

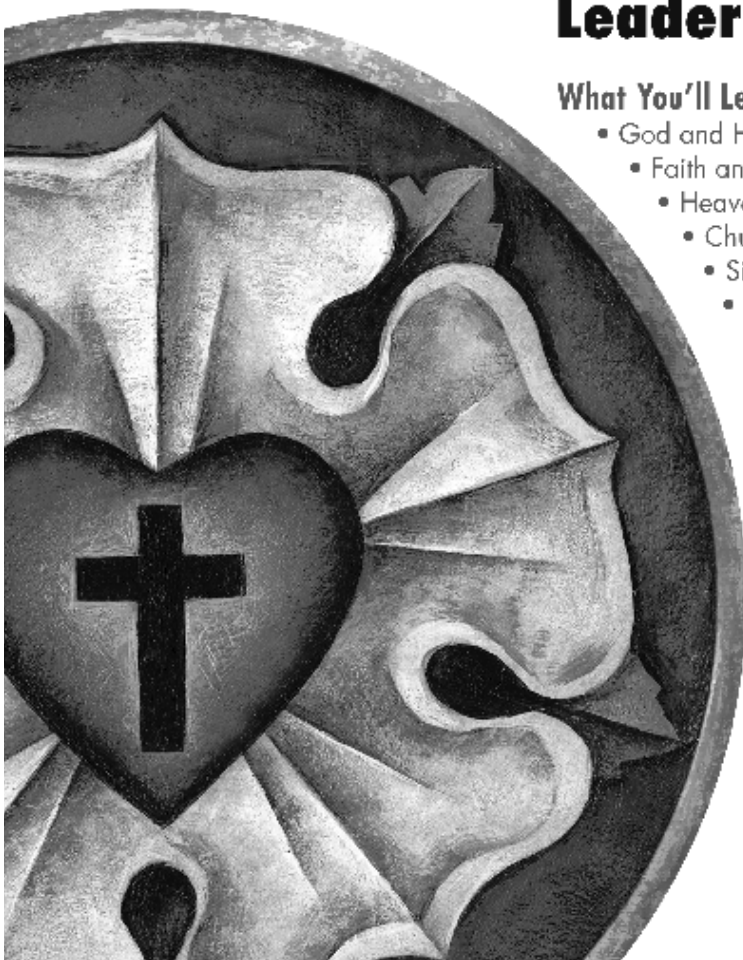
Lutheranism 101

THE COURSE

Leader's Guide

What You'll Learn About:

- God and His Son
- Faith and Belief
- Heaven and Hell
- Church and Fellowship
- Sin and Forgiveness
- and much more!





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CHAPTER 1

WHO IS GOD? PP. 26–30

REVIEW

1. We know God exists by looking at creation (natural knowledge)—p. 26.

We know God exists by having a sense of right and wrong (natural knowledge)—p. 26.

We know God exists because God shows Himself to us through Scripture (revealed knowledge)—p. 27.

2. Verses 1–2 and 38–40 may be the most troubling. Direct the student to Matthew 25:31–46, the separation of the sheep and the goats. The point that Jesus is making has nothing to do with the intrinsic value of good works, but everything to do with the fact that without faith in Christ, there are no good works. The faith summarized in the Athanasian Creed is foundational to the spiritual life of the Christian. Though works do not save, where there is no faith there are no works (cf James 2:14–26).

CONNECT

3. Although God's people may not understand the evil circumstances that come crashing into lives, God is able to use such events to bring about good according to His fatherly wisdom.

PONDER

4. Examples are many. Some may be the following:

Any of the Roman or Greek gods who carry on like an episode out of *Desperate Housewives*. They are fickle, unpredictable, and at times cruel. The comparison to man's life is obvious.

Allah is distant and stingy in his dispensation of heaven, giving eternal bliss to "martyrs" (actually those who commit suicide in his name). Man is by nature stingy and possesses no mercy or grace.

"Mother Earth" who, though an old goddess, has resurfaced as a goddess quite in vogue. She may be appeased by hyper-ecological activity with a New

Age emphasis on prayer and sacrifice to her. Works-righteousness is at the core. Man can do something to save himself—and maybe the earth!

5. Psalm 139:13–14 (p. 30): The psalmist acknowledges that his God is amazingly creative and intimately knows him to the very core.

1 Corinthians 8:1–6: There is only one God, not many gods. Both the Father and the Son are equally involved in creation and in sustaining creation.

Hebrews 3:1–6: Both the “house” of creation and the “house” of faith are built by God and sustained by Jesus Christ.

1 Kings 18:20–29: Elijah rightly describes Baal in terms of a god people would invent. In a humorous, but also sad description, Elijah shows that Baal just isn’t going to do anything for his followers. Baal is a dead idol.

6. Answers will vary, but listen for such themes as the continual presence of God, that God knows us intimately, that God is involved in our lives, that Jesus took on our flesh and became one of us. God in Christ Jesus knows what our lives are like.

CHAPTER 2

THAT'S A SIN PP. 31–35

REVIEW

1. Sin is thought of as illicit fun, something deserved, but dampened by the rules of religion.

Sin is the bad that happens in life, or the devil is behind it all.

The definition of sin doesn't apply to me; I have no accountability for sin.

2. *Original sin*: the inherited corruption from Adam and its tendency to sin; the lack of fear and trust in God. Original sin is the devil's work. Original sin is the inexpressible impairment and corruption of the human nature.

Actual sin: every thought, word, or action conflicting with God's Law; may be done intentionally, involuntarily or even ignorantly.

3. (Psalm 7:14) That the wicked man "conceives" evil shows that the evil is inside of him; sin is a part of his very fiber. This original sin grows (is "pregnant with mischief") and shows its true colors when "birth" comes: actual sins are born.

(James 1:12–15) God tempts no one. He is not the source of sin. Our own innate, inherited, original sin—our "own desire"—gives birth to actual sins. All of this gives birth to death.

CONNECT

4. (Jeremiah 33:8) "I will cleanse them from all the guilt of their sin against Me, and I will forgive all the guilt of their sin and rebellion against Me." (Gospel)

(Ezekiel 18:30) "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, declares the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions, lest iniquity be your ruin." (Law)

(Hosea 6:1) "Come, let us return to the LORD; (Repentance)

for He has torn us, (Law)

that He may heal us; (Gospel)

He has struck us down, (Law)

and He will bind us up. (Gospel)

PONDER

5. The First Commandment is broken because God's holiness is not feared, loved, or trusted.

The Second is broken because of the careless use of God's name.

The Third is broken for not praying for God's help in the couples' marriage.

The Fourth is broken because the children will not be okay. It will be difficult for them to honor one or both parents.

The Fifth is broken because no bodily help is offered. A marriage is being "killed."

The Sixth is broken for perpetuating the problem rather than offering to help heal the brokenness.

Stealing or wasting time on the job breaks the Seventh Commandment.

The Eighth is broken for hurting someone's reputation.

The Ninth is broken by not helping the neighbors keep their property, which may end up having to be divided in a divorce.

The Tenth is broken by not urging a spouse to stay in the marriage.

CHAPTER 3

IT'S ALL ABOUT JESUS, PART 1 PP. 36–42

REVIEW

1. First Pillar (pp. 38–39): Jesus' birth is unique because He was born of a virgin named Mary. Jesus is unique because He is God the Father's Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Second Pillar (pp. 39–40): At the center of what Jesus has done is His submission to the Father's will, His death upon the cross, and His resurrection from the dead.

2. The benefits can include:

- a. The Creeds defend the congregation from heresy creeping in.
- b. The Creeds remind the congregation what is at the core of the Christian faith.
- c. The Creeds speak clearly in a concise form to visitors what Christianity is and what the congregation believes.

CONNECT

3. (Matthew 16:13–20) The disciples offer many answers, just as do people today, but only the God-given answer of Simon Peter is correct: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (v. 16).

(Matthew 27:54) Even in death, upon the cross, proof that Jesus is the Son of God is evident to the centurion.

(1 John 1:1–3; 5:20) John, along with the other disciples, is an eyewitness to all Jesus said and did. John speaks clearly of Jesus as the Father's Son (1:3), that Jesus is the Son of God and true God (5:20).

There are countless other verses. Consult a study Bible for help.

4. Help may be needed in locating some of the Old Testament names. Some may be more difficult than others, but provide encouragement and guidance.

- a.
- b.
- c.

PONDER

5. Answers will vary based on personal experience and are likely to be subjective. If time permits, this is a section that can lead to good follow-up questions and discussion of the person of Jesus and the nature of faith.

- a.

- b.

6. One point of comfort is that when we are tempted, we are never alone in our temptation, as Satan would have us believe. Jesus has been there before us and now stands with us in our temptation, providing the way out and the strength to persevere. Hebrews 2:14–18 also states that Jesus “is able to help those who are being tempted.” Some may be bothered that Jesus knows what it is like to be tempted by murder, sexual abuse, alcoholism, homosexuality, plus many others. And yet the words of Hebrews stand—Jesus was tempted in every way. Such good news brings comfort to every sinner.

CHAPTER 4

IT'S ALL ABOUT JESUS, PART 2 PP. 43–44

REVIEW

1. (Isaiah 45:17, 25) An eternity of shame is taken away by the salvation on the cross of Jesus, a salvation which does not expire but is everlasting. The Lord alone saves Israel, that is, all people of all times who belong to God because of Jesus.

