

ADULT STUDY GUIDE

Unit 9: Jesus Sends the Church



ADULT STUDY GUIDE

This is the adult component of the Enduring Faith Bible Curriculum. This piece follows the **same scope and sequence** as the other levels: **Early Childhood, Elementary, and Youth**. This alignment presents some amazing opportunities.

- First of all, it helps all ages speak a **common theological language**.
- Second, it helps God's people build an understanding of the **lifelong nature of learning God's Word**—that we don't just learn the narratives once or twice before moving on to other matters.
- Third, and critical to this curriculum, it helps **equip households** to teach the faith at home.

If parents and other adults spend time meditating and discussing the narratives of the Bible while the younger generations in the congregation study the same narratives, then there will be greater opportunity throughout the week to **reflect together** upon what the narrative says and what it means. In other words, studying the narratives of the Bible as adults is a blessing in and of itself, but it also helps **equip parents and faith leaders** to be more confident and feel empowered to extend those conversations into the household.

FEATURES OF THIS STUDY

This study guide is meant to provide some guidelines and springboards for discussion in your Bible study groups.

- The **first page** of each lesson provides the central focus statements, not only for the Adult level, but also for the other levels. Use this as a way to orient yourself to the **main themes and goals** of the lessons across all levels. You'll also find helpful **tips for preparation**.
- The **middle two pages** begin with an introductory **"Launch"** section, which provides prompts for beginning the study and an open-ended reflection question to kick off group discussion. The following **"Learn & Live"** section breaks down the text into three to five narrative sections. Each one of these sections has some additional commentary, a reflection question, and some helps to better understand possible answers to the reflection question. The **"Leave"** section provides prompts for a final reflection question and some other considerations to close the lesson. The **sidebars** include leader tips and bonus activities to help you think through options for extending the lesson.
- The **final page** of each lesson is the student piece. Copy one lesson handout per learner, and distribute this at the beginning of class.

TIPS FOR USE

This study guide is designed primarily to help give you, the leader, some thoughts and prompts to help guide and assist facilitation of the class. Below are some tips for how to use it.

- This is meant to be a Bible study, so each learner will need access to a Bible. Encourage your learners to bring their own to class.
- Don't neglect the lesson handout. The primary reason for this page is to create some space for each learner to reflect and engage the questions on his or her own. Often, any given group will have one or two vocal learners and others who may not speak up. Consider using techniques to help engage all learners in the process, such as having each learner write down his or her reflection privately before sharing, having each learner share with a partner before opening up discussion, or changing the seating arrangements to create small groups.
- Use the opening reflection question as a time to build community. Adult learners, generally speaking, desire to share their experience with one another, and this lesson starter provides an opportunity for this.
- For each narrative section, ask volunteers to read the text aloud while the rest follow along. Don't force anyone; adults, like children and youth, may be self-conscious about their reading or public speaking ability.
- Download the Enduring Faith Page from the online digital resource center and hand out copies to your learners. Near the end of the lesson, talk through the prompts, which help the learners extend the lessons in their households throughout the week. Encourage learners to take this page home along with the lesson handout to be used throughout the week.

A REVEALING RESTORATION

Jesus Appears
in Galilee
John 21:1–19
AD 33

BIBLE TRUTH

Jesus forgives and sends us.

LEARNER GOAL

I can consider how the events of the text help me better understand what it means that Jesus forgives me and sends me.

BIBLE VERSE

Jesus said to him, “Feed My sheep.” John 21:17

LAW & GOSPEL

God demands that I love Him and none other, solely and completely. **Even though I deny Him, God forgives me and assures me of His love for Christ’s sake.**

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

Peter, James, John, Thomas, and a few of the other disciples fish all night on the Sea of Tiberias without catching anything. At dawn, Jesus appears on the beach and tells them to cast their nets on the right side of the boat. Immediately, the nets fill to overflowing, and John realizes Jesus is there. Peter swims ashore to see Jesus, who prepares breakfast. Addressing Peter directly, Jesus asks three times, “Do you love Me?” With each question, Peter becomes more distressed. Through these questions, the Lord restores and reinstates Peter to lead His Church.

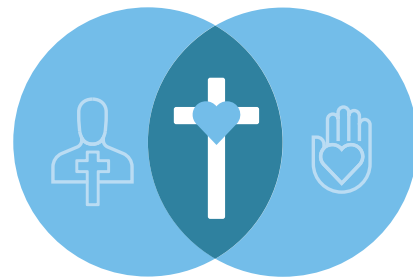
LESSON PREP

BASIC Read the narrative and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible (TLSB)*.

