

**A Journey of Stories**

**Presenters Notes**

PATHWAYS SPIRITUAL – RETREAT MODE

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| **PRE-RETREAT** | | | | |
| **PURPOSE:**  To clarify what ‘retreat mode’ looks like:   * Decide on a time-line to prepare resources [and staff] * To suggest a couple of opening retreat devotions * To co-plan leaders for each session * To create an inviting retreat space for all participants | | **FOCUS QUESTIONS:**   * **What is a Christian spiritual retreat?** * **What do we need to do to get ready for our staff retreat?** * **Who will lead and participate? What must be planned and organised?** * **What will our retreat space/sacred space look like?** | | **BIBLE REFERENCES:**  And early in the morning, while it was still dark, He arose and went out and departed to a lonely place, and was praying there.  *(*[*Mark 1:35*](http://www.jesuscentral.com/ji/life-of-jesus-ancient/biography-of-jesus-christ/who-is-Jesus-by-mark/gospel-of-mark-1_35-39.php)*)*  But He Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray.  *(* [*Luke 5:16*](http://www.jesuscentral.com/ji/life-of-jesus-ancient/biography-of-jesus-christ/who-is-Jesus-by-luke/gospel-of-luke-5_12-16.php)*)* |
| **RETREAT REQUIREMENTS:**  **VENUE SET UP** – INSTRUCTIONS: no tables, participants to wear comfy clothes and bring cushion to sit on.  PARTICIPANTS BRING: their story box and a ‘favourite’ Bible verse that connects with their story  SCHOOL-PREPARED RETREAT PACK; **containing Retreat booklet, posits, highlighters, lolly pack,** | |
| **DATE: Retreat Day - St. Stephens. End of Pupil Free Week 2015**  **RETREAT LEADERS: Co-facilitators: Ian Marks & Luke Spilsbury (and Meg Noack)**  PRICNIPAL Ian’s Sessions –  SCHOOL PASTOR Luke’s Sessions  REGIONAL REP [by request of school] Meg’s Sessions  ADDITIONAL RETREAT ACTIVITY LEADERS: Movement/Physical Activity Session – GEORGIA OR CHELSEA.  SHARING THE SCHOOL AND CONGREGATION STORIES: [GUESTS/SCHOOL STAFF] Janice/Amanda  **CREATING A SACRED SPACE AT THE RETREAT:**  *Key items to Bring*:  Bible – Meg/Ian/Luke  Ulos – Meg  School Cross – Ian/Luke (to be constructed?)  School symbol – Ian/Luke  **PRELIMINARY TASKS: TERM 3, 2014**  Outline of day – Meg  Retreat Booklet – containing stimulus, reflection and sharing questions for each session – 1st draft – Meg; Editors Luke & Ian  Groupings in particular sessions – Ian  Retreat Space preparation - ??  Retreat Location: ?? | | | | |
| **WELCOME AND OPENING DEVOTION**  **8.30 Welcome – Ian** | | | | |
|  | **OPTION 1** | | **PEDAGOGICAL OPTION 2** | |
| OPENING DEVOTION | **RETREATS: SETTING EXPLANATION: focus on the centrality of the cross**  Participants write down worries on coloured paper/coloured post-it notes and then tear into pieces and then glue onto large wooden, free-standing cross.  [Take the cross from the chapel area/or replicate the cross from the front garden]  Explain the symbolism and link to explanation of ‘retreat’ where individually/collectively we recognise we have a place to leave our worries; and have time and space to individually and collegially pause, listen and reflect on relationships and connections – inwards [connecting our own head and heart] – outwards [with each other] and ‘upwards’ [listening to and hearing about God and His great love for us].  *John 14:6New International Version (NIV)*  ***6****Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.* | | **RETREATS: SETTING EXPLANATION: focus on Ulos ‘pathway’ leading to the cross and open Bible**  **Ceremonial Textile (*Ulos Ragidup*)**, Toba Batak people, Sumatra, Indonesia. Cotton; L.  The most sacred textiles of the Batak people of northern Sumatra are the *Ulos ragidup,* whose name literally means "pattern of life." Both during and beyond an individual's life, *Ulos ragidup* play central roles It is referred to as a ‘soul cloth’ – important at the birth of the first child, in marriage and death.  In pre-Christian times, the item was a supernaturally powerful object of protection – where complex woven patterns foretold futures.  Today, the Batak people claim Christianity as their religion. Church life is very important. As guests of Batak Christians, we have ceremonially received Ulos [where it is wrapped around us by key people at that location]. We have also received a variety of explanations that include reference to the Batak’s strong Christian heritage.  “An Ulos will keep you warm. But also spiritually warm.”  “Ulos’ are important in our families still. You are part of our family ‘in Christ’.”  “We wrap you in our hearts and Jesus’ heart too”  “May God protect you and go with you until we meet again”  These Ulos are placed here [holding the Christian symbols of the Bible and the Cross] as an invitation to us – too feel embraced together in the love of God [which is expressed by Jesus sacrifice on the Cross and is revealed through the Word]; wrapped and warmed by God’s gift of grace. in Grace  My prayer today is that you as an individual – and that together as a community you will feel ‘wrapped up’ and warmed by God’s love and the gift of grace – as represented by these Ulos’.  *DEUT 33: 27 “The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms”.* | |

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| **SESSION 1: SPIRITUALITY** | | | |
| **PURPOSE:**   * Begin to investigate the meaning of ‘spirituality’ * Consider different descriptions of Christian spirituality * Reflect on one’s own understandings about Christian spirituality | | **FOCUS QUESTIONS:**   * **Does a person’s spirituality impact on the way they live, work and relate?** * **What is Christian spirituality?** * **What has shaped the development of your spirituality?** | **REQUIREMENTS:** (items bolded are essential - no matter which option is selected)  **RETREAT HANDBOOK** |
| **REFLECTION STIMULUS**  Christian spirituality provides:   * a story to enter * a language to speak * a group to which we belong * away to pray * a work to undertake * a face of God to see | | **BIBLE REFERENCES:**  To have faith is to be sure of the things we hope for, to be certain of the things we cannot see.  *Hebrews 11:1 (GNB)*  For it is by God’s grace that you have been saved through faith. It is not the result of your own efforts, but God’s gift, so that no one can boast about it.  *Ephesians 2:8,9 (GNB)* | |
