

LESSON 1: THE BENEFITS OF BEING A CHRISTIAN

A. FIRST BENEFIT: Read Romans 5:1

1. How does this verse describe the relationship between God and a Christian? _____
2. Read Colossians 1:21-23. According to this passage, before someone believes in Jesus, what kind of relationship does that person have with God? _____
3. What did Jesus do to put us in the right relationship with God? _____
4. From the list below, select the word(s) that best describe how to be accepted by God:
___ Love ___ Prayer ___ Reading the Bible ___ Faith in Jesus ___ Good Works

Your relationship with God is based ONLY on faith in Jesus Christ. It does not depend on the other four items, or anything else that you do. Those other four items will come as the result of your faith relationship with Jesus. They are not the cause of the faith relationship. Because of your faith relationship with Jesus, God will change your life. You will have a God-given desire to love and serve others; to spend time in prayer with God; to read and apply His Word in your life. If you fail in any of these other four areas (and you will), don't worry! God will not stop loving you or forgiving you!

5. If a person agrees with Jesus' teachings, but does not rely on Jesus for a relationship with God, is that person a Christian?

B. SECOND BENEFIT: Read Galatians 5:13

What has God given to us? _____

To understand the idea of freedom, look at the words listed below and select all the things from which Jesus sets us free: (you can check more than one)

- ___ fear of future ___ fear of death ___ guilt ___ poverty ___ control by Satan
- ___ accident ___ power of sin ___ sadness ___ control by your feelings
- ___ fear of ghosts ___ failure ___ ignorance about God

Read Romans 6:20-23. According to this passage, from what has God set us free?

If you are not God's slave, then you are a slave of _____.

C. THIRD BENEFIT: Re-read Romans 6:23

What is God's gift to a Christian when they die? _____

D. FOURTH BENEFIT: Read I John 1:8-9. According to this passage, what is God's response to those who confess their sin? _____

Read Romans 3:20. We can know what sin is through the reading of God's _____.

GOD'S LAW

A. More than 3,000 years ago, God gave his Law, or 10 Commandments, through the prophet Moses. We find these commands in Exodus 20:1-17. What is the context of this passage? Why did God give His people the Law? How does the Law apply to us today?

In Exodus 20:3, God says, "You shall have no other gods before me." Every day, we worship false gods in our life. What are some examples of those false gods? _____
_____ What should we do when we realize that we are worshipping a false god? _____

In Exodus 20:7, God says, "You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God." Why is God's name important to Him? _____
How do we misuse the name of God? _____

In Exodus 20:8, God says, "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy." God told His Old Testament people not to work on the Sabbath, which was Saturday, in order to worship Him and keep His name holy. Since Jesus has come and fulfilled the Law perfectly for us, every day is a Sabbath for Christians, because every day we find our rest from sin, death and the devil in Jesus. How do we worship God today?

These first three commandments are about your relationship with God; how you show your love for Him. Commandments 4-10 are about your relationship with other people. These commandments tell us, in detail, how to love others. Exodus chapter 20 continues: "(12) Honor your father and mother. . . . (13) You shall not murder. (14) You shall not commit adultery (sexual sin). (15) You shall not steal. (16) You shall not give false witness (tell lies about others). (17) You shall not covet (wish for and plan to get something or somebody that does not belong to you)."

In the blanks, write the verse number from Exodus 20 that tells you: ___ Do not be dissatisfied with what you have! ___ Do not cheat others! ___ Respect and protect life! ___ Do not gossip! ___ Do not live as a married person with someone to whom you are not married! ___ Respect and protect the property of others! ___ Respect your parents and all other authorities!

B. In the New Testament, Jesus gives some new applications to the Law. For example, read Matthew 5:21-22. According to Jesus, sin is not only what you do, but also what you _____! According to I John 3:15, sin is not only what you do, and not only what you say, but also what you _____!

C. Re-read I John 1:8-9. When you know that you have sinned, or even if you are not aware of your sin, what should you do? _____

This is the daily practice of the Christian life: to confess your sins—both known and unknown—to God, and then to receive by faith the gifts that Jesus has won for you on the cross and at His empty tomb: forgiveness, life and salvation!