(1 Corinthians 6:9–11) St. Paul clearly states that those who persist in sin—and he lays out many of those sins—will not be a part of God's kingdom. The transition is found, though, in the words, "And such were some of you." The former life of sin is now in the past. New lives have begun in Christ. That life is a baptismal life ("you were washed"). That life is a holy life ("you were sanctified"). That life is a life made right in, by and through Jesus ("you were justified").

2. (Matthew 19:16–22) The young man tries to justify himself by what he thinks he has done, by his keeping of the Ten Commandments. Yet he cannot succeed, for his love of his neighbor does not exceed the love of his possessions, and therefore he fails.

(John 8:31–38) The Jews who had previously believed in Jesus try to make the case that they don't need Jesus because they are descendents of Abraham. Jesus acknowledges their ancestry (v. 37), but His concern is their corrupt hearts, which only He can change.

CONNECT

3. For instance, if one solely focuses on the teaching of the existence of angels, a person might be led quite far away from the teaching of justification, that Jesus died for the sins of the world and has made sinful people right with God. One best speaks of angels if it is pointed out that the message of the angels (the announcement of Jesus' birth, His name, His resurrection) all has to do with the redeeming, justifying work of the Savior. If the focus is elsewhere, then the heart of Christianity stops beating and the one true faith becomes another religion of the Law.

PONDER

4. Jesus tells this parable. Jesus speaks this parable “to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt” (Luke 18:9). In the telling of the parable, Jesus is the one who declares the tax collector justified (Luke 18:14). When Jesus was sacrificed on the cross, the curtain of the temple was torn in two (Matthew 27:51). The separation of God and man is undone by Jesus’ reconciling death upon the cross. Even as Jesus in His own parable declares the tax collector “justified,” so also does Jesus declare you justified, that is, forgiven because of His sacrifice on the altar of the cross.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: GETTING RIGHT WITH GOD

PP. 45–50

LOOKING IT UP

1. a. There is a process that marks out the one designated to die for sin (vv. 5, 9, 15).
 - b. There is the shedding of blood (vv. 15, 18–19).
 - c. There is atonement made for sins by the blood of the animals (vv. 15–19).

2. Sacrifices in the Old Testament needed to be repeated time and time again. The sacrifices ended on the cross when Jesus was sacrificed once and for all for all sins.

LINKING IT UP

3. a. God
 - b. Sin
 - c. Jesus
 - d. Justification
 - e. Pastors

4. These five points are memorable enough that a person could easily explain (1) who God is, (2) what sin is, (3) who Jesus is and what He has done to solve the problem of sin, (4) that this solution is called “justification,” and (5) that this good news comes to us first and foremost through the Office of the Holy Ministry, that is, through our pastors.

CHAPTER 5

IT'S THE END OF THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT PP. 51–58

REVIEW

1.

Psalm 148:13 kingdom of glory

Psalm 67:1–2 kingdom of grace

Psalm 62:11 kingdom of power

Psalm 68:28 kingdom of power

Psalm 86:5–6 kingdom of grace

Psalm 135:6 kingdom of power

Psalm 29:1–3 kingdom of glory

Psalm 33:4–5 kingdom of grace

CONNECT

2. Jesus did not come to establish an earthly kingdom, though by virtue of being King of the universe, the earth and everything in it is already His. Jesus came to establish a kingdom of grace, a people forgiven by and through His death on the cross. Above the cross was the statement, “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews” (John 19:19). To the Jews was given the promise of the Savior, and there He is, reigning from the cross. The kingdom of grace flows from that cross and King.

PONDER

3. (Matthew 28:20b) Jesus will not be confined to a literal 1,000 year time frame. He is with us through His Word and Sacrament continually and always.

(Hebrews 13:8) The writer of Hebrews reminds us that Jesus was there in the past, He is here with us now, and He will be with us forever, not just a misunderstood 1,000 year reign.

(Haggai 1:13) The Lord is not sometimes with us and then at other times not with us. The Lord’s message is short and direct, “I am with you.”

(Genesis 28:15) These words were spoken by the Lord to Jacob on Jacob’s way from Beersheba to Haran. The same words spoken to Jacob while he slept are also words spoken to you. Jesus will not just come for a 1,000-year earthly visit and then leave. Jesus is always with us. Jesus will accomplish for us what He set out to do, that is, spread His word to the ends of the earth and usher in the end of the world where the land of heaven is ours.

4. If Jesus waits with us for the end of all things, then we have absolutely nothing to fear. In addition, whatever the tabloids and televangelists predict, their soothsaying can only be wrong in comparison with the waiting Lord Jesus' patience for the Father to bring an end to all things.

5. Assure students that all judgment for God's people is seen through the ultimate, final judgment of Jesus on the cross. No stain of sin remains before the judgment throne of God.

(2 Timothy 4:8) St. Paul confidently trusted that in judgment he would receive the crown of righteousness, which is pure gift from Jesus. Paul did not lay up this crown for himself. Jesus did.

(John 5:19–24) Jesus has been given all judgment (v. 22). The Word of God and the Spirit create faith in the believer's heart. That believer has eternal life. There is no fear of judgment, then, for in Baptism the believer has already passed from death to life. See Romans 6:1–11 for further consolation and strength of faith in the face of judgment.

CHAPTER 6

THE LAST STOP PP. 59–62

REVIEW

1. (Verse 55) “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” are rhetorical because death cannot answer. Death is dead! These words are Gospel because with Jesus’ resurrection in clear view, death has no victory and the sting of death is blunted. (Verse 56) “The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the Law.” These words are, obviously, Law. (Verse 57) “But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” These words are pure Gospel. On the cross Jesus took the full brunt of sin and death. All of the power of sin was unleashed upon Him. But the empty grave and the physically raised body of Christ Jesus prove death no longer has power over Him. Why know the difference? There is no true explanation of death without the Law. There is no hope from death without the Gospel.

2. (Law) “For the wages of sin is death”

(Gospel) “. . . but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Physical death is sad enough, but eternal death is disastrous. That eternal life is a free gift, something not earned, something with no strings attached, is great news, the best news. The Gospel part of the sentence supersedes the Law part because Jesus fulfilled the wages of sin by Himself dying. Only He can give eternal life.

CONNECT

3. Festus is skeptical of Paul. He cannot easily distinguish between the Roman kingdom and the kingdom of heaven. How convenient it is, then, when Agrippa and Bernice show up. Paul exclaims, “King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe” (Acts 26:27). How close—and yet so far—is King Agrippa from the kingdom of heaven. “And Agrippa said to Paul, “In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?” What is necessary, then, is the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. Agrippa resists, but he also

leaves with Paul's words ringing in his ears. Also needed is prayerful patience and heartfelt concern for a lost soul.

PONDER

4. Answers may vary, some spoken, some not. Be sensitive and caring to heartbreaking events from which God's people await eternal joy and comfort.

5. Give participants time to discuss their personal pictures of heaven. Help lead them to see how earthbound our imaginations are to only what we experience. Lead them to see how much more is shown to us concerning heaven—an eternal banquet, eternal peace and comfort, the new Garden of Eden, and the end of death; at the end of our life, faith delivers to us all God intended for us in Christ Jesus.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER:

THE CERTAINTY OF FAITH PP. 63–66

LOOKING IT UP

1. Jesus' Word combined with His risen flesh and blood convinces Mary Magdalene and the disciples. As Thomas stands in unbelief before Jesus, it is the evidence of Jesus' resurrection—His own flesh and blood and words—that convinces Thomas and strengthens Thomas' faltering faith.

LINKING IT UP

2. Lutherans: Mercy is promised for Christ's sake; through faith in Jesus we have obtained access to the Father and are reconciled to Him.

Roman Catholics: Christ's sacrifice on the cross only gets one so far in salvation. Faith in the crucifixion is only part of saving work. The rest is to be done by us.

CHAPTER 7

THE CONUNDRUM OF FAITH PP. 70–72

REVIEW

1. Ultimately all earthly knowledge is folly. Man can never know or understand everything. But there is one thing of which man can be certain, and that is the love of God shown in Christ Jesus. Jesus said and did so much that the evangelist John has to limit himself in his writing. The world could not contain all the books—and that is saying something!

2. Conversations with unbelievers need to be calm, patient, and well thought out. One doesn't have to have all the answers. In fact, it speaks well of the Christian to admit he doesn't know everything about Scripture, because we cannot "know" or make sense of it all—some things simply cannot be known, understood or reasoned with, we must simply accept them in faith.

The first two Scripture passages deal with creation, which is continually under attack in academic circles. The third passage from Isaiah challenges the world of knowledge and reason with the fact that it will all wither and fade away, but in the end only God's Word matters. Only God's Word will forever stand.

CONNECT

3. The Athanasian Creed makes reasonable statements within the context of Scripture. At some point, particularly those concerning the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, truths we do not fully comprehend are stated.

A clay pot has a very limited understanding of its design, purpose, or the plan the Molder (the Potter) has. It becomes pure folly for the pot to think it is over the Potter, or for the creature to think it has power and authority over the Creator.