| **THEOLOGICAL FOCUS:** *O God, you have made us for yourself and our hearts are restless until they can find rest in you.*  This is the way St Augustine begins his ‘Confessions’. He points out that all human beings, whether they recognise it or not, have what has been called ‘a God-shaped ‘hole’ inside them (Acts 17:27-28; Rom 1:19-20). This universal human experience is the focus for the first session.  We recognise that each new member who comes into the Lutheran school community will bring with him/her a particular spirituality based on who they are, their beliefs and values, their life experiences, their personality and the assumptions out of which they live and which provide meaning and purpose for their daily living. Their **spirituality isn’t simply some feeling or emotional experience but something which impacts on them as a whole person, body, mind and spirit**. It provides the motivation for how they relate to other people and to the whole of creation.  While the spirituality of every person must be respected and valued, this session also recognises that for many members of the Lutheran school community, faith in Jesus Christ will be a central element of their spirituality. **Christian spirituality is the result of the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives as we live as God’s people by the transforming power** (Rom 12:2) of the Holy Spirit (‘vocation’) and develop our spirituality through prayer, Bible reading, worship, and spiritual disciplines such as meditation, contemplation and celebration.  There are many **different approaches to, and expressions of, Christian spirituality.** Some find their point of origin in God as creator and see God's activity in creation and through history. Some emphasise the work of the Holy Spirit and focus on the gifts of the Spirit in the lives of Christians. Others stress contemplation and prayer and resting in God, or living a holy life (possibly taking vows of poverty, chastity and obedience), or being involved in dealing with injustice and human suffering.  **A Lutheran approach to spirituality** can draw on these approaches and practices but will be grounded in the gospel and the freedom which comes in Jesus Christ. It will focus on the word of God and depend on the grace of God. Lutheran spirituality emphasises the personal nature of our relationship with God, but also stresses the centrality of communal worship and the blessings of word and sacrament in that worship. While it values stillness and silence, it does not retreat from the world, but seeks to express itself in service of others, using the gifts God gives through the working of the Holy Spirit.  **CONCEPTS IN FOCUS:**   * Spirituality in general terms * Christian spirituality * Appreciating what is meant by spirituality from a Lutheran context | | | |
|  | **SESSION 1: SPIRITUALITY (45 minutes)**  **PEDAGOGY: SYMBOL-SELECT/RESOURCE HANDOUT REFLECT/INDIVIDUAL WALK AND REFLECT**  **[OPTIONAL: RETURN FOR WHOLE GROUP RE-GATHERING/PLACE IMAGES/BIBLE WORDS ON THE ULOS]** | | |
| STIMULUS | Use outdoors if weather and setting applicable.  INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION TIME: Provide the participants with the Resource Handout, What is Spirituality?, and ask them to read and highlight the different descriptions of spirituality using the following key:   * Anything you think is really important * Anything that raises questions for you * Anything that challenges your ideas about spirituality   Ask them to choose one that they find particularly helpful in describing spirituality. | | |
| REFLECTION | COPY QUESTIONS ON CARD   * What is central to Christian spirituality? * What is the role of Jesus in Christian spirituality?  1. Participants individually think about /select images provided (e.g. from Meg’s images of trees) or invent metaphors that may help depict an understanding of Christian spirituality Or draw an image of your own or write a short series of statements. | | |
| SHARING | DISPLAY IMAGES AND BIBLE WORDS ON PATHWAYS ULOS | | |
| PRAYER | Provide time for the participants to reflect individually AS THEY PLACE THEIR PICTURES/BIBLE WORDS/SAYINGS   * What three things will you take away from the session? * What did you learn that you did not know before? * What have you learned about spirituality that will be helpful as you work in the school?   EXEMPLAR STATEMENTS:  ***Christian Spirituality provides:***  A story to enter; a language to speak, a group to which we belong; a way to pray; a work to undertake; a face of God to see [Fr. Claude Marechael, Assumptionist]  Jesus Christ as my Saviour: he forgives my sins and sets me free. Jesus Christ as my teacher: he teaches me wisdom and guides me into truth. Jesus Christ as my Lord: he lives at the centre of my life. Jesus Christ as my Friend: he understands and comforts me. [Smith, J & Graybeal, L: A spiritual formation workbook. p. 25] | | |

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| **SESSION 2: STORIES** | | | |
| **PURPOSE:**   * Reflect on their personal story * Consider the school story * Explore the LCA story * Begin to connect their story to that of the school and church | | **FOCUS QUESTIONS:**   * **Who have been important people and what have been important events in my story?** * **How has my story shaped my spirituality?** * **What is the school’s story?** * **How has this shaped the way the school gives expression to its spirituality?** | **REQUIREMENTS:**   * Participant’s shoe box * Bible verse (FAVOURITE OPTIONAL) * 3 participants to share the school’s story and 1 to share the congregation’s story (in relation to the school). |
| **REFLECTION STIMULUS**  Story is the most natural way of enlarging and deepening our sense of reality, and then enlisting us as participants in it. Stories open doors to areas or aspects of life that we didn’t know were there, or had quit noticing out of over familiarity or supposed were out-of-bounds to us. They then welcome us in. Stories are verbal acts of hospitality.  [Eugene Peterson, Christ plays in ten thousand places, p 13] | | | |
| **BIBLE REFERENCES:**  For I am certain that nothing can separate us from his love: neither death nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the future, neither the world above nor the world below – there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord.  *Romans 8:38, 39 (GNB)*  Israel, the Lord who created you says, ‘Do not be afraid – I will save you. I have called you by name – you are mine. When you pass through deep waters, I will be with you; your troubles will not overwhelm you. When you pass through fire, you will not be burned; the hard trials that come will not hurt you. For I am the Lord your God, the holy God of Israel, who saves you … I will give up whole nations to save your life, because you are precious to me and because I love you and give you honour.  *Isaiah 43:1-3a, 4 (GNB)* | | | |
