

LEADER

# LEADING LIVES THAT MATTER

— BIBLE STUDY —

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SET APART TO SERVE  
LCMS CHURCH WORK RECRUITMENT



# LEADER NOTES

## ABOUT THIS STUDY

What do you want to do when you grow up? I'm sure you've been asked that question before. While it can be fun to imagine all the possible career choices available to us, the question can also create some anxiety. *How do I know what I want to do with my life? Is there only one career or job for me to do? What about all the other things I enjoy in my life — friends, family, sports, music, hobbies? How do I fit it all into my life?*

The other challenge we face when thinking about our future work is that it seems to associate our identity with our work or career goals. But isn't my identity more than a job?

As Christians, we recognize that first and foremost we are created and redeemed by God in Christ Jesus. We live not only to please ourselves but also to serve God and others. Instead of asking the question about your future job or career, this study invites you to ask these questions:

- Who has God created and redeemed me to be?
- Who do I want to be?
- How is God calling me to a life of love and service toward others?
- How can I live out my vocation right now?

These questions invite us to consider how we should live our lives as Christians. Building on the theological language of vocation, or "calling," this study explores how God is actively calling you to live a life of faith, work, service and witness. Most importantly, you live out these multiple callings in the grace, forgiveness and freedom given to you in Jesus.

## DISCERNING YOUR VOCATION

Vocation comes from the Latin *vocātiō*, meaning a "call" or "summons." This study invites you to consider how Christians lead lives that matter. How do you experience God's calling in your life? Christian writer Frederick Buechner provides a useful framework for discerning the work that God calls us to do.

*"The kind of work God usually calls you to is the kind of work (a) that you need most to do and (b) that the world most needs to have done. If you really get a kick out of your work, you've presumably met requirement (a), but if your work is writing cigarette ads, the chances are you've missed requirement (b). On the other hand, if your work is being a doctor in a leper colony, you have probably met requirement (b), but if most of the time you're bored and depressed by it, the chances are you have not only bypassed (a), but probably aren't helping your patients much either. ... The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."*

—Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 95.

Take some time at the beginning of this study to discuss these two dimensions to Christian vocation:

### Your deep gladness:

- What do you enjoy doing?
- What are you good at doing? What gifts, skills and talents do you have?
- How can you use these gifts, skills and talents to serve God and other people?

### The world's deep hunger:

- What are the hurts of the world?
- Where is there a need for healing? Where is there a need for service?
- How do you want to help people around you, in the U.S. and around the world?

In addition, there is one more ingredient to your life that makes all the difference as you think about how you should live your life. That ingredient is God's grace in your life. At the core of your identity is the enlivening work of the Gospel. God's Good News for you in Jesus Christ is that you have a real, living relationship with God. God has called you by His Holy Spirit and sanctifies you to make you uniquely you — just as God created you to be.

God's word of grace is vital to include in these conversations about vocation because it gives us confidence, forgiveness and peace to know that God is present with us when we succeed and when we fail. Paul writes, *"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose"* (ROM. 8:28). Paul concludes this section of his letter to the Christians in Rome with a powerful word of God's promise:

*"In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (ROM. 8:37-39).

Nothing will be able to separate you from the love of God that is in Jesus. Jesus is your Lord and Savior. He is your rock. God will be your foundation even as you consider how God is calling you to live a life of faith, work, service and witness.

## WAYS TO USE THIS STUDY

This study is best used as a four-part series over a few weeks, at a retreat or on a trip with youth such as a summer service trip. Before you begin the individual lessons, take some time to discuss the overarching study on vocation.

Each lesson is designed to take 45–60 minutes to complete (depending on the length of time set aside for discussion). The discussion questions are intended to foster conversations with youth as a large group but can also be used individually and in small groups.

As a warm-up (or as an extra introductory lesson), take time to consider the quote by Frederick Buechner: *"The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."*

Discuss together the questions under the two headings: 1) your deep gladness and 2) the world's deep hunger. You can use this as a visual chart and discussion tool for youth to reflect on the vocations God calls them to.

Remember that your vocation is more than one job. God's callings include all aspects of your life. Typically, these vocations pivot around four areas of life: family, work, church and the world.