4. People might offer the following: dirt to make Adam; a rib to make Eve; Noah and his family to build the ark (otherwise insignificant people and few in number among a world of unbelievers); Abraham and Sarah (people well past their child-rearing years); Joseph (a young man despised by his brothers and

sold into a faraway land); the water of Baptism; the words of ordinary prophets and pastors; the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper; the blood of Jesus shed upon the cross to make us clean and white.

PONDER

5. One well-known example is trying to make sense of the Real Presence in the Lord's Supper. Using reason instead of faith, one ends up only with bread and wine that cannot hold the body and blood of Jesus (Reformed tradition), or one ends up with only the body and blood and no bread and wine at all (the Roman Catholic tradition). Another example is the tension of being both "saint" and "sinner." One either ends up with no hope of being perfect in the eyes of God through Jesus' holy, saving work, or one ends up declaring one's self to be perfect and holy already. A last example might be an unhealthy preoccupation with angels rather than the Creator and Sender of the angels.

CHAPTER 8

WHAT IS THE CHURCH? PP. 73–81

REVIEW

1. The words and phrases are:

- loved
- gave Himself up for her
- sanctify
- cleansed by the washing of water with the Word
- presented in splendor
- no spot or wrinkle
- holy, without blemish

2.

Psalm 133:1; 1 Peter 3:8	one
Isaiah 4:2–6; Romans 11:13–16	holy
Acts 11:22–26; 1 Peter 4:16	Christian
Acts 2:42; Revelation 21:14	apostolic

3.

	Narrow	Broad
Universal	Revelation 7:9–10	Galatians 1:1–5
Triumphant	Psalm 59:1–10	1 John 4:1–4
Militant	1 Timothy 6:11–12	Revelation 12:7–11

CONNECT

4. Some of the criteria are the following:

- human traditions and ideas are subjected to the Word of God (p. 79)
- unity is seen as only coming from the Gospel and the Sacraments (p. 80)
- pulpit and altar fellowship are only with those who fully agree in the Gospel and Sacraments (p. 80)
- teaching gives a clear witness to Christ and His work for us (p. 80)

- willingness to compare both our teaching and the teaching of others with Holy Scripture (pp. 80–81)

Stories will vary as to how people were brought to a particular congregation. Be attentive to negative or bitter stories, which will need gentle turning to the forgiveness of Jesus and the marks of the Church, Word and Sacrament, that they now enjoy in the congregation they now belong to.

PONDER

5.

a. a hypocrite is two-faced (p. 77)

a hypocrite is someone who says he believes when he really does not (p. 77)

a hypocrite trusts in his own righteousness (Luke 18:9, 12)

a hypocrite treats others with contempt (Luke 18:9)

a hypocrite may separate himself from others, that is, sinners (Luke 18:11)

a hypocrite is well aware of the sins of others, but not his own (Luke 18:11)

a hypocrite doesn't have words and a heart which match (Isaiah 29:13)

b. they both pray to God (Luke 19:10, 11, 13)

they both stand by themselves (Luke 18:11, 13)

they both are sinners, though only one realizes it (Luke 18:13)

c. Yes, repentant and forgiven ones! Yes, there is room for you because of the all-atoning sacrifice for your sins and for the sins of the world.

CHAPTER 9

IT'S ALL ABOUT JESUS, PART 3 PP. 82–85

REVIEW

1. Three important points from each chapter are given and should provide for a good discussion. There may be other points that you, or the participants, want to bring up for discussion and consideration.

Chapter 3

1. Jesus alone was born of a virgin birth and is God's only-begotten Son (pp. 38–39).
2. Jesus alone has lived and accomplished perfect work for our salvation (pp. 39–40).
3. Jesus alone, as God's true Son, is our only Savior (p. 40).

Chapter 4

1. We are sinful to the core of our very being (p. 43).
2. Jesus, who is sinless, took upon Himself our sin (p. 43).
3. This work of Jesus is called *justification*. It is Jesus' answer to God's wrath over our sin (p. 44).

CONNECT

2. St. Paul roots our salvation in Baptism, "the washing of regeneration" (v. 5). Action words are as follows: *appeared, saved, washing, renewal, poured out, justified*.

3. God's holy name makes unholy people holy. This is called *justification, regeneration*, and in the wide sense of the word, *sanctification*. The First Petition of the Lord's Prayer according to the Small Catechism teaches us that God's name is kept holy when the "Word of God is taught in its truth and purity," and this includes the doctrine of conversion.

PONDER

4. A Lutheran would explain he hasn't done anything to save himself (Hebrews 10:1–10). Only Jesus can save (Matthew 1:21). Lutheran would

explain what it means to be dead in trespasses and sins (Colossians 2:13). A Lutheran would explain only Jesus can make one who is dead alive (Ephesians 2:1–9). Look again at Question 1 of this study for the foundational statements of Jesus doing all the work for us.

5. Out of the blue a friend gave me one million dollars. Can you believe it? I didn't deserve the money. I was humbled and grateful. I didn't know what to say except, "Thank you."

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: LUTHERAN SPIRITUALITY

PP. 87–91

LOOKING IT UP

1. Spirituality of the persistent (18:1–8) The widow knew there was an answer in the judge. She would not let his “ears” go. How much more does our heavenly Father listen to us when we are persistent in prayer with Him? His answers are wise according to His own Fatherly will.

Spirituality of the forgiven (18:9–14) The tax collector’s spirituality is evident in his humility. He knows he has nothing to bring before God’s sacrificial altar in the temple. God was merciful to him not because of who the tax collector was but because of who God is—merciful and abounding in steadfast love (Psalm 86:15; 103:8; 145:8). God is merciful through Jesus’ own forgiving sacrifice.

Spirituality of children (18:15–17) A childlike spirituality is completely dependent upon God. Such spirituality is refreshing in its simple trust. An infant, a small child, is completely focused on the One who can provide everything he or she needs. Even the cries for their mother’s milk are heard and answered. How much more their prayers to God!

Spirituality of the living dead (18:18–30) Here we have the spirituality of a man who lives and breathes but whose soul is dead in his own works. The rich man imagines his own righteousness supplies his own spirituality. But Jesus speaks Law to him in order that the man sees he has nothing to offer. Only Jesus can perfectly fulfill the Ten Commandments. Only Jesus can forgive such arrogance. Only Jesus can supply the spiritual life the man really needs.

Spirituality of the Savior (18:31–34) Jesus states His own spirituality. It is completely centered in His death on the cross and the fulfilling of His Father’s good and perfect will. The end result is the joyful resurrection from the dead that provides our own spirituality with His life.

LINKING IT UP

2.

- a. *The Word* is preached in various worship services.
- b. *Baptism* is often administered at the beginning of the worship service.
- c. *The Sacrament of the Altar* is celebrated in the Divine Service.
- d. *The Power of the Keys*, that is, absolution, is offered both corporately in the worship service and privately when requested.
- e. *Mutual conversation and consolation* may be done more informally among fellow Christians, though it may also find its way into Bible studies and family devotions.

CHAPTER 10

EXAMPLES OF FAITH PP. 92–94

REVIEW

1.

A saint is . . . anyone who trusts Christ for his or her salvation.

A saint is not . . . someone with special knowledge or special works.

A saint is found . . . in heaven and on earth.

CONNECT

2.

- Romans 8:26–27 teaches us that the Spirit helps us pray.
- In 1 Timothy 2:1–7 prayers are to be made to the “one mediator,” Christ Jesus, and to no one else.
- Revelation 7:9–11 shows us both angels and humans are present in heaven. All have their faces turned to the Lamb and His throne, not man and our doings. Also note that angels and humans are distinct from each other. Humans, even babies, are not transformed into angels.

PONDER

3. In the face of the most tragic deaths, God’s people can still be comforted that the person who has died in the Lord has been rescued by his or her heavenly Father.

CHAPTER 11

WHO'S GOT THE POWER? PP. 95–100

REVIEW

1. Jesus spoke without reference to other scribes or rabbis. He is His own authority. So authoritative was Jesus' teaching that it astonished the people. God had their attention because He was speaking to them through and in His Son, Jesus. The scribes realized that authority is given, and they wanted to know who gave such authority to Jesus. His Father-given authority was a threat to their power.

2. Pilate was expecting a political ruler, the earthly king of the Jews. Jesus instructed Pilate that He, Jesus, had no intention of being an earthly king. Jesus' kingdom, then, is one of baptizing and teaching, that is, it is based solely on the Word of God. See page 95, "The Source of All Authority." Jesus uses the word *given* in Matthew 28:16–20. Power is acquired. Authority is given. Jesus' kingdom is based on this gift of authority from His Father. Authority is also shared, and this is seen by Jesus' giving the authority to His disciples to baptize and teach.

CONNECT

3. These five risked anger, enemies, lions, and fire, but they feared and trusted God to deliver them, even if by death rendered by civil authorities. Queen Esther showed the utmost respect to her husband, the king. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego also showed proper respect to the king even when he was wrong. None deny their faith, and they were willing to die for their beliefs.

4. If pastors do the work of the people, then the people are robbed of their vocations and the places in their lives where often only they can go with the Gospel. If parishioners do the work of the pastor, they rob him of his called responsibilities to be shepherd to the sheep. Power struggles arise and division occurs, hurting both pastor and people and inhibiting the work of Christ in that place.