MORE TIME Read **John 21:20–25**.

IN DEPTH Read the section “Enigmatic Sayings” in *TLSB*, page 1775.

This lesson can be used for Easter.



CONNECTING IDENTITY & CALLING

IDENTITY: WHO AM I?

God reveals Himself to me as my risen and living Savior.

CALLING: WHY AM I HERE?

I can trust God to forgive and restore me through the death and resurrection of Jesus, my Savior.

GROWING IN FAITH FOR LIFE

See how this lesson builds on previous learning for each age.

ADULT

I can consider how the events of the text help me better understand what it means that Jesus forgives me and sends me.

YOUTH

I can relate how Jesus forgives and sends Peter to how He forgives and sends me.

ELEMENTARY

I understand that Jesus forgives me and sends me out to tell the Good News to others.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

I know Jesus loves me and wants me to tell others about Him.



LEADER NOTE

In many ways, forgiveness as a concept can feel cheap. It's easy to throw the term around like forgiveness is meaningless. At times, though, forgiveness can really mean a lot. For those with guilty consciences or burdens of past mistakes, hearing "I forgive you" can be a massive relief. Encourage your learners to write down words or phrases that describe what being forgiven by somebody else feels like. Learners can share with small groups or in the large group to look for patterns. Then direct them to the lesson, where we see what it means that Jesus forgives and sends His people to do His work.



BONUS ACTIVITY

Consider reading over or directing your learners to **Luke 5:1–11**. As a group, consider the parallels between the first time Jesus calls the disciples to be fishers of men and the narrative from this lesson. How do they complement each other?

LAUNCH

WELCOME

Welcome the group, and open in prayer. It may be a good time to take prayer requests and pray, either now or at the conclusion.

REVIEW

Review the Bible Truth, Bible Verse, and Learner Goal. Then, begin with the opening question.

OPENING REFLECTION

In your own words, describe what it feels like when somebody forgives you for something wrong you did against them.

LEARN & LIVE

JOHN 21:1–3

BIBLE COMMENTARY

Now that Jesus has risen from the dead and appeared to His disciples and many others, He sends them ahead to Galilee to await Him there. As they wait, Peter has the idea of going fishing, and a number of named and unnamed disciples agree to fish with him. It is unclear the extent to which the fishermen disciples continued their trade of fishing over the last few years of following Jesus. Regardless, Peter, the man of action, decides to spend the night fishing. His friends, notably John and James from the old family fishing business and now-believing Thomas, join him. Jesus will use this opportunity to show these fishermen how they will be fishers of men from here on out.

REFLECTION QUESTION

Is it surprising to you that the disciples decided to go fishing here? Why or why not?

REFLECTION HELPS

Answers will vary. On one hand, it may seem strange that they go fishing as they had just seen the Lord. On the other hand, they were waiting for more directions from Jesus, and Peter, a man of action, likely wanted to use the time wisely.

JOHN 21:4–8

BIBLE COMMENTARY

The men fish all night yet catch nothing. Though perhaps an unusual thought to us, it was not unusual during Jesus' day to fish at night. Yet they fish all night and, shockingly, they catch nothing! Jesus appears in the dim light on the shore, and the disciples do not recognize Him. He calls to them, using the term "children," which is an address that does not indicate condescension but instead friendliness, like "lads," or "guys." He commands them to cast the net on the right side of the boat and, surprisingly, they all agree and catch a massive quantity of fish. This is so shocking because the disciples likely had cast the net on that side of the boat many times during the night and caught nothing. In addition, the bizarre nature of the scene continues as the disciples unquestioningly follow the unsolicited advice of a stranger on the shore. Jesus is in control, knows what He's doing, and provides for His followers. John, recognizing the miracle, identifies Christ. Peter, displaying his impulsiveness, quickly rearranges his garments for a swim to shore and dives in, leaving the other disciples to drag the net to shore.

REFLECTION QUESTION

Identify different ways, from the text, that Jesus shows His control of the entire situation. How is this significant in our understanding of His mission to the Church?

REFLECTION HELPS

Jesus comes to the disciples, calls to them, commands them to act, and the disciples follow. As the Church, we recognize Jesus is at work and in control and, like Peter, we follow and listen to Him in all things.