## CHRISTIAN MENTORING

One of the most important components of a study on vocation is for young men and women to have a chance to talk about these ideas aloud to youth leaders and Christian adults who can listen attentively, share their reflections and pray with them. It is important for adult leaders to give youth the space to ponder these questions and to encourage and support them as they discern the many ways God is calling them.

Christian mentoring is a vital aspect of youth ministry. Youth will notice when you take time to listen and encourage them. The LCMS has put together some excellent resources for congregations, such as "7 Practices of Healthy Youth Ministry." Here are four key traits of supportive adult leaders for youth ministry.

- Supportive adults develop not just short term, but long-term relationships.
- Supportive adults deliberately invest in youth and build intergenerational relationships.
- Supportive adults prepare for and respond to celebration, transitions and crisis.
- Supportive congregations seek to connect every youth with at least five engaged adults.

The adult youth leaders in my congregation in the suburbs of Chicago were crucial for me as a teenager. One of the adult leaders made a tremendous impact on me by modeling the Christian life. He commuted on the train from the suburbs during the week to work in one of the city's impressive skyscrapers. On Sundays, he led our youth Bible study small group. He was an engaging teacher, but even more importantly, he listened to us and made us feel comfortable asking questions. He also modeled the Christian life. He shared how he read from the Bible every morning on the

train as he commuted to work. He would often share what it was like to be a Christian in a large corporate office and how he felt called by God to do his work with diligence and integrity. But he also emphasized his God-given vocation to his family, the church and to our local community. He became an elder of our church and coordinated our church's volunteers who served meals at a nearby homeless shelter. He made clear that these callings were not about earning his righteousness before God. Rather, he lived out his callings because of the freedom he had as a Christian to lead a life of significance as he fulfilled his vocation to his family, work, church and the wider community.

This Bible study hopes to foster these intergenerational conversations at your congregation, too. By meeting together for prayer and the study of God's Word, youth and adults will grow and learn together about the amazing and surpassing greatness of God's love in Jesus. Go forth with God's grace to work, serve and witness together in the joy of your risen Savior.

## **MATERIALS**

You will need a Bible or Bible App to look up the passages of Scripture. In addition, there are thought-provoking quotes about vocation throughout the study. I suggest showing the quotes on a screen or printing them out for students to read and discuss.

Oftentimes, discussions among youth are enhanced when youth first have a chance to discuss in groups of two or three. Once they have had time to consider what to say, youth can more easily share their thoughts and reflections with the larger group. The more the youth can be engaged to share their thoughts, the more enriching the study will be for everyone.

*The leader's notes are in orange throughout.*

## SESSION 1

# VOCATION — CALLED TO CHRIST

**YOUR FIRST AND MOST IMPORTANT CALLING** is to Jesus Christ. In the waters of Baptism, you are welcomed into God's family as a redeemed child of God.

### Isaiah 43:1–3

*But now thus says the Lord,  
he who created you, O Jacob,  
he who formed you, O Israel:  
“Fear not, for I have redeemed you;  
I have called you by name, you are mine.  
When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;  
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;  
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,  
and the flame shall not consume you.  
For I am the Lord your God,  
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.*

### INTRO ACTIVITY

- Begin with a name game or icebreaker.

*For instance, you might ask the youth to share their name and a favorite activity that begins with the same letter as their first name. If everyone knows each other very well, you can share your favorite nickname.*

*Once everyone has participated in the activity, ask the youth to share the meaning or reason of their name or a nickname.*

- Discuss the theme verse from Isaiah, especially the phrase: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.”
- What does it mean that God has called you by name?

### DIGGING DEEPER: THE CONVERSION OF SAUL

Read Acts 9:1–22. Discuss the following questions either as a whole group or in smaller groups.

- 1 Why is Saul traveling to Damascus?
- 2 Imagine being one of the companions of Saul. How might you have responded to Saul's sudden blindness and encounter with Jesus?
- 3 What would it have been like to be Ananias? What emotions did Ananias likely experience when God told him to visit Saul? In this instance, what was Ananias's calling?