| **THEOLOGICAL FOCUS:** The following description of spirituality by Jesuit writer David Tuohy emphasises the important relationship between individual spirituality and the spirituality of the Lutheran school and supporting community:  *Spirituality … is the lived dimension of faith. It is how faith looks in everyday relationships, attitudes, values and behaviours. It is the set of assumptions an individual lives out of, and where he or she chooses to locate meaning. For the Christian, this works on both a communal and personal level. The meaning of life is centred on a God who sent the Son and the Spirit to save his people and be with them. A personal spirituality emerges in the dialogue between this communal faith story and the concrete events of each individual’s life experience. (Leading life to the full, p 20)*  While one’s spirituality is intensely personal, it also has a vital communal dimension. When we are baptised, we are not only incorporated into Christ and his death and resurrection, but we are also incorporated into the Christian community (the ‘body of Christ’). Our personal spirituality becomes part of a larger and very varied tapestry of shared spiritual experiences.  Our Christian spirituality also draws us into the trinitarian relationship of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Through the work of the Spirit, we come to know Jesus Christ who reveals to us the love of the Father. We know God as the one who has created us, who has redeemed us, and who makes us holy. We experience Jesus Christ as our advocate with the Father, and the Spirit as the one who prays to the Father with our spirit when we do not know what or how to pray.  In the Lutheran school context, the community of faith provides a haven of hospitality in which the new staff member can explore his/her own spiritual experiences and relate them to the spirituality of the school which is expressed through the story of the school as shown in its history, purpose, logo, celebrations, personalities, etc. In this way, the dialogue between the communal and personal expressions of spirituality is fostered.  **CONCEPTS IN FOCUS**  This session involves the participants sharing their story so that others may get to know them. The following options suggest different ways participants may choose to share their story. Options are provided to assist with the telling of their stories. It will be important to establish a positive, caring and safe environment so participants will feel confident to share and will not be judged or criticised. To begin the section, it is recommended that the workshop leader briefly share his or her story using one of the options below.  **My story**   * Encourages me to explore and articulate my own spiritual journey and its various stages * Allows me to see my own spirituality as important but also as part of a larger and very varied tapestry of shared spiritual experiences   **My school story**   * Is expressed in its history, personalities, celebrations, logo, purpose, etc * Reflects the spirituality of my school   **The local LCA story (congregation)**   * Some aspects of the story of the LCA and the congregation(s) relate to the school * Who are these ‘Lutherans’ anyway! | | | |
|  | **SESSION 2: STORIES (45 Minutes)**  **PEDAGOGY: PERSONAL NARRATIVES [SMALL GROUP/WHOLE GROUP – WG]** | | |
| STIMULUS | Groups to set by Ian and or LUKE  Participants reflect on their story and select a Bible verse from those provided (or could be their own verse) that speaks to them. | | |
| REFLECTION | In small groups participants find a space to share their story through their shoebox and Bible verse. Glue or write Bible verse into their journal. | | |
| SHARING | The School’s Story.  TWO staff members are invited to share information about the school’s story. An incident that happened to them which speaks about the school and it’s makeup. Stories that are woven into the fabric of the school – the stories people remember.  The School’s Story JANICE – LONG SERVING TEACHER  The Congregation’s Story - AMANDA – CONGREGATION MEMBER | | |
| PRAYER |  | | |

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| **SESSION 3: GODS’ STORY WITH HIS PEOPLE** | | | |
| **PURPOSE:**   * Consider God’s story, the Bible * Explore the ways the Bible can be helpful for spiritual growth | | **FOCUS QUESTIONS:**   * **What do I know or believe about the Bible?** * **Why is the Bible important for Christians?** * **How does the school witness to the importance of the Bible?** | **REQUIREMENTS:**   * Tom Christenson quote * Theological focus * (OPTIONAL) Bible readings 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21;John 5:39; Luke 24:25-27 |
| **REFLECTION STIMULUS:**  Who is this God at the heart of Christianity? So what god or gods do Christians worship? In one sense it is the god without a name, a god who responds, when asked for a name, ’I am there whoever I am there’, who frustrates every effort to be named. In another sense it is a god with three names: Creator, Redeemer, Spirit – that lives – in - us. In another sense it is the god with only one name, Love – Love that embraces the world in a way that takes the shape of a cross, a love that, in turn, transforms everything and can be shared by each of us by embracing our world and those in it. That’s the story at the heart of the Lutheran telling of the Christi an vision, which is itself a telling of an old Hebrew story of a loving God. That’s the story about which we ask ’How does this story inform knowing, learning, teaching and human becoming in the contemporary world? What kind of college or university should be built and maintained by those who tell such a story? What kind of work is there for us to do in such a place? ’[Tom Christenson, The Gift and Task of Lutheran Higher Education] | | | |
| **BIBLE REFERENCES:**  Your word is a lamp to guide me and a light for my path’.  *Psalm 119:105 (GNB)*  Everything written in the Scriptures was written to teach us, in order that we might have hope through the patience and encouragement the Scriptures gives us. *Romans 15:4 (GNB)*  So he decided long ago to adopt us as his children. He did it because of what Jesus Christ has done. It pleased God to do it. All those things bring praise to his glorious grace. God freely gave us his grace because of the One he loves. We have been set free because of what Christ has done. Through his blood our sins have been forgiven. We have been set free because God's grace is so rich. He poured his grace on us by giving us great wisdom and understanding.  *Ephesians 1:5-8 (NIRV)* | | | |