LESSON 2: WHAT IS GOD LIKE?

A. Read I John 4:9-10. What is God's attitude towards you? _____
What is the evidence for God's love for you? What if you don't feel His love; does that prove He doesn't love you? What if you go through difficulties; does that prove He doesn't love you? Read Hebrews 12:4-11 to find out more.

B. Read Revelation 4:8. What are the three characteristics of God revealed in this passage? _____

Check the phrases that explain the meaning of "holy":

- no sin far from you
 pure not interested in you
 must punish sin separate from evil

God is holy and just, so by nature, He must punish your sin. Yet, God loves you and desires for you to live with Him forever. So, in His grace, He sent His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment in your place, on the cross.

When did God begin to exist? _____

Please give some examples of God's power from the Bible and from your life:

C. Read Acts 17:22-28. Where did everything in the universe come from? _____
What does God need from people? _____
Where is God found today? _____

D. Read John 4:21-26. Why can't you see God? _____
Who gives us the best view of God? _____

E. Read Matthew 28: 16-20. The Bible teaches that God is three persons, yet one God. This is the teaching known as "the Trinity." Though this word is not found in the Bible, the concept of the Trinity is all over the Bible, particularly the New Testament. For example, read Luke 3:21-22. Only God the Son, Jesus, became a human being.

G. The early Christians wrote a summary of the Christian faith that a person was expected to know and believe before they were baptized. This summary, known as the Apostles' Creed, contains three parts, one for each person of the Trinity. The first part is: **"I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth."**
Read Matthew 7:7-11. Why is "Father" a good name for God? _____

H. The Bible teaches that God made everything. If you believe this to be true, this truth will influence your every day life. Below are five situations. Consider how accepting God as the Almighty Creator might help someone who says the following things:

1. If someone says, "My life has no meaning or value." _____

2. If someone wants to abort the life of an unborn baby. _____

3. If someone does not care that they are polluting the world. _____

4. If someone says, "I can do anything I want to do. Nobody has the right to tell me what is right or wrong." _____

5. If someone says, "All gods are the same; there is no difference." _____

I. God did not create evil, Satan or hell! The word "Satan" means deceiver. He introduced evil into God's perfect, created world when he deceived Adam and Eve to rebel against God in the Garden of Eden (See Genesis 3).

Though the Bible doesn't tell us a lot about Satan, it seems that he was created as a good angel, but he rebelled against God and became God's enemy. See Luke 10:18, II Peter 2:4, and Jude 6 for possible references to this rebellion. The angels who rebelled with Satan are called evil spirits or demons in the Bible.

Because of their rebellion against God, their eternal home is outside of God's holy presence, or hell. Their fate is described in Revelation 20:7-10.

Jesus spoke often about hell. See Matthew 5:27-30, Matthew 10:28, Luke 16:19-31 for examples.

LESSON 3: GOD'S PLAN TO SAVE US

WHO IS JESUS? Let's discover the answer to that question by learning the meaning of His names and titles.

A. Read Matthew 1:18-25.

1. What is the meaning of the name "Immanuel?" _____
2. What does this name reveal to us about Jesus? _____
3. Joseph is told to name the baby "Jesus" because He will save His people from their sins. The first part of the name Jesus is the first part of God's name, which is sometimes spelled "Jehovah." The second part is from a Hebrew word that means "saves," so the name Jesus means "God saves!"

B. Read Mark 15:32 and John 1:41. What are the titles given to Jesus in these verses?

The word "Christ" comes from the Greek New Testament, and the word "Messiah" comes from the Old Testament Hebrew, the language of the Israelites. These two words have the same meaning: the Anointed One. In the ancient Jewish world, a prophet of God would pour oil on someone's head in a special ceremony to show that God had selected that person for a special purpose. The Jews used oil to anoint people into three types of offices: prophet, priest and king.

