaries offer very generous tuition assistance for church work students. Some offer full tuition. Others offer a very reduced rate. Contact one of the universities or seminaries or visit the SAS website (lcms.org/set-apart-to-serve) for more information.*

Remove the obstacle and have the participant proceed to the next obstacle.

4. My pastor tells me there’s too much suffering in being a church worker.

Removing the obstacle: *Because we live in a fallen world wrecked by sin and death, everyone experiences suffering, heart-aches and disappointments in life. Jesus said, “Pick up your cross and follow Me” (Matt. 16:24) and asked His disciples to leave their nets — in other words, leave everything behind — and follow Him*

(Matt. 4:18–22). Suffering in Christ is sacred and honorable. His promise is that He will never leave you or forsake you.

Remove the obstacle and have the participant proceed to the next obstacle.

5. I'm not sure where to go to school to become a full-time church worker.

Removing the obstacle: *Show the map of the Concordia universities and seminaries. Point out the name and location of each one. Also, refer to "The 8 LCMS Church Work Vocations" booklet, which lists which schools offer which programs.*

Remove the obstacle and have the participant proceed to the next obstacle.

6. I don't want to move away from home. Can I become a church worker through an online program?

Removing the obstacle: *While there are some LCMS schools that offer some online courses, SAS strongly encourages you to live and study at the location of the school. While moving away from home may seem scary (for the student and parents!), this is a good way to mature, immerse yourself in a Lutheran education and culture, and prepare yourself for the life of an adult.*

Remove the obstacle and have the participant proceed to the next obstacle.

- After all visible barriers have been removed, say: You have arrived at being a full-time LCMS church worker!

③ Share Your Story

- If a third camp counselor/participant is present who is currently in a church work program, ask them to also share their story and Concordia experience: How did you decide to pursue full-time church work? Which Concordia university or seminary are you attending? Please have them also focus on this question: **What were some of the obstacles along the path of pursuing church work?**

If just one individual is present (and they shared on the previous nights), just ask them to add to their story a focus on obstacles they faced along the path of pursuing church work.

④ Q&A: What questions or comments do you have about obstacles to becoming a church worker?

Prayer:

Dear heavenly Father, you love me and provide for all my needs. You know all the decisions I need to make every day — some big, some small. The idea of being a full-time church worker is moving about in my heart and mind. Whatever godly vocation I pursue, I know you will guide me and provide for all my needs. If I continue to ruminate on the thought of being a church worker and I am led to pursue this vocation, remove any obstacles and give me courage and trust in You to move forward. I pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior. Amen.

SESSION 4: HOW TO GET FROM HERE TO THERE

Supplies: one sign with the word “HERE” and another sign with the word “THERE.”

① Theme Activity: “From Here to There”

Tape the “HERE” and “THERE” signs to the wall on opposite sides of the room. Stand by the “HERE” sign and refer to both signs in the following exercise.

- From this list, what’s the best way to get from the junior varsity basketball team (HERE) to the varsity team (THERE)?
(a) go on a fast-food diet, (b) go to the gym and practice basketball skills, (c) play basketball video games
- From this list, what’s the best way to get from being an amateur cook (HERE) to being a world-renowned chef (THERE)?
(a) enroll in a cooking school, (b) eat grandma’s chocolate chip cookies, (c) talk to your friends about your dream of becoming a chef
- From this list, what’s the best way to get from having no spending money (HERE) to having some spending money (THERE)?
(a) rob a bank, (b) beg your parents, (c) get a job

Explain, “There’s no easy way to get from here to there in most ambitions and desires. Something worth going after is worth working hard to achieve it.”

② Formation Is Involved

- Just like the activity above, there is also no easy or magical way to get from *thinking* about being a full-time church worker to *becoming* one. To become a church worker begins even before you start thinking of becoming one.
- Where does becoming a church worker start? Read 2 Timothy 2:5, 3:14–17, and Romans 10:14–17. *Becoming a church worker begins with hearing the Word and receiving the Sacraments through which the Holy Spirit creates and nourishes saving faith.* Where do we hear the Word, and from whom? *In the Divine Service, Sunday school and Bible study, from our pastor, parents, youth leader and others.*
- How might the following passages of wisdom be applied to getting from here to there in becoming a church worker?
 1. Proverbs 14:23: *There is more profit to hard work than idle talk.*
 2. Ecclesiastes 9:10: *On this earth, do your work with all your might.*
 3. Colossians 3:23–24. *Whatever you do, do it heartily as for the Lord, serving Christ.*

③ Getting From Here to There

- Which of these things do you think are also important to get from HERE to THERE in becoming a church worker?
 1. Reading God's Word and spending time in prayer daily — **yes**
 2. Developing a love of learning and reading — **yes**
 3. Establishing good study skills and habits — **yes**
 4. Scrolling Instagram for hours — **no**
 5. Criticizing your pastor — **no**
 6. Learning the Lutheran Confessions and reading the Book of Concord regularly — **yes**
 7. Going to the Youth Gathering, Higher Things, Vocatio or Christ Academy — **yes**
 8. Making sure you always get your way — **no**
 9. Striving to live a baptismal life that bears the fruits of the Spirit — **yes**
 10. Demonstrating integrity and good manners — **yes**
 11. Learning about your Synod and understanding how we are all walking together under one confession of faith — **yes**
 12. Being an active participant at church with a servant attitude — **yes**
 13. Shouting down your opponent in arguing about the Bible — **no**
 14. Being a good steward of your body and mind (eating, exercising, maintaining good health) — **yes**
 15. Expecting someone else to pay your tuition — **no**
 16. Learning Luther's Small Catechism by heart — **yes**
 17. Calling a Concordia university to learn about the church work programs — **yes**
 18. Praying for God's guidance on your vocation — **yes**
 19. Asking your pastor, Lutheran school teacher, principal, deaconess, DCE, etc., about their job — **yes**
 20. Learning all your theology from the internet — **no**
 21. Shadowing a church worker for a day — **yes**
 22. Going to church and Sunday school regularly — **yes**

④ Final Word

- Whatever godly vocation you pursue is good because through it, you love God and serve your neighbor.
- However, I also want you to prayerfully consider being a pastor, teacher, DCE, deaconess, director of parish music, director of family life ministry, director of church ministries, or director of Christian outreach.
- Take a moment to think, "Is church work for me?" *Pause for a few seconds.*

⑤ Q&A: What questions or comments do you have about how to become a church worker?

Prayer

Dear heavenly Father, You led the Israelites from Egypt to the Holy Land. You led Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem. You led Your apostles and Your church from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. Be with each of these young people as they consider their future. Lead them from here to there in whatever godly vocations they pursue. For those whom You impress on their hearts to consider full-time church work, give them the confidence to know You will be with them throughout the journey from here to serving You full-time in Your church. Send workers into Your harvest field to preach, teach and share the marvelous news of salvation through Jesus Christ, our Lord. In His name we pray, Amen.