| **THEOLOGICAL FOCUS:** In the Bible God reveals himself to us so that we can honour, love and trust him as our God. The Bible contains the story of God working with his people and through his people and it makes known God’s marvellous plan for saving the fallen world (the ‘history of salvation’) which reached its climax in the coming to earth of Jesus Christ, to live, die and rise again as the saviour of the world.  The biblical narrative reveals God as the creator who continues his creative activity in the world. It reveals Jesus Christ as the way of salvation and the Holy Spirit as the one who brings us to faith and who in this way creates and preserves the Christian community. The Bible links together the way in which God revealed himself to his people in the Old Testament, at the time of Christ, and still reveals himself today.  So that we and all people of all time can know what God has revealed and the word he has spoken through the prophets and apostles and particularly through Jesus Christ, the Word who came in human flesh, God has given us his written word in the books of the Old and New Testaments. The Bible is a library of books in various forms, written in human words by human beings. Although God used the personality and style of the human writers, their language, literary methods, knowledge of nature and history, experience of God, etc, the Bible is also a divine book because the various writings were inspired by the Holy Spirit and therefore God is the author (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21). Just as Jesus Christ is both fully human and fully divine, so too the Bible is human and divine in all its parts. This cannot be explained rationally but is accepted in faith.  The centre of the Bible is its witness to Jesus Christ (‘christocentric’). Jesus challenged his hearers to recognise that the Scriptures testify to him (John 5:39; Luke 24:25-27). This means that the Bible must be interpreted in the light of Christ and the gospel. The clear message of God’s love and grace and forgiveness must come through for the reader.  **CONCEPTS IN FOCUS**  The biblical narrative as the story of God and his creation, his work of salvation and the work of creating Christian community:     * recognising that Jesus Christ is the centre of the biblical story * the Bible is not a book of laws, doctrines, etc | | | |
|  | **SESSION 3: Gods’ story with his people (40 Minutes)**  **PEDAGOGY:** | | |
| STIMULUS | Session  Participants read the Christensen quote and the theological notes with the related Bible readings. | | |
| REFLECTION | PUZZLE THE PASTOR PUZZLE THE PRINCIPAL…. Questions you always wanted to know but are afraid to ask… WRITE AND PLACE IN THE QUESTION BOX: starter questions could include:  COPY QUESTIONS ON CARD   * What is your understanding of God’s story? * How could God’s story inform knowing, learning, teaching and human becoming in the contemporary world? * What kind of school should be built and maintained by those who tell such a story? | | |
| SHARING | Entering THE STORY:  EXCELLENT RESOURCES:  “The Story” – with forward by Max Lucardo … THE MESSAGE BIBLE … EXAMPLES OF BIBLES <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o1JY_vEdOK8> | | |
| PRAYER |  | | |

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| **SESSION 4: GOD’S MESSAGE FOR ME** | | | |
| **PURPOSE:**   * Explore some key themes of the Bible * reflect on the Bible’s message for each person | | **FOCUS QUESTIONS:**   * **What are key themes of the Bible?** * **What is the Bible’s message for each person?** * **What is God’s message for me?** | **REQUIREMENTS:** |
| **REFLECTION STIMULUS**  O Lord Jesus, your words to your Father were born out of your silence. Lead me into this silence, so that my words may be spoken in your name and thus be fruitful. It is so hard to be silent, silent with my mouth, but even more, silent with my heart. There is so much talking going on within me. It seems that I am always involved in inner debates with myself, my friends, my enemies, my supporters, my opponents, my colleagues, and my rivals. But this inner debate reveals how far my heart is from you. If I were simply to rest at your feet and realize that I belong to you and you alone, I would easily stop arguing with all the real and imagined people around me. These arguments show my insecurity, my fear, my apprehensions, and my need for being recognized and receiving attention. You, O Lord, will give me all the attention I need if I would simply stop talking and start listening to you. I know that in the silence of my heart you will speak to me and show me your love. Give me, O Lord, that silence. Let me be patient and grow slowly into this silence in which I can be with you. Amen.  [Henri Nouwen, Writings selected with an introduction by Robert A Jonas, p 11] | | | |
| **BIBLE REFERENCES:**  For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life.  John 3:16 (GNB) | | | |
| **THEOLOGICAL FOCUS:** The Bible is not only the story of God working in the world as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but it is also the story of God working for me and with me. In the Bible, God’s story and my story intersect. The biblical story tells me that I am enclosed in God’s grace and forgiveness – that what Jesus came to do in his life, death and resurrection, he came to do also for me.  God’s story in the Bible also links me with Abraham, Moses, Miriam, David, Isaiah, Elizabeth, Mary, Peter and all the nameless people of God in the Bible. It also links my story with that of all Christians everywhere and it shapes my story as I interact with others.  The central question which the Bible addresses to me is the same question that Jesus addressed to his disciples (Mat 16:15); ‘Who do you say that I am?’ How I answer that question determines how I relate to Jesus Christ and the grace and forgiveness which he offers to me. Led by the Holy Spirit, I can confess with Peter, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God!’  Since God has revealed himself and his gift of salvation to us in his word, the Bible is the basis for Christian meditation. God’s word is the power (Rom 1:16-17) which makes Christian spirituality possible. Remaining in contact with that word is crucial for the life of a Christian.  Christian meditation has its focus on God and his word rather than on any potential within us as individuals. We stand under the word of God and listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking through that word with the outcome of a joyful response to God in confession, prayer and praise rather than finding one’s ‘true self’ or solving one’s personal problems. Martin Luther spoke of a three-fold approach to meditation based on the word of God. First comes prayer for the Holy Spirit to speak through the word of God and inspire our thoughts. Secondly comes meditation, which Luther practiced by reading and repeating the word aloud so that the word moves from the tongue to the ear and to the heart (not from the eye to the brain!). Thirdly, Luther identified the process of testing as the word has its impact on one’s life and the difficulties and suffering (also from the temptation of the devil) which lead the Christian back to Christ and the gospel.  **CONCEPTS IN FOCUS**  The biblical narrative as the story of God and his creation, his work of salvation and the work of creating Christian community:   * Recognising that Jesus Christ is the centre of the biblical story * The Bible is not a book of laws, doctrines, etc * Exploring key themes of the Bible, eg, creation (continuing), rescue, community   **appreciating** that the biblical story is also the story of God working with and for me   * The biblical story shows that I am enclosed in God’s grace and forgiveness * At the centre of that story I am asked to respond to the invitation of the gospel and the person of Jesus Christ who asks, Who do you say that I am?   **appreciating** that through faith in Jesus Christ I am a member of the Christian community   * I live within that community and continue to grow within it * I can therefore draw on the resources of that community | | | |