Prophets were called to speak the Word of God. Priests offered sacrifices and prayers, for the sake of God's people. And God had promised that one day He would send a great leader for His people, one who would crush the head of the devil (Genesis 3: 15). That leader would save not only the Jewish people, but people of all nations. The Jews called this leader the Messiah. This word was translated from Hebrew into the Greek language as "Christ." So, if we call Jesus "the Christ," we are confessing that He is the King who came to save us from our sin; He is the prophet who continues to speak His Word to us; and He is the priest who sacrificed Himself, for the sins of the whole world.

C. Read John 1:1-3, and verse 14 so that we can study the meaning of the term "Word."

1. The Word was with whom? _____
2. All things were created through whom? _____
3. The Word is the same as whom? _____
4. According to the Bible, what is the name of the one who was sent to become flesh (that means to become human)? _____
5. Because Jesus is the "Word," He is not only an historic figure, a true _____, but He is also true _____, who exists eternally and who made everything.

D. Read Matthew 16:15-16

1. These verses say that Jesus is the _____. Is he God's Son, or is he God? Is there a difference? Let's find out by reading John 5:17-18. In the mind of the Jews, calling Jesus "Son of God" is the same as confessing that Jesus is equal with _____.

E. Read Mark 2:1-12

1. In verse 7, are the words spoken by Jesus' enemies correct or wrong? _____
2. Because Jesus can _____ sins, that proves that He is God. Only God can do that!
3. Jesus calls himself the Son of Man in verse 10. This name comes from Daniel 7:13-14. In a vision, Daniel saw someone standing in heaven, "like a son of man," because he looked like a man; yet he received the worship of those around God's throne. When Jesus called himself "the Son of Man," He claimed to be the one that Daniel saw in his vision.

WHY DID JESUS COME TO EARTH?

A. Consider these two reasons:

1. Read John 1:18. If Jesus had not come, we would have no way _____.
2. Read I Peter 3:18. If Jesus had not died on the cross, our sins _____.

B. Read Romans 1:1-4

1. What do we learn about Jesus Christ in this passage? _____
2. Why was it necessary for Jesus to be both true God and true man? (See Questions 159 and 160 in Luther's Small Catechism) _____
3. According to verse 4, what is the ultimate proof that Jesus is God's Son? _____

C. Read John 3:16

1. What is God's motive for saving us? _____
2. According to this passage, who is qualified for eternal life? _____

Here is part two of the Apostles' Creed: I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. From there, He will come to judge the living and the dead.

D. Here are some common misunderstandings about Jesus. Try and answer each of these, using a Bible passage from this lesson.

1. Jesus was only a good teacher, but he did not solve the problem of my sin. _____
2. Jesus could never understand what it's like to be a human. _____
3. I can find God without any help. _____
4. I can live my life, according to my own plan. _____
5. There is no way that God could ever love and accept me. _____

LESSON 4: MY IDENTITY IN JESUS CHRIST

People have many needs and concerns. Listed below are some that are common to many people. Which ones are the most common to people you know?

Fear of death Loneliness “Pet” Sins Low view of self
No power to do right Feel far from God Guilt

In order to help us solve these problems, God gave us certain gifts the moment that we believed in Jesus. They are written in the Bible verses below. First, read the Bible verse. Then write the main point of the verse in the space provided. Finally, write one of the problems from the list above in the second space.

1. Read I John 3:1. Because of Jesus, I am a _____, and so there is no reason for me to have a _____.
2. Read II Corinthians 5:17-18. Because of Jesus, I am a _____, and so there is hope that I can repent of my _____.
3. Read I Corinthians 12:27. Because of Jesus, I am a member of _____, which is called the _____, so I know others will care for me when I have a feeling of _____.
4. Read John 16:13. God the Father has given me the _____, who can help me when I feel that I have no _____.
5. Read I John 5:13. After I die, I know I will have _____, so there is no need for me to have a _____.
6. Read Acts 10:43. Because I believe in Jesus, I have the _____, so I can turn to God when I feel _____.
7. Read Colossians 1:27. From the time I came to faith in Jesus, I have a special connection: _____. I know He is near, even when I feel _____.