PONDER

5. Though we cannot see the wise and fatherly will of God being carried out, we trust that God can use even evil rulers and poor churchmanship to His own purposes. St. Paul assures us in Romans 8:28 that God will accomplish His will for His people. Direct your students also to the second part of the explanation of the Third Petition of the Lord's Prayer for further explanation and comfort.

CHAPTER 12

GOD'S DELIVERYMEN PP. 101–5

REVIEW

1. In Matthew 28:16–20, Jesus is given authority by the Father. Jesus then gives the disciples authority to baptize and to teach throughout the world. This authority is then given to those who follow in the steps of the disciples. See also Chapter 17 in *Lutheranism 101*.

In John 20:19–23, Jesus gives to the disciples and then pastors the authority to bind or forgive sins. See Chapter 18 in *Lutheranism 101* and also LSB 614.

In Luke 22:14–23, implied is the authority for the disciples to continue to “Do this in remembrance of Me,” that is, the ongoing giving of Jesus’ forgiving body and blood to believers.

CONNECT

2. *Thieves and robbers* have only one intention—hurting and separating the sheep from both Shepherd and flock, from both Jesus and the congregation. The *stranger* is just that, an unknown voice with unknown intentions toward the sheep. The *hired hand* has no investment in the safety or care of the flock. But the *pastor* is called as representative of Jesus to care for the flock, to bring spiritual healing to the hurting, the sick and the dying, to be the known, familiar voice to God’s people, and to keep the flock safe from heresy.

3. Pastors are sinful, just like all people. Peripheral issues and idiosyncrasies can detract from the under shepherd/sheep relationship. There is a part of suffering through the sinful dislikes of pastor toward people and people toward pastor. Far too often this gets in the way of Christ and His forgiving gifts. May pastor and people resolve their otherwise distracting differences. Forgiveness is the key to unity, according to Ephesians 4.

4. Some examples might be lax preparation of sermons, faltering prayers for their people, begrudgingly offering the gifts of God to certain parishioners. Other examples may be offered. You may also choose to read “A Pastor’s Daily Prayer” on p. 92 of *The Course*.

PONDER

5. With this question there may be uncomfortable silence. This is a necessary question, though, for it is easier to be critical of a pastor than to pray for him, or for a pastor to be critical of his people than to pray for them. If you are the pastor leading this study, tell your people you covet their prayers. If you are a layperson leading this study or using this as a self-study, use this as a prompt and reminder to add your pastor to your daily prayers.

6. If the pastor is leading this study, he may feel uncomfortable with this question. Pastors, be receptive to the discussion of your people. If anything, encourage someone to take these questions to the board of elders for discussion. If you are a layperson leading this study or using this as a self-study, take time to honestly ponder and pray about the answers to these questions—how can you possibly support and uplift the pastor in the day-to-day work that he has been called to do?

CHAPTER 13

CAN'T WE ALL GET ALONG? PP. 107–10

REVIEW

1. There are many right answers to this question. Lutherans are committed to the three *solas*: Scripture alone, grace alone, faith alone, and an additional *sola*, Christ alone (pp. 21–22). From p. 183 we read, “Being a Lutheran is being a person who believes the truths of God’s Word, the Holy Bible, as they are correctly explained and taught in the Book of Concord.”

2. The serpent’s question, “Did God actually say . . .?” is at the heart of every theological disagreement. It divided Adam and Eve from God and from each other. Some examples might be the following: Did God actually say to baptize infants? Did God actually say His spoken words of forgiveness through the pastor really do forgive? Did Christ actually say His body and blood is present in and with the bread and wine?

CONNECT

3. The Pharisees disparage Jesus for not having “studied” (7:15). Both the crowd (7:20) and the Jews (8:48) accuse Jesus of having a demon, while Jesus states He is, in fact, the Son of God and the bearer of all truth. The Pharisees believe Jesus capable of deception (7:47). From the Jews who had believed in Jesus (8:31) comes the claim that Abraham is their father, which takes them back only to an earthly ancestor, and a dead one at that (8:33). Jesus speaks with painful honesty (7:7). For His teaching Jesus gives credit to the Father (7:16–18), and He refers to His Father as being “true” (7:28). When the Jews finally claim God as their Father, Jesus bluntly tells them their father is the devil (8:41, 44), and yet Jesus leads them straight to the Gospel in 8:51. He alone can rescue them from death.

PONDER

4. Unity around the Lord's Table is solid biblical agreement in all matters of doctrine. Unity, is first therefore, a doctrinal issue. Once there is unity in doctrine, there can form around that doctrinal unity a united community. There is no room for dishonesty or a sweeping under the carpet of divisive issues, nor is there undue haste to fashion supposed unity without complete, honest Christ-centered agreement. Those who work to first create a united community always ultimately compromise on the Scriptural doctrines of not only the Lord's Supper, but other fundamental doctrines as well.

5. It is one thing to fly somewhere, have a disagreement, and then go home. It is quite another to have a disagreement and live in the same community. Ministerial associations might be fruitful ground to plow with public discourse. Universities may regularly have religious dialogues between world religions. In winsome and wise ways Lutherans do have opportunity to bear witness to the truth in Christ Jesus.

CHAPTER 14

WHAT ABOUT WOMEN? PP. 111–13

REVIEW

1. a. Mary. Gabriel greets her with words of greatest honor, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!” (Luke 1:28). Mary receives this news with humility and joy. Obviously Mary knew her Old Testament well, for she fashions and sings a hymn reminiscent of Hannah. See 1 Samuel 2:1–10.

b. Mother Eunice and grandmother Lois taught Timothy the Christian faith (2 Timothy 1:5). Mary so highly regarded the Gospel that she committed it to memory and treasured it in her heart (Luke 2:18–19, 51). Both Jesus and the apostle Paul use the imagery of mothers, both hen and human, to show the protective and nurturing care of mothers (Matthew 23:37; 1 Thessalonians 2:7).

c. Within the Body of Christ submission is mutual. Such submission flows from the “fear, love, and trust in God above all things” (SC, First Commandment), and the mutual love of the neighbor (Second Table of the Law—Commandment 1–3).

CONNECT

2. At the heart of every action is God’s love in Christ Jesus for women. They, too, are healed and forgiven. Their support of the ministry of Jesus and of the apostles is extraordinary in the ancient world. They gave willingly and deeply that the same Good News that had been given to them might be given to others too.

3. There is often a low regard for the authority of God’s Word in difficult topics, one of which is the service of women in the Church. What is misunderstood is the very high regard women are accorded in Scripture, according to their own creation by God and His own purposes for them and all of us. While it is commendable that society has put into place laws and ordinances to ensure that women (and men) are treated fairly and equitably, a sad result—and a goal of some—is that there has been an effort to try and erase all difference between men and women, forgetting these differences were instilled in us by God, that they are important, and by God’s design delightful.

PONDER

4. Oftentimes when any sinful person is told he or she can't do something, that is the very thing he or she wants to do. And we don't necessarily grow out of this trait when we are no longer toddlers! There is a danger in only or always saying to young women, "You can't be a pastor. Don't even think about becoming a pastor." Yes, the truth of Scripture can be taught, but better fruit will be born through encouragement to use gifts in an appropriate way.

CHAPTER 15

A WORD ABOUT GOD'S WORD PP. 116–25

REVIEW

1.

Genesis 1:3	God's Word is powerful and creative.
1 John 1:5	God's Word is light. In His Word there is no room for darkness.
Psalms 58:3	Man's words are lies from birth. God's Word is not lies.
Isaiah 55:7–9	God's Word is not manmade. His thoughts are not our thoughts.
Matthew 15:19	Our words reflect an evil heart. Our words are not holy.
Matthew 7:18–29	God's Word is authoritative.
Ephesians 1:13	God's Word is truth. It is saving and it is always connected with the Holy Spirit.

CONNECT

2. John 4:1–41 The sin of this woman was known by all. She led a dark and desperate life, separated from her community and from all hope. Jesus, knowing her life, her thoughts, and her need, gave her His forgiveness, gave her a new start, and through her faith, gave the same to many in her community.

Luke 19:1–10 Zacchaeus was despised by those around him. His great wealth as a tax collector betrayed his dishonest ways. Jesus graciously invites Himself over to the home of Zacchaeus. Though the whole discussion is not recorded for us, obviously Zacchaeus's sins were forgiven, for his faith now bears good fruit. Jesus declares that salvation lives in the home of Zacchaeus.

Matthew 27:38–44; Luke 23:32–43 Matthew, especially in verse 44, shows us the sinner. Luke, especially in verse 43, shows us the saved sinner. In the most desperate situation in all of Scripture, a crucified robber with a mouth full of scorn is brought to faith through the few words uttered by the dying Savior. How amazing it is that a dying sinner would put his faith in a dying Savior. That this thief believed a dying King had a kingdom to give is

astounding. Only the Word of God and the work of the Holy Spirit could create such faith.

3. a. Joshua 8:35—read; Ezra 7:10—mark (study); Ezekiel 3:3—inwardly digest; Matthew 11:29—learn; Acts 13:44—hear.

b. Hearing brings God's Word to our ears. Reading brings God's Word to our eyes. Marking or studying brings God's Word to our hands. Learning brings God's Word to our brains. Inwardly digesting brings God's Word to the core of our very being—our hearts.