|  | **SESSION 4: God’s message for me**  **PEDAGOGY:** | | |
| STIMULUS | BIG THEMES OF THE BIBLE… HARRY WENDT…  GROUPWORK KEY THEMES OF THE BIBLE PARTICIPANTS BOOKLET… | | |
| REFLECTION | Question to share back as a main group:  What we learnt about… e.g. God’s people, God’s forgiveness, prayers. (see folder for verses)  (share key words and phrases Place a bible in the centre of the group space and participants read their favourite bible words and come and place that text on the poster beneath the open bible…  Create a collage with an open bible and cross as a focus where people reflect upon what they have learnt about the Bible and its importance for people. | | |
| SHARING | In groups participants discuss their responses to questions:  COPY QUESTIONS ON CARD   * *What do you think are common misconceptions about the Bible?* * *Is the concept of the Bible as God’s story helpful?* * *How could God’s story inform knowing, learning, teaching and human becoming in the contemporary world?* * *What kind of school should be built and maintained by those who tell such a story?* | | |
| PRAYER |  | | |

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| **SESSION 5: COMMUNITY OF FAITH** | | | |
| **PURPOSE:**   * Explore the nature of the school as a ‘community of faith’ * Consider ways the school community gives expression to faith through worship * Consider the spiritual disciplines as a means of nurturing the community of faith | | **FOCUS QUESTIONS:**   * **What are the ways the ‘community of faith’ within the school gives expression to its faith?** * **What are the features of worship, prayer and Bible study in a school setting?** * **How does the school community provide opportunity to practice any of the disciplines?** * **Which disciplines have I experienced or wish to experience?** | **REQUIREMENTS:** |
| **REFLECTION STIMULUS**  The discipline of community makes us persons; that is people who are sounding through to each other (the Latin word personare means ‘sounding through’) a truth, a beauty, and a love which is greater, fuller, and richer than we ourselves can grasp. In true community we are windows constantly offering each other new views on the mystery of God’s presence in our lives ... The question is not simply, ’Where does God lead me as an individual person who tries to do his will?’ More basic and more significant is the question, ‘Where does God lead us as a people?’ This question requires that we pay careful attention to God’s guidance in our life together and that together we search for a creative response.  [Henri Nouwen, Making All Things New, p87, 88] | | | |
| **BIBLE REFERENCES:**  You are God's chosen people. You are holy and dearly loved. So put on tender mercy and kindness as if they were your clothes. Don't b proud. Be gentle and patient. Put up with each other. Forgive the things you are holding against one another. Forgive, just as the Lord forgave you. And over all of those good things put on love. Love holds them all together perfectly as if they were one. Let the peace that Christ gives rule in your hearts. As parts of one body, you were appointed to live in peace. And be thankful.  *Colossians 3:12-15 (NIRV)*  As a deer longs for a stream of cool water, so I long for you, O God. I thirst for you, the living God; when can I go and worship in your presence?  *Psalm 42:1,2 (GNB)*  Be still, and know that I am God.  *Psalm 46:10a (NIRV)* | | | |
| **THEOLOGICAL FOCUS:** Within the Lutheran school there is a community of faith which is made up of believers from various Christian traditions who confess a personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and saviour. Through the working of the Holy Spirit, the members of the community of faith are nurtured in their faith as they participate in such activities as worship (including the sacrament), prayer, study of the word of God, fellowship, hospitality, care and various spiritual disciplines. Through word and sacrament, and through the witness of these members, the Holy Spirit may also bring others into this community of faith within the Lutheran school.  This community of faith provides the supportive formation environment for those who are new to the school community of faith and learning. It provides the opportunity for the new staff member to relate his/her personal story to the spiritual story of the school. The new member is also invited and encouraged to participate in those activities which develop and promote the spiritual life of the school such as worship, corporate and private prayer, Bible studies and other theological studies, fellowship, etc.  The Lutheran school also provides a ‘haven of hospitality’ in which staff can explore various spiritual disciplines. While some staff may have considerable experience in various spiritual disciplines (for example meditation, worship, study, solitude), others may have no real experience in this area at all. In fact, some people may be rather wary about participating in these experiences. This is where it is important to discuss with new staff members the centrality of worship in the life of the school, the place of Bible study and other theological studies, the practice of praying with and for one another, a regular devotional life and the place of word and sacrament ministry. Also important is reflection on the ministry of care, encouragement, fellowship and hospitality in further developing a sense of community.  **CONCEPTS IN FOCUS**  God has provided the school community   * Worship is an integral part of the rhythm of Lutheran school life   + An opportunity to be served by God and to respond in worship together with other members of the community   + Worship provides the resources to live a daily life of worship through serving others      * The Lutheran school is a community of prayer   + Developing my corporate and private prayer life   + Prayer partners, etc      * Regular Bible study provides   + A channel for the Holy Spirit to provide strength, insight, direction and refreshment   + Resources for preparing worship and teaching Christian Studies     The Lutheran school community is a safe environment (a haven of hospitality) in which I   * Can explore expressions of spirituality and develop those disciplines which support my own spirituality:   + Individual disciplines, eg, meditation, solitude, study   + Corporate disciples, eg, confession, celebration   + A context in which to express support, care, compassion, encouragement, hospitality for one another | | | |
|  | **SESSION 5: Community of Faith**  **PEDAGOGY:** | | |
| STIMULUS | SESSION 5: CLOSING  (RECOMMEND – as closing…. Focus on 2 particular disciplines… primarily to lead into action or doing… or practicing…  e,g discipline of service – and include an act of service. …  e,g, discipline of worship – closing worship  e.g. meditation… conduct a meditation – include in closing worship… (stillness exercise)  e.g. prayer – Prayer of St. Francis. | | |