Here is part three of the Apostles’ Creed: I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen!

“Saints” means “believers.” “Communion” means “togetherness.” So, the communion of saints means that we have an eternal relationship with all other Christians.

LESSON 5: DO YOU ENJOY A MYSTERY? BAPTISM AND COMMUNION

INTRODUCTION—Please put the correct answers in the blanks provided.

Baptism _____ Communion _____

- | | |
|--|---|
| a. Do it once in a lifetime | b. Repeated many times during your life |
| c. Also called the Lord's Supper | d. Also called the Eucharist (means thanksgiving) |
| e. Uses bread and wine | f. Uses water |
| g. Must be done in secret | h. Instituted by God |
| i. Invented by people | j. Promises forgiveness of sins, life and salvation |
| k. Is not a secret, but is done where others Christians can know and take part | |

A. BAPTISM

1. The sacrament of baptism is God's gift to you! Read Matthew 28:19-20. To be baptized "in the name of" means that in baptism, you belong to the _____.
2. Read Colossians 2:11-12. What OT rite does baptism replace? _____
3. What is the difference between the baptism performed by John the Baptist and the baptism that Jesus institutes in Matthew 28? _____

B. THE BENEFITS OF BAPTISM

1. The early Christians practiced baptism. Read Acts 2:37-38. What two blessings from God can you be sure of receiving in your baptism? _____
2. Read Mark 16:16. Because you believe in Jesus and are baptized in His name, you know that you are _____. Is it possible for a person to be saved without baptism? _____
3. Read Titus 3:5-8. This verse talks about a washing of _____. This means you have new life in your baptism. Your "old" life is from your parents. They gave you all your physical characteristics. They also passed on to you their sinful nature. Your new life is from God. He gives you a new nature, one that desires to forgive and love, as Jesus has done for you. Your new life with God is for _____.
4. Read Galatians 3:26-27. You can know that you are a child of God because of two things: _____ and _____. What kind of clothing does Jesus give you? _____ Why is that necessary? _____
5. Read Romans 6:1-11 How much sin can a dead person do? _____ In baptism, you die to _____ with Jesus. In the same way, you are raised to _____ with Him, just as He was raised from the dead. How does this impact the way we live, as God's people? _____

C. WHY ARE BABIES AND SMALL CHILDREN TO BE BAPTIZED?

1. They are included among "all nations." Please see Matthew 28:19 and Acts 2:38-39.
2. As sinners, they need what baptism offers. Please see Psalm 51:5 and John 3:5-6.
3. They are invited by Jesus to come to Him, and to have faith in Him. See Luke 18:15-17 and Matthew 18:6.
4. The role of parents and the Church in raising baptized children: see Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Proverbs 22:6, and Ephesians 6:4.

D. LIFE AFTER BAPTISM—Even after we are baptized, we may sometimes doubt God’s love for us. We may wonder if our faith is strong enough. We may fear that we have lost our relationship with God, because of some sin we have committed. It is at these times, in particular, that we look to Jesus and the promises He has made to us in our baptism. God the Father proved His love to you by sending you His Son, Jesus. Jesus suffered eternal death on the cross for you, and then rose again to give you eternal life. God the Holy Spirit brought you into a faith relationship with Jesus. We can depend on God and His promises! The promises to us who believe and are baptized are as sure as the reality of Jesus’ death and resurrection. These promises do not change just because our feelings or emotions change. These promises do not depend on how strong our faith is. These promises depend on what Jesus has done! So, each day, remember the promises that God has made to you in your baptism. He has washed you of your sins and sent you His Spirit; made you His holy child; put His name on you; and given you everlasting life. Always remember your baptism!

E. HOLY COMMUNION

1. Holy Communion is also God’s gift to you! Read Matthew 26:26-28. Jesus tells us to remember Him by eating _____ and drinking _____. The bread is Jesus’ _____, and the wine is Jesus’ _____. What does it mean “to remember” Him?
2. What OT rite does Holy Communion replace? _____
3. The early Christian Church practiced Holy Communion. Read Acts 2:42. Here, Communion is called _____.