JOHN 21:9–14

BIBLE COMMENTARY

When the disciples make landfall, they are presented with an amazing scene. Jesus is there and has already prepared a charcoal fire with fish on it and bread for their breakfast. He provides enough for all the disciples. He then says to bring some of the fish that they caught, which possibly means that Jesus commands the disciples to first sort through their miraculous haul of fish, sorting out the larger fish they will keep from the smaller fish they will throw back. When the disciples do this, they find 153 fish. Though some have tried to find a symbolic rationale for the inclusion of this number, it is best to read this as simply a poignant memory from John who couldn't believe what he saw at the time. In addition, the fact that the net isn't torn alludes to Christ's hand in providing this miraculous catch for them. The facts make it clear that it is Christ; the disciples need not question His identity. He who provides everything that's needed for the fishermen will also provide everything they need to fulfill their callings as fishers of men. This is the third time Jesus appears to His disciples in this prominent way, though He has revealed Himself to individuals and small groups in the weeks since His resurrection.

REFLECTION QUESTION

Looking over the text, in what ways did Jesus provide for His disciples here? How might these correlate to us today in the Church?

REFLECTION HELPS

Jesus provided breakfast for His disciples, passing it out to them and revealing Himself to them. Life in the Church today is about receiving the gifts that Christ graciously gives out to us—most important, forgiveness, life, and salvation in the Means of Grace.

JOHN 21:15–19

BIBLE COMMENTARY

After breakfast, Jesus and Peter have a conversation, wherein Jesus asks Peter if he loves Him three times and Peter responds by confessing his love for Christ. This is generally interpreted as Jesus reinstating Peter after Peter's three denials. Then, Jesus informs Peter of the cost of discipleship, or following Him. In an enigmatic saying, Jesus alludes to Peter's future crucifixion. Peter had previously denied and abandoned Christ in the garden; now Peter would follow Christ even to the cross. Even to us, Jesus says, "Follow Me."

REFLECTION QUESTION

What does Jesus tell Peter to do and expect to be done to him? How does the Church follow that same mission today?

REFLECTION HELPS

Peter is to feed and tend Christians with the Means of Grace, expect to carry his cross even unto death, and follow Christ. Today, pastors administer Word and Sacrament publicly in the congregation. And all baptized believers are called to follow Christ in their own lives.

LEAVE

FINAL REFLECTION

Consider how the events of the text help you better understand what it means that Jesus forgives you and sends you.

TAKE HOME

Equip your learners with ideas for taking the lesson into their households by giving them access to the Enduring Faith Pages.

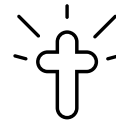
CLOSE WITH PRAYER

If you haven't yet, take prayer requests, or encourage a volunteer from the class to pray as you prepare to leave.



BONUS ACTIVITY

Jesus' distribution of the fish and the bread is reminiscent of Jesus' feeding the five thousand in **John 6:1–15**. If you have time, read over this miracle and discuss how the feeding of the five thousand sheds light on Jesus' provision for His people and what that means in this narrative. Also, consider how Christ continues to distribute His Means of Grace among His Church today, and what these two narratives continue to uncover for us about Christ's gracious character.



CHRIST CONNECTION

Christ forgives us our sins and sends us into the world to proclaim the Gospel.



LEADER NOTE

Jesus controlled the situation, provided for His disciples, forgave them, and told them to follow Him. Though we are not the Twelve, we, too, are forgiven and follow Jesus in our daily discipleship in our different vocations.

ADULT
Unit 9
LESSON HANDOUT
Lesson 1

Jesus forgives and sends us.

I can consider how the events of the text help me better understand what it means that Jesus forgives me and sends me.

Jesus said to him, “Feed My sheep.” John 21:17

Jesus Appears in Galilee

John 21:1–19

NOTES

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A grid of 100 small blue dots arranged in 10 rows and 10 columns. The dots are evenly spaced and form a rectangular pattern.

A WALKING WONDER

Peter and John
Heal a Man Who
Can't Walk
Acts 3:1–16; 4:5–22
AD 34

BIBLE TRUTH

The Holy Spirit empowers God's people to show mercy.

LEARNER GOAL

I can express how God empowered Peter and John to show mercy and how He continues to empower the Church to do the same today.

BIBLE VERSE

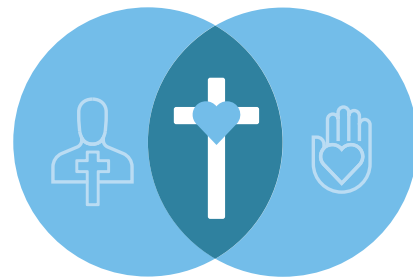
Give thanks to the LORD! Psalm 106:1

LAW & GOSPEL

I show symptoms of living in a fallen world full of disability and illness. **Through His Son, God gives me forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation—the cure for all sin.**

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

A man who had never been able to walk lies by the Beautiful Gate and begs Peter and John for alms. Having no gold or silver to give him, they offer him something better—complete healing. Leaping for joy, the man praises God for His miraculous healing, and Peter uses the opportunity to teach about the true Savior. The Jewish Council asks Peter and John by whose power they performed this miracle, so they witness concerning the power of the risen Christ. Being warned against speaking further concerning Jesus, Peter and John assert they must continue to speak the Gospel.



