Starting Points: Classroom Activities

**Engage…**

Gather some data and map it! Create a map of all the Lutheran churches in your community or town/city or state. Are there other Christian communities? Position them on the map.

Find a surface where you can draw a large outline of Australia. Mark in the states and territories. Use the LCA website <http://www.lca.org.au/find-a/>

or Yearbook to locate Lutheran churches across Australia. Place a person in each spot. You may need to combine classes for this one! Individuals find some facts about the church they represent ,ie how it came to be there, and share this. At this point, students could choose one of the other Christian communities (eg Roman Catholic, Anglican, Uniting,…) and inquire into their spread across Australia, then choosing one to find out how it came to be there. What can be concluded about the establishment of Christian communities?

Search the internet to see what Christian churches look like.in other parts of the world what can be discovered about their establishment, history, context? commonalities?

On a world map, colour in or pattern all of the countries where there are Christian churches, or limit this to just SE Asia, or a continent. (Groups could focus on different denominations). Use an understanding/generalization such as

* *Historical events and cultural identity influence Christian communities*

OR

* *Christian communities communicate the good news in a range of ways.*

plan a unit of work, and develop the concepts of community, diversity, social organization, identity and culture, functions (of the church).

<http://www.lca.org.au/about-us/lutherans-worldwide/>

**Connect…**

Brainstorm all of the ways you can think of that one church community can connect with another, or more.

Prepare a survey to gather more information on connecting. Prepare a list of people who could be surveyed.

Visit some church websites. What do they reveal about how they connect with one another/their church community/visitors?

What does a name tell about a church? Does it give any indication about how a church might view it’s mission?

**Build…**

What do the people in a Christian community do? Can a community of believers grow and strengthen? Does a community of believers need support from outside its own community? Set up some interviews, collate the data.

Investigate the five functions of the church and make links with the outcome of data collected in the previous activity.

Investigate the involvement of the church in education, aged care, youth ministry and leadership, welfare, overseas aid and mission. Make links with the outcome of data collected in the first activity.

Does the church demonstrate the biblical concept of ‘being a neighbour’?

What is hospitality? Does the church demonstrate this virtue?

‘Hospitality is a profound response to the crucified One who takes in the whole world by his wide embrace upon the cross’ (Paul Wesley Chilcote, 2005, *Changed from Glory into Glory*: Upper Room Books, Nashville p106). Listening and hospitality have a strong link. “Listen” to the stories from people in schools where there is conflict, difficulty or vulnerability. “Listen” to another’s disclosure. “Listen” another soul into love.

* ‘Indonesia Photo Album’, pages 21-23, in *The Lutheran* Vol.41 No.8 20 August 2007
* ‘Friends and Neighbours’, pages 8-9, in *The Lutheran* Vol.41 No.9 17 September 2007
* ‘A Walk in their Shoes’, pages 7-9, in *The Lutheran* Vol.41 No.11 12 November 2007
* ‘Chapel Offerings become face to face Mission’, pages 4-6, in *The Lutheran* Vol.41 No.12 10 December 2007
* ‘School’s in – for life!’ page 9, in *The Lutheran* Vol.42 No.2 March 2008

Apply prayer and care.

**Sustain…**

Research the meaning of ‘sustain’.

What kinds of practices or ways of being might sustain individuals? A church community as a whole? How could you find out?

Locate some bible verses that give hope, encouragement, are uplifting (for a start, see the accompanying file, Starting Points: Bible Verses). Using your investigations as a starting point, decide on who to send some words of hope and encouragement.

Send a box of sunshine to a class in another school. Include a message (see above) for each week, and enough messages to last a term, ie the recipient class begins each week by opening and reading/looking at/listening to their message of encouragement from you. The messages could be written, drawn, painted, constructed, sung, filmed.