| REFLECTION |  | | |
| SHARING |  | | |
| PRAYER |  | | |

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| **SESSION 6: GOD’S SPECIAL CREATIONS** | | | |
| **PURPOSE:**   * Explore what it means to be a special creation of God * Consider ways of keeping the dimensions of life in balance | | **FOCUS QUESTIONS:**   * **Who am I?** * **What does God think of me?** * **What has God created me to do?** | **REQUIREMENTS:** **BIBLE**   * Reflection stimulus ‘Living from Belovedness’ * Bible readings ‘God’s Special Creations’. * Paper and several roles of tape |
| **REFLECTION STIMULUS**  Living from Belovedness When Jesus was baptised in the Jordan, he heard a voice from heaven, saying, ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased’ (Matt.3:17). These words revealed the true identity of Jesus as the beloved... I know now that the words spoken to Jesus when he was baptised are words spoken also to me and to all who are brothers and sisters of Jesus. My tendencies toward self-rejection and self-depreciation make it hard to hear these words truly and let them descend into the center of my heart. But once I have received these words fully, I am set free from my compulsion to prove myself to the world and can live in it without belonging to it. Once I have accepted the truth that I am God’s beloved child, unconditionally loved, I can be sent into the world to speak and to act as Jesus did. The great spiritual task facing me is to so fully trust that I belong to God that I can be free in the world – free to speak even when my words are not received; free to act even when my actions are criticized, ridiculed, or considered useless; free also to receive love from people and to be grateful for all the signs of God’s presence in the world. I am convinced that I will truly be able to love the world when I fully believe that I am loved far beyond its boundaries.  [Henri Nouwen , Modern Spiritual Masters Series, p72 | | | |
| **REFERENCES:**  I think about the heavens. I think about what your fingers have created. I think about the moon and stars that you have set in place. What is a human being that you think about him? What is a son of man that you take care of him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings. You placed on him a crown of glory and honour.  *Psalm 8:3-5 (NIRV)*  God's gifts of grace come in many forms. Each of you has received a gift in order to serve others. You should use it faithfully. If you speak, you should do it like one speaking God's very words. If you serve, you should do it with the strength God provides. Then in all things God will be praised through Jesus Christ. Give him the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.  *1 Peter 4:10,11 (NIRV)*  There are different kinds of gifts. But they are all given by the same Spirit. There are different ways to serve. But they all come from the same Lord. There are different ways to work. But the same God makes it possible for all of us to have all those different things. The Holy Spirit is given to each of us in a special way. That is for the good of all.  *1 Corinthians 12:4–7(NIRV)* | | | |
| **THEOLOGICAL FOCUS:** In the Small Catechism, Martin Luther begins his explanation to the first article of the Creed with the words: ‘I believe that God has created me together with all that exists. God has given me and still preserves my body and soul: eyes, ears, and all limbs and senses; reason and all mental faculties.’ This is part of the theology of ‘continuing creation’ which sees God as active in the life of each person. It also emphasises that human beings are a special creation of God, the climax and crown of God’s creation (Ps 8:4-6).  While the Bible uses the terms ‘body’, ‘soul’ and ‘spirit’ to speak about human beings, it is important not to suggest that a human being is made up of three ‘parts’ (as for example in Greek philosophy). We do not ‘have’ a body, a soul and a spirit, but we are body, we are soul and we are spirit (I Thess 5:23). The body needs to be seen as part of God’s ‘good’ creation (Gen 1:31) and should be treated as such also because the body will rise again at the end of time (Phil 3:20-21, 1 Cor 15:35-57). Each person also needs to appreciate the necessity to develop ‘holistically’ and keep a healthy balance of body, mind and spirit. Time and space needs to be provided also for spiritual development.  Each individual person is unique. While there may be many similarities with other persons, no two human beings are identical. God has given each person distinctive characteristics and abilities. These gifts do not establish our worth, because human worth does not depend on people’s abilities, talents or achievements; nor is it diminished by illness, handicap, age, or failure of any kind. Human worth certainly has nothing to do with race, colour, gender, distinctive characteristics and abilities, or anything else that distinguishes one human being from another.  All human beings, whether or not they realise it, are individual creations of God. This gives every individual worth and value in the eyes of God because they are all creatures of God whom he loves equally (Acts 10:34: ‘God does not show favouritism’). This value rests not only on the creative work of God, but also on the fact that Jesus has died for each individual and the Holy Spirit offers faith to each person and lives within each Christian.  **CONCEPTS IN FOCUS**   * I can see myself as one of God’s good creations – with value and purpose and dignity created in the ‘image of God’ * I appreciate that I am a total person – developing holistically in body mind and spirit, needing to keep all of this in balance: recognising that I am uniquely gifted * I have to care for myself – also take time and space for my spiritual development | | | |
|  | **SESSION 6: God’s special creations**  **PEDAGOGY:** | | |
| STIMULUS | In the large group read ‘Living from Belovedness’ | | |
| REFLECTION | REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS:   * What does God say about our value or worth? * How does Nouwen suggest our value impacts on the way we live?   Introduce the concept of God’s view of us as humans. Reflect on the question   * What are your gifts?   If you find identifying the ways God has gifted you difficult consider:   * What do you love to do? * How do you like to spend your time? * What do other people say you’re good at?   Reflection question in retreat resource – What does God want me to do with these gifts? | | |
| SHARING | * Participants have a piece of paper on their back and other participants record what that person’s gifts are. * Participants remove paper, read, glue in journals. | | |
| PRAYER |  | | |

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| **SESSION 7: FULFILLED IN RELATIONSHIP** | | | |