CONNECTING IDENTITY & CALLING

IDENTITY: WHO AM I?

God heals my greatest illness, sin and death, through Christ's death and resurrection.

CALLING: WHY AM I HERE?

I can trust God's promises to heal me and make me whole.

GROWING IN FAITH FOR LIFE

See how this lesson builds on previous learning for each age.

ADULT

I can express how God empowered Peter and John to show mercy and how He continues to empower the Church to do the same today.

YOUTH

I can demonstrate acts of mercy through the power of the Holy Spirit.

ELEMENTARY

I understand that the Holy Spirit helps me to show mercy to others.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

I know Jesus loves me and helps me show love for others.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read the narrative and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible (TLSB)*.

MORE TIME Read Acts 3:17–26 in *TLSB* with study notes.

IN DEPTH Read the article “The Acts of Whom?” in *TLSB*, page 1841.



LEADER NOTE

If your learners are confused, encourage them to think of the immediate neighborhood surrounding your place of worship. Because of the increased ability to travel, and a variety of other factors, it's not uncommon for church members to not live in the immediate community of the congregation. Challenge them to think about the actual needs of their surrounding community, not just saying general statements but really reflecting. Encourage them to work in groups or pairs to come up with the greatest need. Then discuss the role of showing mercy and care in the life of the Christian and the life of the Church, pointing them to the narrative.



BONUS ACTIVITY

If you have time, consider reading **Acts 3:17–26**, where Peter extends his sermon. Consider what else Peter's words proclaim about God's epic plan of salvation revealed throughout Scripture.

LAUNCH

WELCOME

Welcome the group, and open in prayer. It may be a good time to take prayer requests and pray, either now or at the conclusion.

REVIEW

Review the Bible Truth, Bible Verse, and Learner Goal. Then, begin with the opening question.

OPENING REFLECTION

In your opinion, what is the single greatest physical need in your community right now? Why?

LEARN & LIVE

ACTS 3:1–10

BIBLE COMMENTARY

Peter and John, two pillars of the Church and obvious good friends, daily go to the temple to pray. The disciples continue to attend the morning and evening temple prayers after Jesus' ascension, and only cease their regular attendance of these prayers when persecution eventually prevents them. The Christian faith is not a new thing, but a continuation of God's fulfilled promises in Christ. On their way, they pass a beggar man, more than forty years old (Acts 4:22), who had been disabled from birth. Though they had likely passed him many times before, this time they stop. The man expects something from them, but Peter and John do not give silver or gold. They give him something much greater. Peter declares, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, that he rise and walk. Whereas the beggars' hand had been previously extended to receive alms, it now receives Peter's hand to help him arise! The man is instantly and miraculously healed, and he immediately moves throughout the temple praising God. It is not the power of man or even of faith that heals. It is solely the power and choice of Christ, who graciously has mercy on the man in need.

REFLECTION QUESTION

What are the different effects of the use of Jesus' name here? What benefits does the Church today receive in Jesus' name?

REFLECTION HELPS

The man is healed in the name of Jesus, and then he rejoices, praising God for the healing. Not only do we receive Jesus' gifts through the Means of Grace, we call upon Jesus' name in prayer and praise. Everything depends on Jesus.

ACTS 3:11–16

BIBLE COMMENTARY

The healed man now clings to Peter and John. There is no way that he wouldn't draw attention to them, not only by his miraculous healing but also by his very exuberance. And here, within the temple, Peter delivers an awesome speech. He points not to himself but to the promises of God fulfilled in Christ. Peter recounts the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, and the reality that Peter and John are simply witnesses of God's mercy through Christ. Just like in Jesus' life, the miracle of healing is not meant to be an end unto itself, but instead a means through which the Gospel can be freely proclaimed.

REFLECTION QUESTION

From your observation of the text, how can Peter's speech serve as an example for the Church today as to how to share Christ with others?

REFLECTION HELPS

Peter pointed the hearers away from his power and instead pointed them to God's faithfulness throughout time to Christ. In addition, he understood the context of the hearers. We, too, work to understand our hearers and point all people to Christ.