- 4 How does Saul's transformative experience exemplify how you are called by Jesus to live a life of faith?
- 5 God calls Ananias to go and lay hands on Saul, but it is God who restores Saul's sight. How does God restore our lives?
- 6 Saul is baptized after he is filled by the Holy Spirit and healed of his blindness. What is the importance of Baptism for Saul? How does your Baptism begin your calling to follow Jesus?
- 7 In the following chapters in Acts, Saul takes on a new name — Paul. What is important about this name change? How does it illustrate how Saul has been called by name by God and invited to begin a new life in Jesus?

## THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON VOCATION

*"In encounter with Jesus Christ, a person experiences God's call, and in it the calling to a life in community with Jesus Christ. Human beings experience the divine grace that claims them. It is not human beings who seek out grace in its place, for God lives in unapproachable light (1 TIM. 6:16). Instead, grace seeks out and finds human beings in their place — the Word became flesh (JOHN 1:14) — and claims them precisely there.*

*Only by the call of grace heard in Jesus Christ, by which I am claimed, may I live justified before God ... From Christ's perspective this life is now my vocation; from my own perspective it is my responsibility."*

—Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics in Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*, Vol. 6 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 289–290.

### KEY POINT

Your first and most important calling is to Jesus Christ. In the waters of Baptism, you are welcomed into God's family as a redeemed child of God.

- What does Bonhoeffer mean when he emphasizes that only in an encounter with Jesus Christ does a person experience God's call? How was this true for Saul? How is this true for you?
- What does it mean that God's divine grace claims you as a human being? How does this relate to Baptism?
- Bonhoeffer emphasizes God's grace in Jesus Christ, but he also emphasizes responsibility within one's vocation. How do you live with both of these realities: grace and responsibility?

## WRAP UP

- How do Isaiah 43 and John 1:14 give you an identity that is different from those who do not know that they are created, redeemed and loved by God?
- Talk about ways to remember your Baptism on a weekly or even daily basis. How does your Baptism remind you about the identity and calling that you have in Jesus?
- Read Psalm 25:1–3 and meditate on the phrase: “*O my God, in you I trust.*” How will you trust God this week?

*Close with prayer asking for God to give you strength to trust and follow Him.*

## SESSION 2

# VOCATION — CALLED TO WORK

**THERE ARE DIFFERENT KINDS OF VOICES CALLING** you to different kinds of work. It can be a challenge to discern which is the voice of God rather than society or your self-interest and wishes. God guides us in our vocational discernment. God's calling for you is to use your gifts, talents and passions to serve the needs of the world through your work.

### Genesis 1:27–28

*So God created man in his own image,  
in the image of God he created him;  
male and female he created them.  
And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful  
and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have  
dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of  
the heavens and over every living thing that moves on  
the earth.”*

### Isaiah 65:21–22

*They shall build houses and inhabit them;  
they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.  
They shall not build and another inhabit;  
they shall not plant and another eat;  
for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be,  
and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of  
their hands.*

## INTRO ACTIVITY

*Use this week's introductory activity as an intergenerational activity by having the youth and adults in Bible study begin class together. Start by having the youth group pair up with adult members in Bible study.*

*Invite the youth to interview the adults about their work and vocation.*

- What do you do for a living? How did you decide on your career?
- How has God called you to live a life that matters in your family, work, church and society?
- How is God calling you to a life of service?

*Invite the adult members to ask the youth about their work, school and vocation.*

- How has God called you to live a life that matters in your family, school, work, church and society?
- What do you think you might do after high school? What are your goals for the next 1–3 years?
- How is God calling you to a life of service?

*Encourage these intergenerational conversations to continue within the congregation. It will be an enriching experience for the youth and the adults who participate.*

## DIGGING DEEPER: JESUS CALLS ZACCHAEUS

Read Luke 19:1–10. Discuss the following questions either as a whole group or in smaller groups.

*As you discuss these questions, consider again the “7 Practices of Healthy Youth Ministry” (<http://www.youthsource.com/7-practices/>) for congregations based on extensive LCMS research on millennials and preliminary research on Generation Z.*

- 1 Why don't the people in the crowd like Zacchaeus? Why do you think Jesus takes special interest in this short man who climbed a sycamore just to see Jesus?