PONDER

4. John the Baptist, in calling Herod to repentance, could not ignore the place of the Law in Herod's life as possible preparation for the Gospel to be proclaimed to a repentant heart. The apostles had every opportunity to deny and recant the resurrection of Jesus, and yet they did not. As for the last question, answers will vary, but a central answer would be that only God's Word gives salvation, peace, hope, and eternal life in and through Christ Jesus.

5. What gets in the way is sins of all kinds: work, hobbies, family, sports, hardness of heart, ignorance. What draws people? Jesus' spirit-filled Word that makes alive that which was dead, namely the souls and minds of unbelievers. How does Jesus "press" Himself upon you? Jesus does so through His Word, by pressing water and the Word upon the head in Baptism, by pressing the Word of absolution into the ears of the penitent, by pressing into hungry mouths His body and blood of His forgiving Supper.

CHAPTER 16

LAW AND GOSPEL:

THE TWO GREAT DOCTRINES OF THE BIBLE PP. 127–34

REVIEW

1.

John 1:17

Law: For the law was given through Moses;

Gospel: grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:15b

Law: For if many died through one man's trespass,

Gospel: much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many.

Isaiah 6:5, 7

Law: And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!"

Gospel: And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for."

CONNECT

2. This person needs to hear the Gospel. There is the temptation to say, "Don't do that again" or "Stop it." Another danger is to justify the sin by saying, "They deserved it." Instead, you might say, "You know you are forgiven, don't you? Jesus died for just those kind of sins. Even as you are forgiven, now you can go home and ask for the same forgiveness and also speak forgiveness to your family."

3. The weight of the Law is crushing. Left without the Gospel and the substitute of Christ in our place for our sins, a Christian would despair. If only Gospel is preached, there is no answer to any specific Law—those hurts and

sins and failures that the Christian is left struggling with. Also, if only Gospel is proclaimed, then the soul is open for sinful self-assurance and smugness that no sins have been committed.

4.

Romans 6:4 “. . . we too might walk in newness of life.”

Galatians 5:1 “. . . stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.”

Hebrews 12:3 “. . . so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.”

1 John 3:16 “. . . and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.”

PONDER

5. Stanza 3 of *LSB 579* sings of the third use of the Law, sanctification. The hymn concludes with a stanza of Gospel, stanza 6. The choices of stanzas from *LSB 580* that would be appropriate for the friend in question 2 will vary, but stanza 5 would be particularly comforting.

CHAPTER 17

DELIVERED IN WATER PP. 135–38

REVIEW

1. Topics will vary. Treat the questions with respect and carefully look for accurate and appropriate answers.

2. God’s Word does not dictate how much water. Sprinkling, pouring, or immersion is sufficient for a Baptism.

3. Faith is created by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God. One common definition is this: Faith is the hand that receives the gifts of God. Faith is the trust a person has when made alive in and by Christ Jesus. Faith is the open eyes of the believer that recognize Christ for who He really is—the Son of God, the Savior of the world.

CONNECT

4. Some examples might include immersion in a river, sprinkling water with a rose, the absence of the name of the Holy Trinity, an emphasis placed on how the child is dressed, or a complete lack of Scripture.

5. Answers may vary, but the following summarizes what occurs: Baptism is the application of water to a person in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Word of God, in and with the water “works forgiveness of sin, rescues from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this” (SC, Baptism, What benefits does Baptism give?).

PONDER

6.

Newness of life (v. 4)

Life with Jesus (v. 8)

Resurrection like Jesus’ (v. 5)

Will never die again (v. 9)

No longer enslaved to sin (v. 6)
(v. 9)

Death no longer has dominion

Set free from sin (v. 7)

Alive to God in Christ Jesus (v. 11)

7. While many other passages can be used to present the scriptural practice of baptizing infants, these create a firm foundation upon which to build.

- Little ones can believe. (Matthew 18:6)
- Infants and small children are included in “all nations.” (Matthew 28:19)
- The promise of forgiveness of sins through Baptism is also for children. (Acts 2:38–29)
- The Philippian jailer’s entire household was baptized. (Acts 16:25–34)

8. Even as Christ is as white as light and is as bright as the sun, because of His blood shed upon the cross, so also is this newly baptized one. The stains of sin are covered by the perfect righteousness of Christ bestowed in Baptism. The same words spoken upon Jesus, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 17:5), are spoken upon each newly minted Christian.

9. In God’s eyes, through the saving work of Jesus, I am already seen as pure and clean. All my sin has been taken away, washed away by Jesus’ blood. I am white and bright as wool. And on account of Jesus’ resurrection, my hope of life forever with God is secured.

CHAPTER 18

CONFESSION IS GOOD FOR THE SOUL PP. 139–45

REVIEW

1.

Repentance: to recognize the reality of sin; to turn to God in faith for His mercy

Confession: to admit or to confess sin(s) and the guilt of sin

Absolution: to be set free from sin

2. With repentance a pastor would help a person see the severity of sin, if hard-heartedness or ignorance of sin is present. A pastor would also show the benefit of confession, the emptying of the heart of all that weighs down, troubles, and gnaws away at the soul. Finally, a pastor can point a person to the joyful hearing of the forgiveness of sins, rooted firmly and deeply in the cross of Christ and His free gift of Absolution.

CONNECT

3. *LSB*, pp. 184–85 Confession and Absolution. The people and pastor speak the Confession. God hears the Confession. The pastor, “in the stead and by the command of . . . Jesus,” speaks the Absolution. The people hear the Absolution.

LSB, p. 254 Compline. In the left column, the leader, who may or may not be a pastor, speaks the Confession. The people hear the leader’s Confession and then speak Absolution. The people then speak the Confession and the leader speaks the Absolution, which the people then hear. In the right column, the people, with the leader, confess their sins. God hears the Confession. The leader then speaks a declaration of grace and forgiveness. The people hear that forgiveness.

LSB, pp. 290–91 Corporate Confession and Absolution. The people, with the pastor, speak the Confession. God hears the Confession. The pastor, on behalf of Jesus, speaks the Absolution. The pastor may do this corporately, or he may do so individually. Either the whole group or each person hears the Absolution.

LSB, pp. 292–93 Individual Confession and Absolution. The penitent speaks the Confession. The pastor, as a servant of God, hears the Confession. The pastor forgives the penitent's sins in Jesus' stead and by His command. The penitent hears the Absolution.

4. That Jesus claims and has the authority to forgive sins most bothers the Pharisees and teachers of the Law. The authority and the power to forgive sins belongs to God alone. While they don't acknowledge that Jesus is the Son of God, they do recognize the claim He is making by forgiving sin.

The forgiveness of sins is the most important healing. Though physical healing may or may not come according to God's good and gracious will, Jesus promises to heal every repentant, sin-sick soul.

PONDER

5. Answers may vary, but at the core the penitent will know sins that were spoken aloud in Confession are no more to be spoken of. The sins are silenced by the forgiveness of Jesus as delivered to the ears of the penitent and believed by the power of the Word and the Holy Spirit. The sins are removed an infinite distance away.

6. Though private Confession and Absolution is not to be commanded or forced, it may be joyfully encouraged and set before God's people as a wonderful, freeing gift. The answers to these questions will be private, but if discussion should ensue, care and direction toward private Confession and Absolution may be offered.

CHAPTER 19

THE LORD’S SUPPER: GIVEN FOR YOU PP. 147–53

REVIEW

1. While all four writers are similar, they also give their own unique perspectives and emphases.

2. There is the denial that Jesus really said these words. There is the denial that bread and wine aren’t really needed at all. There is the denial that Jesus is present in the bread and wine. There is the denial that “often” means regularly and the Lord’s Supper only need be celebrated that one time long ago or that it only meant something that one time and is now only a pleasant memory re-enacted. Finally, there is the turning of the Gospel gift of the Lord’s Supper into a commandment or Law, that it must be done and fulfilled by people as a requirement and a way to receive blessings from God.

CONNECT

3. Some examples might be the passing of the elements person by person through the pews rather than kneeling or standing at an altar, the absence of the Words of Institution, the Words of Institution spoken by the people instead of the pastor, the use of leavened bread or grape juice, or the distribution of only the body of Christ.

4. To the first friend you might respond, “Yes, there is unity because of the Body of Christ. (See 1 Corinthians 12:12–26 for Paul’s words.) But that reality is only present because Jesus is really present in the bread and wine. The body and blood of Christ really does unite through the forgiveness of all sins.” To the second friend you might respond, “Yes, the Lord’s Supper is there for you, in fact, the words ‘for you’ ought to be a great comfort. But you are joined together with those also communing, yes, even with the saints who have gone before you, with angels, archangels, and everyone in heaven.” (See John 15:1–11; the Preface in *LSB*, p. 208.)

PONDER

5. "These words, 'Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins,' show us that in the Sacrament forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are given us through these words. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation" (SC, Sacrament of the Altar, "What is the benefit of eating and drinking?"). In addition, what is lost is comfort and calmness of soul, body, and mind received from the body and blood of Jesus and His words of assurance that His gift is "for you."

