

Praising God Together

Litany of Service

Begin your session with a short time of worship. Use the following order of litany and response, which includes the hymn “Take My Life and Let It Be” (LSB 783/784).

Leader: Lord, You have given me all I am and all I have. Help me always to praise You for all the wonderful things You have done for me. Especially I thank You for sending Your Son to give me eternal life.

Student Response: (Sung)

1. Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Leader: Help me, Lord, to respond to Your love with my hands and feet.

Student Response: (Sung)

2. Take my hands and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love;
Take my feet and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee.

Leader: Lord, help me use my mouth to praise You.

Student Response: (Sung)

3. Take my voice and let me sing
Always, only for my King;
Take my lips and let them be
Filled with messages from Thee.

Leader: You’ve blessed me with my money and with my intelligence and ability to plan and reason. Let me use these to serve You.

Student Response: (Sung)

4. Take my silver and my gold,
Not a mite would I withhold;
Take my intellect and use
Ev’ry pow’r as Thou shalt choose.

Leader: Sometimes, God, I want things my way. Help me to be willing to give up what I want for what You want. Take Your place in my heart and rule there always.

Student Response: (Sung)

5. Take my will and make it Thine,
It shall be no longer mine;
Take my heart, it is Thine own.
It shall be Thy royal throne.

Leader: Lord, let me give You everything. Take my time, talent, and treasure and use them to serve You.

Student Response: (Sung)

6. Take my love, my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure store;
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee.

Prayer

Leader: May all that we are and have be Yours as we study Your Word and live as Your servants. Amen.

Sharing Activities Together

Look at Your Week

Distribute copies of Reproducible 3, “A Look at a Week.” Point out that Jesus’ first disciples were fishermen. When Jesus called them, He gave them a whole new life to live with a whole new set of opportunities to serve God and others as His followers. Explain to the group that as twenty-first century followers of Jesus, we also have a new life to live each and every day. Jesus promises to guide and bless us during each new day, just as He once did Peter, Andrew, James, and John. Ask students to work individually to think about a typical week in their life. Record for each day, the opportunities that day usually holds for using their time, talents, and treasures as Jesus’ disciples.

Get students started by sharing with them the examples included on the bottom of this column and continuing to the top of the next. Then, after allowing time for them to complete the journal entries on their own, invite them to share what they have written. Comment that God gives us the desire and ability to serve Him as the Holy Spirit changes us through God’s Word.

Here are some sample responses.

Sunday: I go to church. One of my talents is singing so I sing the hymns to praise God. I’m also good with children, so I help my sister find her way to her Sunday School class. I put some money from my allowance into the offering.

Monday: I help my friend Jenny at school with her math. I volunteer to help the younger class get their boots on before going home from school. I save some of my snack money for a class project.

A New Beginning

Distribute copies of Reproducible 4, “A New Beginning,” one to each student. Involve students in reading the opening paragraphs and then discuss the questions that follow.

1. **What difference would you expect to find in a learning environment dedicated to the triune God with respect to**
 - **decorations, furnishing, and wall hangings?** (Possible responses include pictures of Jesus and biblical scenes, Bible verses and symbols prominently displayed, an altar, and prominently displayed crosses.)
 - **lesson materials and content?** (Lessons may teach the Bible and Christian doctrine and help students apply these teachings to life. Elements of the Christian faith could be expected to be integrated into all subjects and aspects of school life.)
 - **routines and practices?** (Teachers and students pray at the beginning and ending of day and at meals, weekly chapel services are held, care and concern are evidenced for student and family needs, forgiveness is given and received.)
 - **teachers and learners?** (Teachers and students work at building a culture of Christian love and forgiveness founded and rooted in the forgiveness Jesus earned for us at Calvary.)

2. What differences do you suppose Jamal began to notice in himself with respect to his

- **regard for himself and others?** (By God's grace as the Holy Spirit works through God's Word and Sacraments, He imparts faith and changes believers to recognize their worth and the worth of others as God values them.)
- **activities?** (God's Spirit moves people through His Word to desire activities that include worshiping God and enjoying the fellowship of other believers.)
- **choices made?** (The Holy Spirit works in Jesus' followers to help them follow Jesus' ways and will.)
- **use of time?** (God's Spirit gives believers the desire and power to devote a portion of their time to worship and Bible study as well as to serving God and others.)
- **use of money and other resources?** (Honoring God with money and other resources happens also as God brings His followers to appreciate the value of living every aspect of life dedicated to Him who died for us and rose again.)

Direct students to the bottom of the sheet and allow time for them to unscramble the words of encouragement for Jamal and all who come to know Jesus and the blessings and guidance He desires to bring to everyone. Answers follow.