ACTS 4:5–12

BIBLE COMMENTARY

The great sermon of Peter catches the attention of the priests, the Sadducees, and the captain of the temple guard, who arrest Peter and John and put them into custody until the council could be gathered the next morning. Though there could be no denying the miraculous healing that had occurred, the Sadducees who denied the resurrection are greatly annoyed that Peter and John claim that the miracle happened by the power of the resurrected Jesus. It is also important to remember that the same council and gathering of the high priestly family had been the ones behind Jesus' trial and death not that long before this episode. The stakes are high for Peter and John. Yet, when Peter is called upon to give witness to the name by which the miracle occurred, and thus incriminate himself, Peter does not shy away from speaking the truth. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, Peter confesses that Jesus, whom the leaders themselves sentenced to crucifixion, is risen, is the one who healed the disabled man, and is the sole source of salvation for all mankind. Peter, the one who had confessed Jesus as the Christ before Christ, now confesses Christ before the world. So the Church has continued to bear witness ever since.

REFLECTION QUESTION

Identify different words and events in this text that point to God's great plan of salvation for us in Christ. What does this scene show us about life as God's called people in Christ?

REFLECTION HELPS

Answers include the proclamation of Christ leading to many coming to faith, the same rulers who crucified Jesus now questioning Peter and John, Peter and John confessing Christ, and the mention of Jesus as the cornerstone. As God's people today, we will run into opposition, but we are to continue proclaiming the Gospel.

ACTS 4:13–22

BIBLE COMMENTARY

The council is baffled by the boldness and eloquence of Peter, and they know they have no case to punish as the miracle has occurred. Nevertheless, they command Peter and John to be silent. The apostles refuse, saying they can only speak what they know. Peter and John are released, but the opposition to the Way will only continue to build in the upcoming years.

REFLECTION QUESTION

What can we learn from the narrative here about both the nature of the opposition Christians face for Christ and how to stand firm in that opposition?

REFLECTION HELPS

The religious leaders commanded Peter and John to be silent. The devil, the world, and our sinful flesh continually tempt us to do likewise. Peter and John, however, boldly confess the faith. We, too, can learn to obey God rather than man.

LEAVE

FINAL REFLECTION

Express how God empowered Peter and John to show mercy and how He continues to empower the Church to do the same today.

TAKE HOME

Equip your learners with ideas for taking the lesson into their households by giving them access to the Enduring Faith Pages.

CLOSE WITH PRAYER

If you haven't yet, take prayer requests, or encourage a volunteer from the class to pray before you leave.



BONUS ACTIVITY

If you have time, consider either reading over or pointing your learners to the Fifth Commandment in *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* (2017). Brainstorm together different ways that people in society uphold and reject the Fifth Commandment, and how that compares to how God has called His Church to show mercy.



CHRIST CONNECTION

Christ came into the world to rescue His people from sin, death, and the power of the devil. He did this only out of His mercy and grace.



LEADER NOTE

Peter and John cared for the man who could not walk, performing a miracle, but they also cared for the souls of those who witnessed, proclaiming the truth of God's Word even in the face of opposition.

A WALKING WONDER

BIBLE TRUTH

The Holy Spirit empowers God's people to show mercy.

LEARNER GOAL

I can express how God empowered Peter and John to show mercy and how He continues to empower the Church to do the same today.

BIBLE VERSE

Give thanks to the LORD! Psalm 106:1

ADULT
Unit 9
LESSON HANDOUT
Lesson 2

Peter and John Heal a Man Who Can't Walk

Acts 3:1–16; 4:5–22

REFLECTIONS

OPENING REFLECTION In your opinion, what is the single greatest physical need in your community right now? Why?

ACTS 3:1-10 What are the different effects of the use of Jesus' name here? What benefits does the Church today receive in Jesus' name?

ACTS 3:11-16 From your observation of the text, how can Peter's speech serve as an example for the Church today as to how to share Christ with others?

ACTS 4:5–12 Identify different words and events in this text that point to God’s great plan of salvation for us in Christ. What does this scene show us about life as God’s called people in Christ?

ACTS 4:13–22 What can we learn from the narrative here about both the nature of the opposition Christians face for Christ and how to stand firm in that opposition?

FINAL REFLECTION Express how God empowered Peter and John to show mercy and how He continues to empower the Church to do the same today.

NOTES

This image shows a full page of dot grid paper. The background is a very light gray. Overlaid on this background is a precise grid of small, solid blue dots. The dots are arranged in perfectly straight horizontal and vertical rows, creating a series of small squares across the entire page. There are no margins, text, or other markings present.