F. THE BENEFITS OF HOLY COMMUNION

1. Read I Corinthians 10:16-18. In the Old Testament, the people of God ate of the _____, and that is how they shared in its benefits. In the New Testament, Jesus sacrificed himself. We share in the benefits of His sacrifice when we eat the bread and drink the wine of Holy Communion.
2. Read Hebrews 8:8-12. God has made a covenant (contract) with believers in Jesus. He promises to be our _____, and we can be His _____. Read Hebrews 9:16-22. When there is a covenant made in the Bible, there must be _____ to guarantee it. To guarantee the new covenant between God and us, Jesus shed His blood on the cross. Every time I take Holy Communion, I receive His blood that guarantees this new covenant. When we eat and drink, we receive the results of Jesus’ death, which is _____.
3. I Corinthians 10:16 tells us that when we eat and drink in Holy Communion, we are _____ in Jesus’ body and blood. That means we are united with Jesus and His sacrifice for us. This is the vertical dimension of Holy Communion.
4. I Corinthians 10:17 tells us that just like many grains of flour make up one loaf of bread, in the same way, many Christians together make up one _____, because we eat of the same _____, Jesus Christ. Therefore, we can be sure that we are united with other Christians. This is the horizontal dimension of Holy Communion.

G. HOW TO PREPARE FOR HOLY COMMUNION

1. Please read I Corinthians 11:27-29. This verse tells us to _____ ourselves before we participate. Please see Luther’s Small Catechism, pages 340-345 to learn more.

LESSON 6: GOD'S PLAN FOR FELLOWSHIP

A. CHURCH MEANS PEOPLE

1. One benefit of being a Christian is that you are not alone. Read Ephesians 2:19-22. In this verse, God compares believers to what four things? _____

 2. According to these verses, what is the key for a strong church? _____

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B. THE OFFICE OF THE KEYS (See pages 224-227 in Luther's Small Catechism)

1. Read Matthew 16:13-19, 18:18 and John 20:19-23. To what kingdom does Jesus give His church the keys? _____. What does it mean to "bind" and "loose"? _____
2. How is the Office of the Keys used in worship? _____
How is it used in every day life among Christians? _____

C. WHY GOD'S PEOPLE GATHER AND WHAT THEY DO

1. Read Hebrews 10:24-25. What things does this verse say Christians should do?

2. Read Colossians 3:16. What is the place of God's Word in our gatherings?

3. Read Acts 2:42. The third activity means Holy Communion. What others are mentioned? _____

D. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CHURCH LEADERS

1. Read Ephesians 4:11-16. Who does the work of the Church? _____
2. What is the job of the leaders mentioned in these verses? _____
3. When does the body of Christ grow? _____
4. Read Titus 1:5-9. Pastors need to know God's Word so they can _____ God's people. When people disagree with God's Word, the leader must _____.
5. Read Acts 20:28-30. Pastors are compared to what kind of vocation? _____
6. Who does the flock belong to? _____
7. What do the pastors have to watch out for? _____
8. Read Hebrews 13:17. Describe the proper relationship between the pastor and his people: _____

E. God's plan for every believer is to be a part of a Christian church that is cared for by a pastor (and other leaders) who are faithful to God's Word. This is what every believer should look for when trying to choose a church. The word "church" sometimes means people; sometimes a building, and sometimes a denomination (i.e. Lutheran, Catholic, Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist, Evangelical, Orthodox, etc.) The Church is found where the Gospel is proclaimed and the sacraments are properly distributed. Church is not a weekly "one-hour" activity, but it is people caring for others 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Church is not a group of perfect people, but a group who depends on God's grace and forgiveness for eternal life, and a group who extends the same to others.

LESSON 7: THE CHRISTIAN LIFESTYLE

Who is holding hands in this picture? What does the picture mean? If we hold firmly to Jesus, what kinds of problems can we avoid falling into? Let's discover together!