6. If Christ's body and blood are truly in us, then the resurrected body and blood of Jesus is truly in us (Romans 8:1–11; Psalm 16:9). The renewal of our minds is entirely dependent upon Him who sacrificed His body and shed His blood and who now gives to us His living body and blood (Romans 12:1–2; Philippians 2:5–11). And likewise, our "inner nature," the heart, is made clean and pure by the pure and clean body of Jesus (2 Corinthians 4:16; Psalm 51:10).

CHAPTERS 20 AND 21

THE LORD'S SUPPER: DINNERS WITH SINNERS PP. 154–58

REVIEW

1.

- Believe Jesus' body and blood is present and given in His Supper
- Believe Jesus' body and blood is given "for the forgiveness of sins"
- Believe Jesus' body and blood and His forgiveness is "for you"
- Summary: "To be worthy and well prepared for the Supper is to be repentant of sin and to trust that Jesus gives you His body and His blood for the forgiveness of your sins" (p. 155).

CONNECT

2. The man rejected the king's gift of a wedding garment. The man wanted to come to the banquet on his own terms. The man is speechless because he continues to believe he is right in sitting at the banquet in his own clothes. The man could have confessed his arrogance and his own, now obvious, sin of rejecting the king's ability to make him, a sinner, worthy of attending the king's banquet.

PONDER

3. The Lord's Supper is only for sinners, not for those who think they are perfect and not for those who think they deserve the Sacrament. The comfort and hope is in the gracious serving by Jesus to sinners His body and blood for their forgiveness and for the strength of their flesh, souls and minds.

THE LORD'S SUPPER: THE LORD'S CARE

PP. 160–63

REVIEW

1.

- See pp. 161–162
- We cannot send a confused confession of faith concerning the Lord's Supper or any other teaching of the Church.
- We send forth a message of unity when those who believe the same teachings commune together.

CONNECT

2.

- The habit of going to the Lord's Supper is instilled at an early age.
- Being at the table provides for a later teachable moment to discuss the real presence and the forgiveness of sins.
- Anticipation is instilled for one day receiving the Lord's body and blood.

PONDER

3. Answers may or may not be openly shared, but be assured the Lord does attend to His people's weaknesses and burdens.

CHAPTERS 22 AND 23

LUTHER: THE UNLIKELY REFORMER AND THE WORLD OF THE REFORMATION PP. 166–78

REVIEW

1.

- An understanding of how people are saved (p. 168) *See also pp. 80–85*
- Are we saved by grace from God or by what we do (p. 178)?
- How the Sacraments are understood (p. 168)
- What the Sacraments mean (p. 178) *See also pp. 135–62*
- What the Church is (p. 168) *See also pp. 73–79*
- What the Church's ministry is (p. 168) *See also pp. 101–5*
- What the Christian life looks like (p. 168)
- The authority of the Bible (p. 178)

2.

- How people are saved is the foundational question. For Lutherans, this is known as the doctrine of justification. Is it Jesus who saves us, do we do it ourselves, or is it a combination of the two?
- There is still confusion concerning the Sacraments: How many? Are the Sacraments just symbols, magic, or efficacious because of the Word of Jesus?
- There is still confusion concerning the identity of the Church. Is the Church made up of holy, perfected people? Does the Church consist of people who show up only once? Or does the Church consist of baptized and taught people?
- The ministry of the Church may be defined by some as programs to change society. Others see the Church as a social club within society. Or is the Church sinners who have been called by the Word of God and the Holy Spirit?

- Is the Christian life one of complete sanctification, that is, where people act holy in all things? Is the Christian life one of abandon, that is, completely free of the Law? Or is the Christian life one of tension between sin and grace, a life lived in the Law and the Gospel?
- Does the Bible have complete authority in the Church, is it an irrelevant history book with nice stories, or is it a rule book for the Christian life?

CONNECT

3. Luther saw his own excommunication as unbiblical and unfounded. He didn't seek to divide the Roman Catholic Church but instead to call it back to the faithful roots of Scripture. That Luther burned the papal bull which excommunicated him shows just what Luther thought of his excommunication.

4. The movable type of Gutenberg's press prepared for the rapid dissemination of Luther's writings. The Reformation literally became a movement of words—lots and lots of words. The discovery of a New World turned the attention of Europe's powers outward, leaving unattended some of the home fires, such as the ones which burned Wycliffe's bones and Hus' body (p. 176). Luther and the Reformers benefitted from this change in focus.

PONDER

5. Luther translated Scripture into the language of the people so that they might learn of Jesus (p. 167). Luther's writings and those of the Reformers taught about Jesus and defended the truth of Christ against heresies.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: CONFESSION OF FAITH

PP. 179–83

LOOKING IT UP

The confession, we are reminded by Jesus, was revealed by His Father in heaven (v. 17), which takes the glory from Peter and gives it to where it belongs—God!

LINKING IT UP

The rock is the God-given confession that Jesus is the Son of God. By the fact that Jesus is the Word made flesh (John 1:14), Jesus Himself is the foundation of all faith and the Church itself. The Old Testament speaks in many places of a foundational rock that is strong and secure. Paul sees the rock that Moses struck in order to bring forth life-sustaining water as none other than Jesus Himself.

CHAPTERS 24 AND 25

LUTHERANISM AFTER LUTHER AND CHANGES AND CHALLENGES TO LUTHERANISM

PP. 184–94

REVIEW

1. To be called a Lutheran after Martin Luther is recognition of who restored the pure Gospel of Jesus to the Church. But to be called Lutheran is also confusing to those who might think Lutherans worship or hold in too high of a regard Luther himself. He was a fallible man after all. Paul's caution in 1 Corinthians 1:10–13a is a serious one to take. We don't follow a human being, no matter how smart or talented, but we follow Jesus Christ and Him alone.

To be called an Evangelical gets to the heart of the matter. The root word means "good news." Lutherans are people of good news, the Good News of Jesus as the only Savior and way to heaven. But the name Evangelical has been hijacked by other Protestants who have imported a meaning of non-liturgical worship with twinges of Pietism (see p. 188) and moralism. This is counter to the very word *evangelicalism*.

2. For example, traditional Methodism emphasized Pietism and the ability to be holy. Now the church body is more prone to Rationalism, where the authority of God's Word is under attack in matters of women's ordination, the ordination of gay clergy, and gay marriage. Today's non-denominational churches seem to be the epitome of Pietism, with a great emphasis on how to live rather than on what has been delivered to believers—Jesus, the Savior. Other examples will certainly be offered.

CONNECT

3. The German language provided continuity in theological discussion and written works among the German-speaking Lutherans. In addition, the tendency to retain the German language reinforced the formation of parochial schools which taught not only Jesus but also the German language. Retaining the language also insulated the Lutherans from harmful cultural and religious changes occurring among American Christianity at the time. German, though, also made the Lutherans greatly suspect when World War I came along. The change of languages became a necessity in order to maintain integrity in the United States.

PONDER

4.

- Attention and agreement to the Word of God (the apostles' teaching)
- This agreement results in fellowship, a group of like-minded and like-believing Christians.
- Because such unity exists, then the Lord's Supper (the breaking of bread) can be celebrated.
- This worship is then conducted in the context of a common form of worship (the prayers).

CHAPTER 26

NO LAZY BELLIES ALLOWED! PP. 197–200

REVIEW

1. If this was done regularly, one would hope the level of biblical knowledge would increase in the congregation. Heads of households may have not been taught how or know how to teach the Small Catechism. Consider how this might be done in your congregation.

CONNECT

2. There will be a variety of opinions. Be careful that the discussion does not devolve into an ad hominem or unfair critique of either public or parochial school. Be sensitive to the presence of teachers and school administrators that they not take constructive criticism as personal criticism of them. Take seriously good ideas that might be implemented in your congregation.

PONDER

3. The congregation can truly be a baptismal family for those without biological family members. The apostle John speaks as a father to his people. James turns his attention to those without immediate family members.

CHAPTER 27

FINDING MEANING IN THE WORDS PP. 204–9

REVIEW

1.

Divine: That which finds its source and origin in the triune God Himself

Service: That which Jesus Christ serves us in His Word and His Supper

Divine Service: God's work of providing for us through preaching, the proclamation of His Word, and the giving of His Sacraments

Worship: First, the way in which God comes to us; second, the way in which we receive the gifts of God's grace and respond

2. By all earthly appearances you arrived at the worship service by your own willpower. But according to the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed, the Holy Spirit and the Word of God draw you to receive the gifts of God. None of us would come to worship according to our own sinful nature. Only the Holy Spirit and the Word can bring us into the presence of the Holy Trinity.

CONNECT

3. The words *receive* or *received* are passive words, ones that indicate that God in Christ Jesus gives gifts. That you recognize such gifts as having come from God's grace and mercy is itself evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit in you. To use the word *accept* or *accepted* makes our involvement active and, therefore puts the burden on us to make a decision to accept or not accept God's gifts. If faith is the hand that receives the gifts of God, then the Holy Spirit, who made that hand of faith alive, is doing the work, which is the best work of all.

PONDER

4. This can be a helpful approach because the Divine Service is lived out in word and music Sunday in and Sunday out. Even with the assistance of a hymnal, using the outline of the Divine Service, a person could explain the story of Jesus to a visitor before that person walks through the doors of the church.