- ② In what ways can your job and career be hijacked by your selfish desires? What can you do to guard against making your job and career all about you instead of others?
- ③ Jesus often ate with sinners. But Jesus doesn't just eat with them; instead, He transforms them by calling them to repentance and trust in Him. How does Zacchaeus exemplify a life transformed by Jesus? Zacchaeus realizes his mistake and vows to give away half of his possessions to the poor. In addition, he promises to pay back four times as much to anyone whom he has defrauded.
- ④ What does it mean for Jesus to say to Zacchaeus: *"Today salvation has come to this house"* (LUKE 19:9)? How does the knowledge of our salvation in Jesus change how we approach our job, work and career?
- ⑤ There are many different jobs that you may choose to do. All jobs run the risk of being used toward selfish ends. The story of Zacchaeus shows that God calls people to serve with integrity and compassion no matter what job they may have. Where in your life is God calling you to act with integrity and compassion?
- ⑥ It's interesting that Jesus doesn't tell Zacchaeus to change his occupation. Tax collecting, even if unpopular, is a reality for most societies. But Jesus is very interested in how Zacchaeus lives out his calling to his work.
- ⑦ Consider again the quote by Frederick Buechner about vocation. He writes, "The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." Discuss together the questions under the two headings:

#### **Your deep gladness:**

- What do you enjoy doing?
- What are you good at doing? What gifts, skills and talents do you have?
- How can you use these gifts, skills and talents to serve God and other people?

#### **The world's deep hunger:**

- What does the world need?
- What are the hurts of the world? Where is there a need for healing?  
Where is there a need for service?
- How do you want to help people around you, in the U.S. and around the world?

### **KEY POINT**

God's vocation for you includes all aspects of your life, especially family, work, church and community.

*Remind the youth that their vocation is more than one job. God's vocation for them include all aspects of their lives, especially family, work, church and community.*

## **THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON VOCATION**

*"Work is not, primarily, a thing one does to live, but the thing one lives to do. It is, or it should be, the full expression of the worker's faculties, the thing in which he finds spiritual, mental, and bodily satisfaction, and the medium in which he offers himself to God."*

—Dorothy Sayers, *"Why Work?" in Creed or Chaos?* (London: Methuen & Co., 1947), 47–64.

- What does it mean for work to be "the thing that one lives to do"? Do you agree or disagree with Sayers?

- Consider the opening Bible verses from Genesis and Isaiah. How do these passages support Sayers' claim that people should live to work?
- How has sin distorted this reality? Read and discuss the fall of Adam and Eve into sin, especially God's punishment (GEN. 3:14–20).

## WRAP UP

- Brainstorm ways you can live generously, using your gifts, talents and passions to serve others.
- How can you live out your God-given responsibilities and vocations as a student? Sibling? Son or daughter? Paid worker? Teammate? Friend? Volunteer?
- Discuss the meaning of the two opening passages of Scripture (GEN. 1:27–28 and Is. 65:21–22). The passage in Genesis describes God's original intent for creation, where work was meaningful, fulfilling and life-giving. The passage in Isaiah describes how God will make all things new and God's people will again "enjoy the work of their hands" (Is. 65:22).
- Read Psalm 25:4–7 and meditate on the phrase: *"Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long"* (Ps. 25:5). How will you look for God to lead you this week?

*Close with prayer asking for God to give you strength to trust and follow Him.*

## SESSION 3

# VOCATION — CALLED TO SERVE

**OUR VOCATION EXTENDS BEYOND OUR JOB** or professional work. Everything we do, all our roles and relationships, are ways of serving God and serving our neighbor.

### Romans 12:3–8

*For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.*

*Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.*

### INTRO ACTIVITY

*Begin by asking the youth to share a meaningful time that they have served someone else, either individually or as part of a service project or servant event.*

- How did you use your gifts, skills, and talents in the servant event or service trip?

*Ask youth to illustrate how different people served in different roles based on their interests, skills and experiences. Then explain that God provides for the world by gifting people in different ways to serve and care for each other.*

*As an additional warm-up activity, take a poll among the youth using this question:*

- Which is easier: to help someone or to receive help from someone?

*Discuss their responses together. Sometimes it can be difficult to help someone else, but oftentimes we have a hard time receiving help from someone else.*

*Use this as an opportunity to talk about the benefits and challenges of service activities and service trips.*

### DIGGING DEEPER: MARY IS THE LORD'S SERVANT

Read Luke 1:26–56. Discuss the following questions either as a whole group or in smaller groups.