| **PURPOSE:**   * explore the importance of relationships * consider ways of keeping the dimensions of life in balance | | **FOCUS QUESTIONS:**   * **What relationships are important to me?** * **What is God’s plan for relationships?** | **REQUIREMENTS:**   * The Calling of Humans * Prayer |
| **REFLECTION STIMULUS**  Christianity means community through Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ. No Christian community is more or less than this. Whether it be a brief, single encounter or the daily fellowship of years, Christian community is only this. We belong to one another only through and in Jesus Christ. What does this mean? It means, first, that a Christian needs others because of Jesus Christ. It means, second, that a Christian comes to others only through Jesus Christ. It means, third, that in Jesus Christ we have been chosen from eternity, accepted in time, and united for eternity.  [D Bonhoeffer, Life Together, p11] | | | |
| **BIBLE REFERENCES:**  I give you a new command. Love one another. You must love one another, just as I have loved you. If you love one another, everyone will know you are my disciples.  *John 13:34,35 (NIRV)*    Suppose I speak in the languages of human beings and of angels. If I don't have love, I am only a loud gong or a noisy cymbal. Suppose I have the gift of prophecy. Suppose I can understand all the secret things of God and know everything about him. And suppose I have enough faith to move mountains. If I don't have love, I am nothing at all. Suppose I give everything I have to poor people. And suppose I give my body to be burned. If I don't have love, I get nothing at all. Love is patient. Love is kind. It does not want what belongs to others. It does not brag. It is not proud. It is not rude. It does not look out for its own interests. It does not easily become angry. It does not keep track of other people's wrongs. Love is not happy with evil. But it is full of joy when the truth is spoken. It always protects. It always trusts. It always hopes. It never gives up.  *1 Corinthians 13:1-8 (NIRV)*    Each of us has one body with many parts. And the parts do not all have the same purpose. So also we are many persons. But in Christ we are one body. And each part of the body belongs to all the other parts. We all have gifts. They differ in keeping with the grace that God has given each of us. Do you have the gift of prophecy? Then use it in keeping with the faith you have. Is it your gift to serve? Then serve. Is it teaching? Then teach. Is it telling others how they should live? Then tell them. Is it giving to those who are in need? Then give freely. Is it being a leader? Then work hard at it. Is it showing mercy? Then do it cheerfully. Love must be honest and true. Hate what is evil. Hold on to what is good. Love each other deeply. Honour others more than yourselves.  *Romans 12:4-10 (NIRV)* | | | |
| **THEOLOGICAL FOCUS:** The story of creation (Gen 2:14b-25) shows how highly God values relationships. God created everything to be in a state of perfect harmony. Human beings, created in the image of God, shared in harmonious and mutually beneficial relationships with each other which reflected the relationships within the trinity. Human relationships flowed out of, and were blessed by, a perfect relationship with the creator. Human beings were also in perfect harmony with the animals and all of the rest of creation. Before the advent of sin to distort and destroy those relationships, nothing disturbed them.    Although human beings are different from all the other creatures God created, the close relationship between human beings and the rest of creation is emphasised in the creation stories. God formed a human being from the dust of the ground and breathed his breath into that ‘person’ who became a living being (Gen 2:7). These two aspects need to be kept closely together – that human beings are one with the earth (which they share with all creation, and to which they will return) but contain the breath (spirit) of God. This means human beings have a ‘vertical’ relationship with God, and a ‘horizontal’ relationship with the rest of creation.    Human beings relate to each other at various levels. Each person is related to every other member of the human family, but God has placed us in a closer relationship with some people than with others. Relationships also change: for example parent/child relationships, friendships, work relationships, etc. The closer the relationship, the greater the mutual benefits, but also the responsibilities.    Sin has fragmented the relationships which God had established. The account of the fall (Gen 3) clearly shows how all relationships were immediately shattered by the advent of sin: between Adam and Eve (vs 7; 12); between God and human beings (vs 8; 10); between human beings and the rest of creation (vs 15; 17; 18). The natural self-centredness of sinful human beings leads to disharmony, conflict, and the breakdown of relationships at all levels. Individuals see themselves as the self-sufficient centre of the universe and see the rest of creation as provided for their benefit and exploitation. The Bible itself gives many examples of the tragedy of broken relationships (cf Gal 5:19-21).    Jesus Christ came to restore broken relationships. By restoring the relationship between God and human beings (the 'new creation'), Jesus also provides healing for all broken relationships: between the individual and him/her self; between the individual and other people; between people and the animals, the environment and all of creation. For Christ's sake God offers forgiveness and restoration and makes it possible for us to try to live in harmonious and loving relationships with one another. It also allows us to offer support and care to those who are experiencing difficulties in relationships (eg marriage breakdown, family strife, unacceptable work situations, congregational tensions, abuse and harassment, bullying, etc).  **CONCEPTS IN FOCUS**   * I am created for relationships with others and with God * I am fulfilled in relationship (family, church, society) * Relationships also help me experience brokenness and wholeness (sin and forgiveness) * I experience the struggle of being a ‘saint and sinner’ at the same time | | | |
|  | **SESSION 7: Fulfilled in Relationship (30 – 40 Minutes)**  **PEDAGOGY:** | | |
| STIMULUS |  | | |
| REFLECTION | Participants are asked to draw a series of concentric circles to show the many different relationships in which they are involved. Start with their closest relationships in the inner circles and extend this through to the less close relationships.  Reflecting on:   * How do relationships enrich my experience of life? * What challenges do I experience through relationships? | | |