CHAPTER 28

ORDER IN THE ORDER PP. 211–21

REVIEW

1. Using the Kyrie as an example, the student will discover in Settings One (*LSB*, pp. 152–53) and Two (pp. 168–69) that the Kyrie is much longer than the other settings and that each setting has the same text but different musical arrangements. The Kyrie is shorter in Settings Three (p. 186) and Four (p. 204), and in Setting Five the Kyrie is a hymn (p. 214). The charge leveled that the Divine Service is boring or the same all the time is dispelled when the services are compared. The hope is that by comparing the five Divine Services, discoveries will be made.

CONNECT

2. An easy example is *LSB* 710, “The Lord’s My Shepherd, I’ll Not Want.” In addition, point the student to the small print in the lower right corner of the hymn to show there are additional Scripture passages upon which the hymn is based. Encourage the student to also look up these passages and locate the stanzas, lines, or phrases where these passages are reflected in the hymn. Using the Scripture notes associated with most hymns becomes one possible way to meditate on a hymn.

PONDER

3. Answers will vary because of the wide variety of architectural designs. Be ready to help explain (or explore!) the placement of altar, font and pulpit, the use of symbols on paraments, banners, or in stained glass windows.

4. Some people may need more knowledge or explanation for a particular part of the services, the “what” and “why” questions. Others may need to know some “hows,” such as how to chant an introit or a gradual. Some may also have “when” questions, as to when certain parts of the liturgy are sung during the Church Year and when they are not. An example is when “Alleluias” are to be sung and when they are not. Finally, there may be some “who” questions, such as who is responsible for choosing liturgies, hymns,

readings, and prayers, or who is responsible for leading parts of the Divine Service.

5. If the pastor is leading this study, it might be helpful to bring some of the *LSB* resources used to plan worship and any planning sheet used in preparing the worship services of the parish.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: NOTHING ELSE THAN FAITH

PP. 222–24

LOOKING IT UP

1. Just as Isaiah's sinful lips were cleansed, so also are ours in the Absolution. John sees and hears the wonderful news of clean robes washed in baptismal water and the blood of the Lamb. The result is the restoration of Eden. The marriage feast of the Lamb fulfills the promise that there will be no more hunger or thirst.

2. The several passages from Scripture as well as those from Luther on pages 222–223 are what is referenced here. The summary is "faith in Christ is true worship." As simple as the answer seems, and while worship matters "are neither commanded nor forbidden in God's Word" (FC Ep X3), "true worship" of the holy God actually constrains us instead of letting us go our own way. Discuss the advantages of the Church's historic practice of using an order to guide the conduct of her worship.

LINKING IT UP

Though answers will vary, an important answer is that Jesus and His Word is at the center of all that is said and done in worship.

CHAPTER 29

A TIME FOR EVERYTHING PP. 227–30

REVIEW

1. The seasonal colors are:

ADVENT: blue or violet. Blue symbolizes anticipation and hope in the coming King. Violet is used as a symbol of our repentance in preparation for our coming King.

CHRISTMAS and the FEASTS OF CHRIST: white. White symbolizes divinity, purity and holiness, and joy.

SUNDAYS AFTER EPIPHANY: green. The focus of the Sundays after Epiphany is on the growth of Jesus' ministry, and the color green is used to symbolize that growth.

LENT: violet. Violet is the color of royalty and repentance and marks the season of Lent as a time for turning away from sins and turning toward Christ for His mercy and forgiveness.

ASH WEDNESDAY: black. When black is used it is a reminder of death, much in the same way that the ashes remind us that "we are dust."

HOLY WEEK: violet or scarlet. The deep blood red of scarlet reminds us of Jesus' blood shed as He suffered and died for our sins.

EASTER: white and gold. White symbolizes the holiness of our risen Lord. Gold decorations and vestments remind us that our resurrection life in Christ is precious and eternal.

PENTECOST and MARTYRS: red. Red represents fire and blood. On Pentecost red recalls the tongues of fire on the disciples' heads. The sacrifice of the martyrs is also symbolized with the color red.

THE SEASON AFTER PENTECOST: green. The color of growing plants and life, green is used to symbolize the growth of the Church in all times and our growth as we live in our Baptisms and the receiving of the Lord's Word and Sacraments.

2. These dates remind us that the Gospel of Jesus Christ affected a wide variety of peoples' lives. Knowing those who have gone before us in faith strengthens us. If you haven't already done so, take time to look at and discuss

especially the Feasts of Christ and their place in the Church Year (refer to the note on page xi and discuss its importance in this regard).

CONNECT

3. The Church Year is neither commanded nor forbidden. St. Paul teaches the Colossians and us that there is freedom for such observances. As long as the time set aside for the Church Year doesn't detract from Christ and the article of justification, and only helps our neighbor and does not harm, then the Church Year is a useful and good tool.

PONDER

4. Answers will vary. Each answer gives an opportunity to look at and discuss the seasons and/or festivals and why the Church uses them to teach the life and work of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER 30

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS PP. 231–32

REVIEW

1. Answers will vary.

CONNECT

2. You might teach that in Baptism each person is marked with the sign of the cross. Next, you might teach that making the sign of the cross is neither a Roman Catholic nor a Lutheran action but a Christian one. You might point to the times when the pastor makes the sign of the cross either upon himself or upon the congregation (Invocation, during the speaking of the Words of Institution, during the Benediction).

PONDER

3. The first question is open to opinion and also guidance from p. 231. Misuses of making the sign of the cross might include using the action as a “good luck” charm for making homeruns, a free throw, or a winning touchdown. Another common misuse is the automatic signing of the cross when passing by a church or to ward off evil.

CHAPTER 31

WE CONFESS PP. 236–42

REVIEW

1. Creeds protect us from heresy (that is, teaching contrary to the orthodox doctrine of the Church) within the Church and heresy from outside the Church. Each Sunday the congregation reminds itself who God is, what God's name is, and what each person of the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—has done and still does for us. If a person unfamiliar with Christianity visits on a Sunday morning, that person will clearly hear (though certainly may not understand) what there is to say about our God.

2. Such a handmade creed may reflect a local need or theme, but has not withstood the test of time or the scrutiny of the Church through the centuries or intense comparison with Scripture. A new creed placed into the mouths of the people sight unseen puts them at a disadvantage. Local creeds tend to be very personal for those who wrote it, but others may not be able to relate to the circumstances. They don't know if they can say "Amen" to the words, that is, this is true and this is true for me. The Ecumenical Creeds may be compared to a rudder on a ship that keeps the path straight and true. The creeds remain constant as the most concise form of what Scripture says to us about our triune God.

CONNECT

3. Some phrases may be the following: concerning the Father, "All He made His love enfolds" (LSB 953:1); concerning the Son, "By whose cross and death are we Rescued from all misery" (953:2); and concerning the Spirit, "Who sustains and comforts us In all trials, fears, and needs" (953:3). Other phrases from LSB 954 will catch students' attention.

PONDER

4. Baptism brings to us the full life of Jesus. His life becomes our life, and therefore His victory over sin, death, and the devil is also our victory. You may wish to also look at Romans 6:1–4. There we learn that we have died and been raised with Christ. We can then conclude that just as Christ descended into hell, His descent has become our descent; that just as there was no place for Jesus in hell, because of Jesus there is no place in hell for us. Jesus' announcement of victory over the devil is our triumph too.

CHAPTER 32

WE LOVE GOD AND OUR NEIGHBORS PP. 243–46

REVIEW

1. Adam and Eve failed to love God first by not trusting His Word and instead trusting the lies of Satan. Adam and Eve then failed to love God by lying to God and blaming God, showing how deeply infected they were from the bite of Satan and of the fruit of the tree. Eve failed to love Adam when she gave him the fruit to eat. Adam failed to love Eve by not defending her and remaining silent while she was being tempted. Their failure to love God and each other resulted in lives of pain, toil, and hardship.

CONNECT

2. Bad fruit	Good fruit
Sexual immorality (Galatians, Colossians)	Love (G)
Impurity (G, C)	Joy (G)
Sensuality (G)	Peace (G)
Passion (C)	Patience (G, C)
Idolatry (G)	Kindness (G, C)
Covetousness (C)	Goodness (G)
Sorcery (G)	Faithfulness (G)
Enmity (G)	Gentleness (G)
Strife (G)	Self-control (G)
Jealousy (G)	Humility (C)
Fits of anger (G, C)	Meekness (C)
Wrath (C)	Bear with one another (C)
Rivalries (G)	Forgive one another (C)
Dissensions (G)	Put on love (C)
Divisions (G)	Peace of Christ (C)
Envy (G)	Be thankful (C)
Drunkenness (G)	Teaching (C)
Orgies (G)	Admonishing in all
wisdom (C)	

Evil desire (C)

Malice (C)
in the

Slander (C)

Obscene talk (C)

Lying (C)

Singing psalms, hymns,

spiritual songs (C)

All words and deeds done

name of Jesus (C)

PONDER

3. The good fruit of the trees of heaven is fed with the very water of heaven. These everbearing trees give to us leaves that forever heal us. All the “bad fruit” listed in Question 2, those things called “accursed,” will be gone. Pure baptismal worship and Christ the Light will be ours forever.