- 1 What is ordinary about Mary's call from God? What is not-so-ordinary?

*Consider making a chart on the board listing the answers to these two questions.*

- 2 Theologians distinguish between the direct call experienced by Mary who is visited by the angel Gabriel, and the mediated call experienced by Christians today. In our lives, God's call is mediated and discerned through conversations with other people and a process of prayer and discernment.

- What people in your life do you turn to for guidance and wisdom about big, important decisions? (Note that after her encounter with Gabriel, Mary travels to visit her cousin Elizabeth.)
- Where do you see God leading and guiding you through the conversations you have with other people?
- Where do you see God leading and guiding you through your personal prayer and devotional life?

3 Even though Mary's direct call by God was very unique and radically different from the mediated vocations people receive from God, what can you learn from Mary's faithful response, "I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (LUKE 1:38)?

- What does it mean to be the Lord's servant?
- How does God's Word in the Scriptures serve to guide you in your process of discerning your vocation?

4 Martin Luther explains that people have multiple vocations in their lives. In a contemporary context, the four main areas for your vocation from God include vocations to serve others in your family, work, church and community.

- Where do you discern God calling you to serve in these four areas?

*Make a chart on the board listing ways youth can serve in these four areas.*

- Are there other areas where God is calling you? How is God calling you as a student?

5 It's easy to focus so much on yourself when you think about your vocation that you often overlook how the most important vocation in the world is fulfilled in Jesus Christ when He takes up the cross for your sake. How does knowing what Jesus has done for you enable you to approach your individual, personal vocation with more freedom, grace and humility?

*Any station in life (parent, grandparent, child, student, and so on, as well as job) could be equally a place from which to serve God and one's neighbor. Encourage youth to interview a family member, friend, youth leader, teacher, coach or pastor to share how they live out God's vocation for them in their lives. Remind youth that all of these people can be helpful for them to talk about their own lives — especially as they discern their vocation.*

## THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON VOCATION

*"We are all one body, yet every member has its own work, whereby it serves every other, all because we have one baptism, one Gospel, one faith, and are all alike Christians; for baptism, Gospel and faith alone make us 'spiritual' and a Christian people."*

—Martin Luther, "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation," in *Three Treatises*, trans. C. M. Jacobs (Philadelphia, Muhlenberg, 1943, 1960), 13.

- What does it mean for you to have your own work to do? What individual responsibilities has God given to you?
- Luther's Small Catechism details a Table of Duties ([catechism.cph.org/en/table-of-duties.html](http://catechism.cph.org/en/table-of-duties.html)) based on the Scriptures where God calls you to live a life of trust and obedience. How do you apply these duties to your own vocation as a young man or woman? Consider the following examples:
  - *"The commandments ... are summed up in this one rule: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" (ROM. 13:9).*
  - *"I urge ... that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone." (1 TIM. 2:1).*
- How can people all have separate work, yet also be together as one body?
- On a practical level, what can you do to support and encourage others in your separate work? How do you guard against envy and jealousy of other people's skills, talents and vocations?

### KEY POINT

It's easy to focus so much on ourselves when we think about our callings and vocation that we often overlook how the most important calling in the world is fulfilled in Jesus Christ when He takes up the Cross for our sake.

## SHARING MOMENT ON VOCATION

*Invite adult leaders in the congregation to visit the class and give a 5 to 10 minute personal story and example in connection with their vocation in the four realms. Allow opportunities for the youth to ask questions and to get to know how the adult leaders live out their Christian faith. Intentionally ask adult leaders who have a variety of professional perspectives (e.g. healthcare, customer service, science, engineering, construction, accounting, food service, software developers, etc.), personal experiences and diverse cultural insights.*

*Invite college students and other adult leaders who were previously in the youth group to come back and share their experiences living out their Christian vocation. It's a great way to keep young men and women connected with their congregation even while away at college. For instance, you might invite Christian college athletes to share insights from their vocation on and off the field. Or you might invite a young adult who took a year off school to do a mission trip or service project to speak. Or invite a newly married couple to share about their Christian faith, engagement and marriage. The goal of these conversations is to help youth and adult leaders have an ongoing and mutually encouraging conversation on Christian vocation.*