I. OUR SOURCE OF STRENGTH: Read II Peter 1:3-4

1. What has God given us to live a life of godliness? _____
2. Read verse 4. What else has He given us, to help us? _____
3. We will live a life of joy and peace when we realize that the Christian life means trusting, moment by moment, in the _____ of God.

II. A PRACTICAL PROMISE FOR EVERY DAY: Read I Corinthians 10:12-13

1. What kind of problem is mentioned in these verses? _____
2. Give some examples of how Satan tempts a child of God. _____
3. What is God's promise to you in these verses? _____

III. DAILY CUSTOMS OF A CHRISTIAN: Since you have a new life in Jesus Christ, God the Holy Spirit will give you the power to live your new life in the following ways:

1. Read James 4:7. When you are tempted, what should you do, in regard to Satan?
_____ God promises that if we resist Satan, Satan will _____. When we do this, we won't have to live a life full of _____. (Write the word or words from one of the six problems above.)
2. Read I John 1:8-2:2. How does a Christian handle the feelings of regret that come after doing something wrong? _____
God promises that He will _____.
By doing this, we won't be burdened by _____.
3. Read I John 1:7. We don't have to fight Satan's temptations alone. Not only is God with us, we also have _____. By sharing our burdens with others, we won't fall into _____.

4. Read John 8:31-32. What has God given us, so that we can know Him, and we can better understand the Christian life? _____ God promises that those who know His Word will know the _____. By studying and applying God's Word, we can avoid being deceived into _____.

5. Read Philippians 4:6-7. What can a Christian do when worried? _____ What does God promise to give us when we pray? _____ By doing this, we won't fall into _____.

6. Read Colossians 4:2-6. Following Paul's example, every day, we should look for opportunities to _____. We pray for God to open a _____. As we make helping others to know Jesus Christ as their Savior our highest priority in life, we will never feel that we have _____.

LESSON 8: PRAYER

- I. What is prayer?
 - A. How does God speak to you? See Joshua 1:8, Colossians 3:16, Acts 2:42
 - B. How do you speak to God? See Psalm 19:14, Matthew 6:5-8
Is God pleased when we participate in formal public prayer, following a prescribed pattern, such as in a worship service? See Matthew 6:9-13
 - C. Does it matter to whom we address our prayers? See John 14:13-14, John 16:23

- II. What should be the nature of our prayers?
 - A. For what do we pray? See John 15:7, Philippians 4:6, Psalm 136:1, Romans 8:26-27
 - B. For whom should we pray? Luke 22:40, Acts 7:59-60, Matthew 5:44, Colossians 4:3, I Timothy 2:1-2, James 5:16

Should we pray for the dead? See Hebrews 9:27
What do we pray for in the following prayer, spoken at the death of a child of God?
“Lord God, the Maker of heaven and earth, the Giver of life, we give thanks for all the mercies you granted to _____ during his/her earthly life, especially for calling him/her to faith in Jesus Christ. Comfort the survivors who mourn his/her death with the hope of the glorious resurrection and a happy reunion in heaven. Lead all of us to remember that we are mortal so that we will ever prepare our hearts to fall asleep in faith and finally receive the glory promised to all who trust in your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.”
(LUTHERAN WORSHIP AGENDA)
 - C. When and where should we pray? See Matthew 6:6, Mark 1:35, I Kings 18:36-39, Acts 6:6, I Thessalonians 5:16-18
Is saying a prayer in public ever the wrong thing to do? See Luke 18:9-14

- III. What response should we expect from God when we pray?
 - A. Does God always hear our prayers? See Psalm 139:1-4, Isaiah 65:24, I John 5:14
 - B. Does God always answer our prayers? See Exodus 3: 7-10, II Corinthians 12:7-9
 - C. Do we always get what we ask for in prayer? See Matthew 26:36-44, Luke 11:5-13
 - D. Why should we always conclude our prayers with “Your will be done?” See Romans 8:28-39.

- IV. What attitude should we have as we pray? See Mark 11: 22-24, James 1:6-7

BASIC CHRISTIAN TEACHING/BELIEF

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