4.

- ¹⁹Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰by the new and living way that He opened for us through the curtain, that is, through His flesh, Chapter 4, It's All about Jesus, Part 2 (Justification)
- ²¹and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²²let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, Chapter 9, It's All about Jesus, Part 3 (how Jesus saves)
- with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Chapter 17, Delivered in Water (Baptism)
- ²³Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, Chapter 31, We Confess (Creeds)
- for He who promised is faithful. Chapter 3, It's All about Jesus, Part I (Person of Jesus)
- ²⁴And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, Chapter 32, We Love God and Our Neighbor (Good Works)

- ²⁵not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, Chapter 27, Finding Meaning in the Words (Worship)
- and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. Chapter 5, It's the End of the World as We Know It (Last Days)

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: LIVING IN TWO KINGDOMS

PP. 247–49

LOOKING IT UP

1.

(Matthew 13:55) Jesus is a son and a brother, and was most likely a carpenter for a time.

(John 11:1–11) Jesus was a friend to Mary, Martha and Lazarus.

(John 17:1–5) Jesus is the Son of the Father.

(John 18:33–37) Jesus is not just a king, but *the* King.

Answers will be many and varied. The rare person may need help thinking of more than the obvious.

LINKING IT UP

2. As light and salt we battle darkness. We live and move in a tasteless, bland world that would otherwise be lost were it not for the Savior Jesus and for His loving people who bring the good news of salvation *and* their many talents to share.

(As an aside: The Epitome of the Formula of Concord [printed in 1576 and adopted in 1580] is the condensed version of two previous documents and provides the outline for the Solid Declaration, which expands upon each of the doctrines.)

To understand the tension in which we live, review the final section of the essay (pages 248–249). Discuss who one creates the balance at various points in life.

CHAPTERS 33 AND 34

WE TELL OTHERS AND WE SHARE OUR BLESSINGS

PP. 250–56

REVIEW

1. Paul, along with Silvanus and Timothy (1 Thessalonians 1:1), shared the Gospel of God with the church of the Thessalonians. But Paul also indicated that they came to share their very selves with the Thessalonians, a stewardship of who they were as proclaimers of the Gospel. Paul includes evangelism and stewardship in the same breath.

CONNECT

2. Jesus drew people to Himself by His Word, *the* Word of hope and forgiveness which only He can give. Jesus uses that very same word today to still draw people to Himself.

3. Answers will vary. Encourage participants to choose two ideas that fit well with their personalities and their vocations.

4. The answer being aimed at here is the word *refreshed*. What an amazing idea that God Himself was refreshed!

5. Paul anticipates that his Christian brothers and sisters in Rome will refresh him by simply being with him, indicated by the words, “refreshed in your company.” Paul also knows that Philemon’s home was open to many Christian people and that his openness to them had resulted in them being refreshed through him. Paul is very much aware that the Christians in Corinth had lovingly refreshed the spirit of Titus by their gracious gifts to him, whatever those gifts may have been.

PONDER

6. Gently encourage participants to be bold in whatever way they may feel comfortable and natural. Assure them that the seed sown will not return empty or void, so rich in blessing and grace is God's Word.

7. Help your participants to reach God-pleasing, Christ-centered answers to their own stewardship considerations.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER PP. 257–61

LINKING IT UP

Answers will be personal and varied. The Basic Christian Library (page 286–89) and your pastor may help in your further study.

APPENDIX

A PASTOR'S DAILY PRAYER

O Almighty God, merciful Father, I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto Thee all my sins and iniquities; especially do I acknowledge my indolence in prayer, my neglect of Thy Word, and my seeking after good days and vainglory. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them; and I pray Thee, of Thy boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Thy beloved Son, forgive me all my sins, and be gracious and merciful to me. Yea, cleanse me through Thy Spirit by the blood of Jesus Christ, and give me more and more power and willingness to strive after holiness, for Thou hast called me that I should be holy and blameless before Thee in love.

I thank Thee also, O faithful God, for my family, my wife and children, and for all my relatives. Thou hast given them to me purely out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. Preserve them in good health, and give them their daily bread; but above all keep them in Thy grace and in the true confession of Thy name unto the end.

Thou, O God of all grace and mercy, hast also called me, a poor unworthy sinner, to be a servant of Thy Word and hast placed me into that office which preaches the reconciliation and hast given me this flock to feed. In and by myself I am wholly incompetent to perform the work of this great office; and, therefore, I pray Thee, make me an able minister of Thy Church. Give me Thy Holy Spirit, the Spirit of wisdom and knowledge, of grace and prayer, of power and strength, of courage and joyfulness, of sanctification and the fear of God. Fill me with the right knowledge, and open my lips that my mouth may proclaim the honor of Thy name. Fill my heart with a passion for souls and with skillfulness to give unto each and every sheep or lamb entrusted to my care what is due unto it at the proper time. Give me at all times sound advice and just works; and wherever I overlook something or in the weakness of my flesh speak or act wrongly, do Thou set it aright, and help that no one may through me suffer harm to his soul.

Glory and honor, praise and thanks be unto Thee, God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for all the mercy and faithfulness Thou hast shown to this congregation. Thy Word has not returned unto Thee void, but Thou hast here

gathered a people that knows Thee and fears Thy name. Give me Thy Holy Spirit, that I may at all times see the good things in this congregation and praise and thank Thee for them. Bless Thy Word in the future, that it may preserve the believers in Thy grace, convert those that are not yet Thine, and bring back the erring and delinquent. Gather Thy people as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and be Thou a wall of fire round about Thy congregation.

Graciously take into Thy fatherly care the sick and the needy, all widows and orphans, and all who are in any trouble, temptation, anguish of labor, peril of death, or any other adversity. Comfort them, O God, with Thy Holy Spirit, that they may patiently endure their afflictions and acknowledge them as a manifestation of Thy fatherly will. Preserve their soul from faintheartedness and despondency, and help that they may seek Thee, the great Physician of their souls. And if any pass through the valley of the shadow of death, suffer them not, in the last hour, for any pain or fear of death, to fall away from Thee, but let Thine everlasting arms be underneath them, and grant them a peaceful departure and a happy entrance into Thine eternal kingdom.

Furthermore, I pray Thee, Thou wouldst at all times fill the offices of this congregation and its societies with upright, honest, and sincere men and women, who have the welfare of their congregation at heart and are able to help me in my office with their counsel and their deeds. Unite their hearts with me in love for the truth; give them the spirit of prayer for me and for their congregation, so that we may in unity and harmony build Thy kingdom in this place.

And since hypocrites and ungodly people are often found within the visible church organization, I pray Thee, do not permit Satan to disrupt this congregation through such or to hinder the efficiency of my office. If there are such in our midst, let Thy Word be like unto a hammer upon their hearts of stone. Have patience with them; but if they persist in their unbelief, hypocrisy, and wickedness, do Thou reveal them, so that they may be put forth from Thy congregation. Give me a forgiving heart towards all, and help me, especially for their sake, to speak and act cautiously.

Preserve and keep the youth of our Church from falling away and joining the world, and keep them from the many sins of youth. Thou, O Lord, knowest how difficult it is to lead the young on the right paths and to divide the Word of

Truth with respect to them; do Thou, therefore, give me particular wisdom and skill to be stern without estranging their hearts, and mild and charitable without strengthening them in frivolity and unruliness.

Mercifully bless the education and instruction of the children, that they may grow up in Thy fear to the praise of Thy name. I commend unto Thee also the nursery of our church, the Christian day school. Hinder and frustrate all enemies of this institution. May I ever regard and accept it as a precious gift of God! Give our congregation able and apt teachers. Preserve them from an indecent and evil walk and conversation. Bless the work of our Sunday school teachers, and help them to lead the little ones into the Savior's loving arms.

To Thy grace and mercy I also commend all my brethren in office. Arrest and suppress all discord and dissension. Give me a brotherly heart towards all true humility, and help me to bear with patience their casual weakness or deficiencies. Grant that they also may act as true brethren toward me.

Keep and preserve our whole Synod, its teachers and officers, true to Thy Word. Cause the work of our Synod to grow. Guard and protect all members of Synod against sinful ambitions, dissension, and indifference in doctrine and practice. Bless all higher institutions of learning, our colleges, seminaries, and university. Accompany all missionaries on their dangerous ways, and help them to perform their work. Gather the elect from all nations into Thy holy Christian Church, and bring them at last into Thy Church Triumphant in heaven.

Grant also health and prosperity to all that are in authority in our country, especially to * the President and Congress of the United States, the Governor and Legislature of this State, and to all Judges and Magistrates. *(His Majesty the King of the British Commonwealth of Nations, the Governor-General and the Prime Minister of our Dominion, as well as the Premier of our Province, and all Governments and Parliaments, and all Judges and Magistrates. [For Use in the British Empire])

Endue them with grace to rule after Thy good pleasure, to the maintenance of righteousness and to the hindrance and punishment of wickedness, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

Hear me, most merciful God, in these my humble requests, which I offer up unto Thee in the name of Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, to whom, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honor and glory, world without end. Amen.

—From *The Lutheran Agenda* (St. Louis: Concordia, n.d.), 117–20.