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCE:

For an example of a clear and concise talk on Christian vocation, watch the seven-minute video about calling and purpose featuring DCE Shelly Schwalm and produced by Concordia University, St. Paul: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pUGVXkF5vsc>

## WRAP UP

- God fulfills His promises in Jesus. Christians live in hope of the coming kingdom of God as spoken by the angel Gabriel to Mary. Brainstorm ways you can live in hope this week at work, school and home.
- Talk about opportunities in the congregation where you can become more involved in serving others.
- Read Psalm 25:8–15 and meditate on the phrase: “*All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies*” (Ps. 25:10). How is the Lord steadfast in love and faithfulness?
- Meditate also on the confession: “*For your name’s sake, O Lord, pardon my guilt, for it is great*” (Ps. 25:11). What sins of disobedience need to be confessed? Turn to your Lord in prayer asking for His grace and forgiveness.

*Close with prayer thanking God for the forgiveness offered in Jesus and ask God to give you strength to trust and follow Him.*

# VOCATION — CALLED TO WITNESS

**GOD MAKES US NEW IN CHRIST.** We serve God and our neighbor through our many roles and relationships. Jesus is real, present, and risen from the dead. We join God's church in proclaiming the great news that Jesus is alive.

## 2 Corinthians 5:17–21

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

## INTRO ACTIVITY

- Share some good news that has happened to you (especially good news that has made you metaphorically — and even literally — jump for joy).

*Answers will likely include getting a good grade on an assignment, winning a championship game or plans for an exciting vacation.*

*Encourage youth to think more deeply about good news that has made them overjoyed and relieved. Answers might include a family member or friend recovering from a bad illness or surgery or accident; the reunion of friends or family after years apart; or the celebration of a new birth, Baptism, friendship or marriage.*

- What did you do when you heard this good news?

Most of the time, we tell people about the good news we experience (or we post it on social media). In the same way, the Christian Gospel about God's love for us in Jesus is good news that we can't help but share with others. Telling people about the Good News of Jesus is something that flows from the realization that the Christian Gospel is good news for me — and for everyone. And yes, the Good News of Jesus is so good that we can literally shout it out loud and jump for joy!

*In the course of this week's study, lead the youth to experience again the amazing Good News of God's love for us in Jesus. Talk about the joy of knowing the Good News that Jesus has been raised from dead. But don't stop there. God brings new life for us, too, in our Baptism!*

## KEY POINT

Telling people about the Good News of Jesus is something that flows from the realization that the Christian Gospel is good news for me — and for everyone.

## DIGGING DEEPER: MARY MAGDALENE PROCLAIMS THE RISEN CHRIST

Read John 20:1–23. Discuss the following questions either as a whole group or in smaller groups.

- 1 In John 20:1–10, Mary Magdalene finds the tomb of Jesus empty, so she runs to tell Simon Peter and John (the disciple whom Jesus loved). What are their reactions? What are their emotions? Notice that they are perplexed and even afraid at first, because they do not know what has happened.
- 2 Once Jesus appears to Mary, how does she respond? How does the presence of the resurrected Jesus change everything for Mary?

- ③ What does Jesus tell Mary to do? What does Mary immediately go and do?
- ④ What is the significance of Jesus' greeting: *"Peace be with you"* (JOHN 20:19)?
- ⑤ What is the significance of Jesus breathing on the disciples and giving them the Holy Spirit? What does it mean to be sent by Jesus (JOHN 20:21)?
- ⑥ What does it mean for God's people and the church to proclaim the risen Jesus and share the forgiveness of sins?
- ⑦ What makes the announcement of Jesus' resurrection great news for you today? Why does the Gospel bring about joy? Think back on the warm-up activity about hearing good news — especially news that's so good it makes people want to shout and jump for joy.
- ⑧ Brainstorm ways to share the Good News of Jesus with your own family, friends, co-workers, teammates and church members.

## THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON VOCATION

### Lecrae, "Tell the World."

I know one thing's true  
 I don't even really deserve to know you  
 But I am a witness that you did this, and I'm brand new  
 So, I'm ready to go

And I'mma tell the world what they need to  
 know A slave to myself, but you let me go  
 I tried getting high, but it left me low  
 You did what they could never do  
 You cleaned up my soul and gave me life  
 I'm so brand new, and that's all that  
 matters I ain't love you first,  
 but you first loved me

In my heart I cursed you, but you set me  
 free I gave you no reason to give me new  
 seasons To give new life, new breathin'  
 But you hung there bleedin'

And ya' died for my lies and my  
 cheatin' My lust and my greed, and  
 What is a man that you mindful of him?  
 And what do I have to deserve this lovin'?

Tryna make the moments last  
 Holdin' onto the past  
 But like a hero in a dream  
 Christ came and he rescued me  
 Now, I'mma tell the world, tell the world, tell 'em  
 I'mma tell it everywhere I go  
 Tell the world, tell 'em  
 Yeah, I'm a billboard  
 Tell the world, tell 'em  
 And I'm broadcastin' like a radio  
 Tell the world  
 You ought to know, I'm brand new

*I suggest having the lyrics of this popular song available for youth to discuss so they can dig deep and read them closely. Invite them to consider the messages in the music that they hear. You might search for this song on YouTube or play it on a music device so that youth can hear the music while reading the lyrics.*

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCE:

Christian music artist, Lecrae, has a moving story of how God has called him that can be viewed on the website: I Am Second (<https://www.iamsecond.com/seconds/lecræ/>).

- How is Lecrae a witness to Jesus and the Good News of salvation through this song? How can you incorporate being a witness to Jesus in the things and activities that you frequently enjoy?
- What does it mean to be a billboard for Christ? Sure, you can wear Christian T-shirts, but what are some more meaningful ways you can witness to others the love, joy, forgiveness and hope that you have in Jesus?

*Consider making a chart on the board listing the ways youth can share and be a witness of God's love to others.*

The starting point for Lecrae's witness for Jesus has everything to do with how God has made him "brand new." How has God made you brand new? How is being made brand new an ongoing occurrence in the Christian life?

## WRAP UP

We are called to Christ in our Baptism, work, service and witness. How does 2 Corinthians 5:17–21 link all of these lessons on vocation together?

What does it mean for us to be an ambassador for Christ? Brainstorm ways that youth (and the congregation) can go and share the Good News of Jesus.

Read Psalm 25:16–22 and meditate on the phrase: *"Oh, guard my soul, and deliver me! Let me not be put to shame, for I take refuge in you. May integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for you"* (Ps. 25:20–21). How will you trust God this week?

*Close with prayer asking for God to give you strength to trust and follow Him.*



## NEXT STEPS

**WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS FOR YOUTH DISCERNING THEIR VOCATION?** Oftentimes, a Bible study like this one succeeds in starting the conversation, but ongoing conversations need to happen in order for a theology of vocation to become a foundation for youth and adults in the church. How can these conversations about Christian vocation continue to be a part of your discipleship path for your youth and congregation?

**CHRISTIAN MENTORING IS A VITAL ASPECT OF YOUTH MINISTRY.** Youth will notice when you take time to listen and encourage them. Discuss with your congregation's leaders the "7 Practices of Healthy Youth Ministry," which is based on extensive LCMS research on millennials and preliminary research of Generation Z. How can you and your congregation best support and encourage young men and women (and their parents) in your congregation? A key conclusion from this research is the importance of significant adult leaders who constantly walk in this vocational framework and who are always asking and helping young men and women to discover, grow, lead and serve others.

**DISCUSS WITH YOUR CONGREGATION'S LEADERS** how you will continue to encourage and equip young men and women in their early adult lives after high school. Consider a mentoring program for college students modeled after the Solus Christus Fellows program at Concordia University, St. Paul (<https://www.csp.edu/soluschristus/>). Please reach out to me and other leaders in the church to guide, equip, and encourage you in this important work of Christian faith mentoring.

**READ AND DISCUSS** Ephesians 4:1–7, 11–16. What insights can be gained by your God-given vocation to live a life with meaning and purpose? How do these words from Ephesians continue to equip you for lives of service to God and the needs of the world?

**GO TO THE LORD IN PRAYER** asking God to guide you in His Holy Spirit as you "walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called" (Eph. 4:1).

