

Pathways

Session 1
Spirituality



RESOURCES FOR THE PRESENTER



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Purposes of Session 1

For the participants to:

- begin to investigate the meaning of 'spirituality'
- consider different descriptions of Christian spirituality
- reflect on their own understandings about Christian spirituality

Reflection stimulus

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 Marechal, Assumptionist]

Focus questions

- What is Christian spirituality?
- Does a person's spirituality impact on the way they live, work and relate?
- What has shaped the development of your spirituality?

Biblical focus

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.

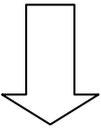
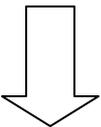
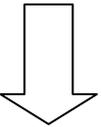
Concepts in focus

Spirituality in general terms

Christian spirituality

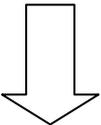
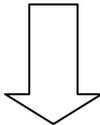
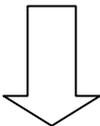
Appreciating what is meant by spirituality from a Lutheran context

**WORKSHOP
Option 1**

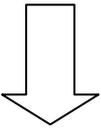
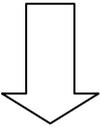
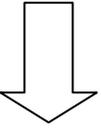
<p>Stimulus</p> 	<p>Provide the participants with the Resource Handout, <i>What is Spirituality?</i>, and ask them to read and highlight the different descriptions of spirituality using the following key:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • anything you think is really important • anything that raises questions for you • anything that challenges your ideas about spirituality <p>Ask them to choose one that they find particularly helpful in describing spirituality.</p>
<p>Reflection</p> 	<p>Ask the participants to reflect individually on the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which description did you find most helpful/interesting/meaningful? • What are key words or phrases that describe Christian spirituality for you? • Do the Lutheran descriptions point to any important aspects of spirituality in a Lutheran context? <p>Provide the final Resource Handout of photos. Ask the participants to choose a photo that they think could be used to represent a spiritual life.</p>
<p>Sharing</p> 	<p>Ask the participants to share their responses to the questions with a partner or in small groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which description did you find most helpful/interesting/meaningful? • What are key words or phrases that describe Christian spirituality for you? • Do the Lutheran descriptions point to any important aspects of spirituality in a Lutheran context? <p>Each pair or group can be asked to report on what they found to be important key words or phrases. If appropriate, discuss as a whole group the emerging features of spirituality from a Lutheran perspective.</p>
<p>Prayer</p>	<p>Provide time for the participants to reflect individually in quiet time or record in their journal their responses to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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?

[Note: From the three workshop options provided, please choose the option that best suits your staff needs]

**WORKSHOP
Option 2**

<p>Stimulus</p> 	<p>Ask the participants to reflect individually on the Bible passages contained in the Resource Handout, <i>Spirituality</i>, as they consider different aspects of Christian spirituality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is central to Christian spirituality? • What is the role of Christ in Christian spirituality? • How does the Holy Spirit work in the development of Christian spirituality?
<p>Reflection</p> 	<p>Provide a range of art materials such as clay, paint, paper, card, junk items and ask the participants to individually reflect on the way spirituality has been described. Ask them to think about images or metaphors that may help depict an understanding of Christian spirituality.</p> <p>They work individually to use the available art materials to create a visual depiction of their thoughts on Christian spirituality.</p>
<p>Sharing</p> 	<p>Ask the participants to discuss in pairs or groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are some of the perceptions held by the wider community or students or school families about spirituality? • Why do you think there is an interest in the wider community in spirituality? • What is challenging about living a spiritual life today? • What things do you think are helpful in developing a person's spirituality?
<p>Prayer</p>	<p>Share with the participants that Jesus Christ is at the centre of Christian spirituality. Jesus has taught us how to gain strength for our spiritual lives and one of the ways is through prayer. Jesus taught the following prayer that unites Christians around the world and through time.</p> <p>Read Matthew 6:9-15 and then provide a copy of the version of the Lord's prayer as used in the school and pray this together.</p>

WORKSHOP Option 3

<p>Stimulus</p> 	<p>Share with the participants the following quote.</p> <p>Christian spirituality provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p>[Fr Claude Marechal, Assumptionist]</p>
<p>Reflection</p> 	<p>Ask the participants to reflect individually, either silently or in their journal, on the following questions derived from the quote.</p> <p>Personal spirituality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the story you enter? • What is the language you speak? • To which group/s do you belong? • In what ways do you pray? • What work do you undertake? • What face of God do you see?
<p>Sharing</p> 	<p>In the book <i>A Spiritual Formation Workbook</i>, Smith and Graybeal describe four main ways that Jesus can function:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.' <p>(Smith, J and Graybeal, L. <i>A Spiritual Formation Workbook</i>, p25)</p> <p>Share with participants that we can experience some of these roles more than others. Invite them to share/discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which role have you experienced the most? • Do you find the descriptions about the roles of Jesus helpful? How could they be used to enrich a Christian's spiritual growth? • How do these roles relate to the face of God (Jesus) which you see?
<p>Prayer</p>	<p>Provide time for personal prayer and reflection on the session. They may choose to use one of the roles of Jesus as the focus for their prayer.</p> <p>Share preparation for next session.</p>