Matthew 28:20b "I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Isaiah 43:1b "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are Mine."

Isaiah 41:10 "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."



A Look at a Week

Directions: Think about each day of the week. Write about ways you can use your time, talents, and treasures for Jesus during each of the days of the week.

Journal

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

A New Beginning

Jamal began attending St. John Lutheran School when he was in the seventh grade. His mother enrolled him soon after they moved into the neighborhood. Jamal's mother wanted Jamal to go to St. John because she had heard about the school's excellent reputation for providing a safe learning environment in which students received a quality education. Jamal needed a safe environment. Life with his father had become unbearable, and fearing for Jamal and herself, Jamal's mother had decided to leave his father until he would decide to get help for his addiction.

At first, Jamal felt somewhat indifferent about his new surroundings. But eventually he warmed up to the school and looked forward to going there each day. He appreciated the routines and

rituals that indicated God's presence. Teachers seemed to genuinely care about him and the other students. His classmates in the seventh grade were pretty much like seventh graders in the neighborhood who attended other schools; still, there was a difference. Eventually, Jamal began to notice a difference in himself.

(Your teacher will lead you in a discussion of the differences Jamal discovered in the school and eventually in himself.)

Unscramble these words of encouragement for Jamal and all who come to know Jesus and the blessings and guidance He desires to bring to everyone.

Matthew 28:20b with you I always, age. to the end am of the

Isaiah 43:1b not, Fear you; have for redeemed I Mine. called you have you are name, by I

**Isaiah 41:10 with will Fear am righteous help am My will not, for I be hand. uphold not
I your for God; I strengthen you, I will dismayed, you, I you you; with right**

Taking It Home

Dear Parents,

Your child has been learning about Christian discipleship and stewardship. Lessons have taught your child that everything he or she is and has belongs to Jesus. The words of a beloved hymn echo through the years down to today, “We give Thee but Thine own, Whate’er the gift may be; **All that we have** is Thine alone, A trust, O Lord, from Thee” (LSB 781). The lessons emphasize that God’s people want to give their all because our Savior, Jesus Christ, has given His all for us. His gift of a perfect life and His death and resurrection move us to respond. And how do God’s people respond? Matthew says it so clearly and simply: “Freely you have received, freely give “ (Matthew 10:8b NIV).

All that we have—our time, our talents, and our treasures—provide us with the means to respond to God’s great love. The children have been exploring ways to serve God and others in response to God’s great love for us in Jesus. Ask your child to tell you about the class projects we have been involved in.

Your child has also learned about Lutheran Church Extension Fund projects. Ask him or her to share information learned about this program. Your child has come to recognize that when we serve others we are really serving our Lord. Prayerfully consider what your family can do to build God’s kingdom through careful investing and Christ-motivated giving. Your attitude here can set lifelong patterns of investing and giving. Remember, “God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7).

As a family, discuss your blessings (your home, health, talents, jobs, and family members). Help children see the ways God has blessed them and encourage them to share some of these blessings. Perhaps your family can plan their own giving project whether it is serving at a soup kitchen or raking a neighbor’s yard.

May God bless you as you lead your family in Christian stewardship. Your actions and attitudes can reinforce God’s Word, where we are reminded, “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).



Activities at Home

- * Spend time with your child discussing your offering for church. Help him or her to understand how you determine the amount you give. Tell your child about the ways your church uses these donations to further God's work. Remind your child that our offerings are a response to God's love.
- * If your child has an allowance, talk about giving some of this money to do something for others. Expose your child to information on missions and activities in your church that are funded by members' donations.
- * Keep a family change barrel. Use a coffee can or jar. Decorate this container with a Christian message like "God loves a cheerful giver." Ask family members to collect spare change in this. As a family, decide how this treasure will be spent to share God's love with others.
- * Make a plan for a family giving activity. This could involve working together to make a special meal to serve to someone in your church who would enjoy your company. It could be a family work project for a shut-in neighbor or friend. Another idea might be writing letters as a family to a college student from your church, a missionary, or a member of our Armed Forces, encouraging them and assuring them that the Lord is with them. Spend an hour of family time together doing this project.

Devotion Ideas

"Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together; running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you" (Luke 6:38).

What did Jesus give for you? How would you describe His measure of love?

Take some brown sugar. Put it loosely in a cup. Press it down. Now add some more brown sugar. Press it down again. Observe how much more goes into the "pressed down" version of measuring.

What is better: to give or to receive? Why? Share a time that you have given a gift to someone. How did you feel after giving it?

Pray together: Dear Lord, You have given us so much. You gave us Your only Son, Jesus. With that gift You have given us forgiveness and eternal life. How can we thank You? Let our thanks for Your great gift move us to give generously to others. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