| SHARING | **In pairs** participants read ‘The Calling of Humans’ discuss the questions:   * How does this describe the interconnectedness of relationships? * Why do you think it important to think about relationships in these ways?   This activity occurred as a culminating of our ‘outdoor session’   * Participants read prayer 1 JOHN 4: 7 – 21 and highlight sentence that speaks to them. * In large group circle reading of favourite verse. | | |
| PRAYER |  | | |

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| **SESSION 8: VOCATION THROUGH SERVICE** | | | |
| **PURPOSE:**   * Explore the concept of Christian service in the light of the Lutheran understanding of vocation * Reflect on their different roles and responsibilities * Consider areas into which God is calling them to serve | | **FOCUS QUESTIONS:**   * **What is Luther’s concept of vocation?** * **What is Christian service?** * **In what areas of life do you have a sense of service?** * **How is the concept of service developed in the school community?** | **REQUIREMENTS:**   * Vocation |
| **REFLECTION STIMULUS**  Before Luther the word vocation (Latin: vocation and German: Beruf) had been applied only to people who had a ‘religious vocation’, people called to be priests or monks or nuns. Luther challenged that usage and the view of human work it presupposed, that some are doing God’s work but others are not. Luther argued that the station of every Christian was a calling from God to serve the needs of our neighbour where we are as we are able. It isn’t that we need to serve God separately from our work. We serve God through our service to each other. Luther used the word vocation, therefore to apply to the work and duties of every person. The fish - pickler, the shoemaker, the schoolteacher, the mayor, the street cleaner, the prince, the pastor, the parent, even the student – each of these has a work and a responsibility given to her or him by virtue of this station.  [Tom Christenson, The gift and task of Lutheran Higher Education, p49] | | | |
| **BIBLE REFERENCES:**  For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.  *Ephesians 2:8-10 (NIV)*    An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest. Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took a little child and had him stand beside him. Then he said to them, ‘Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For he who is least among you all – he is the greatest’.  *Luke 9:46-48 (NIV)*  In the same way, let your light shine in front of others. Then they will see the good things you do. And they will praise your Father who is in heaven.  *Matthew 5:16 (NIRV)* | | | |
| **THEOLOGICAL FOCUS:** The word ‘vocation’ is often equated in school circles with 'occupation' or ‘career’, for example when speaking about 'vocational counselling' rather than 'career counselling'. ‘Vocation’ is seen as a means by which people make money and build up status in society. Often the idea of serving others by using one’s gifts and talents for the welfare of others is missing.  Theologically, ‘vocation’ has a much wider meaning. Christians are called (voco = ‘to call’ in Latin) to faith in Jesus Christ (Eph 4:1-5). They are also called to live a life of service to their neighbours (Eph 2:8-10), serving God by serving others. This service leads ultimately to praise of God as Christians function as salt and light in the world (Matt 5:16). The call to faith (vocation as believers) and the call to serve the neighbour (vocation to serve in the world) are inseparably connected for Christians. Faith is directed towards God: good works are directed to the neighbour.  Service may be motivated by a sense of care and responsibility for fellow human beings. While this may be based on a number of different motivations, theologically this can be seen as operating from an understanding of God as creator and all human beings as brothers and sisters of God as Father.  Jesus Christ, the suffering servant of God (Phil 2:6-11), came ‘not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many’ (Matt 20:28). Christians are called to identify with Jesus Christ in serving others. This is the cross which disciples of Christ ‘take up’ as they follow Christ (Matt 16:24).  Every person finds him/herself in a variety of areas of responsibility in life. Thus a person can be a child, a parent, a sibling, a grandparent, etc., all at the sametime. The person may have a paid occupation, serve on various community groups, have various roles within the congregation, work in the canteen at a school, be a volunteer caregiver, etc. All of these responsibilities become part of ‘vocation’ when they are used to serve others, and when that service is done in response to the love of God in Jesus Christ. A person may also find considerable changes in their places of vocation through life. The birth of a child, a new place of employment, the death of a family member, retirement, a change in place of residence, etc., all lead to significant changes in vocation.  One of the challenges for a staff member in a Lutheran school is to maintain a balance between the various areas of responsibility which that staff member has. He/she needs encouragement and support to ensure that a healthy balance is established and maintained. Staff members may also need assistance to deal with the pain, frustration, failure and even tragedy which may come in vocation as problems arise within the relationships of home, school and congregation. This is where we can ‘bear one another’s burdens, and in this way fulfil the law of Christ’ (Gal 6:2).  **CONCEPTS IN FOCUS**   * I see my teaching as ‘vocation’ – recognising and using the gifts God has given me in the service of others * I respect my responsibilities in education to church and to state * I witness to my faith in my various areas of responsibility * Spirituality means living as God wants me to live in the world in serving him by serving others. The school is one context in which I explore and develop my spirituality * I see my serving in the light of Jesus’ service to me: theology of the cross | | | |
|  | **SESSION 8: Vocation Through Service**  **PEDAGOGY:** | | |
| STIMULUS | Ask participants to draw a picture of themselves surrounded by the various roles or responsibilities they have at home, school, local worshipping community, local community etc. In the picture they show the strength of the relationships and levels of commitment to these various roles.  . | | |
| REFLECTION | Participants reflect on their time in the last week and:   * **Participants create a pie graph to show how they have spent their waking hours.** * **Participants spend some time reflecting on how the priority given to roles and responsibilities in the first activity is reflected in the second.** * **Is there congruence or inconsistency?** * **What challenges lie in trying to maintain congruence between keeping balance in life with the different roles and responsibilities?** * Participants read Vocation and reflect on the stated questions | | |
| SHARING | Prayer of St. Francis with cards: in groups with cards. | | |
| PRAYER |  | | |