

# Handouts

### Walk and talk

The goal is for each person to have uninterrupted time to reflect on and talk about all the things that are pulling them in different directions:

- what are the things on your plate right now?
- what is getting in the way of your work, work-life balance?
- what impact is accountability having on your work/time?
- what kinds of things are at cross-purposes, in educational terms?

It could be that you respond to the question:

**what challenges does working in a Lutheran school present for you?**

#### The procedure:

1. Find a partner
2. You have ten minutes of dedicated time for this activity. You can walk any place so long as you are back with the whole group at the end of ten minutes.
3. As you walk for the first five minutes, only one person speaks. The accompanying partner is an attentive listener (no questions, no comments).
4. At the end of the five minutes, swap roles so that the second person talks and reflects on the way back. Again, the accompanying partner is an attentive listener (no questions, no comments).

It is fine for periods of thinking and silence to take place within the dedicated time for each speaker.

### Participant theological notes

#### Focus questions

- How do we see God working in the Lutheran school?
- Who has the authority to determine what happens in the Lutheran school – the government or the church?
- How does theology inform educational decision making in the school?

#### A real life scenario

##### Scenario 1

Term 2 was rapidly coming to a close and the issue of reporting was on the agenda of the staff meeting. There were a number of protests from staff as the timeline and format for reports was being put into place. 'Why do we have to do this? It's just a government requirement, and we don't see any educational value in it!' 'Can't we protest more vigorously as Lutheran schools that this doesn't fit with our educational approach? The whole process of reducing students to A-E grades is just so inappropriate and unnecessary!'

##### Scenario 2

David and Helen were very pleased that they had been able to get teaching positions in a Lutheran school, and having already taught for some time in the school, they were confirmed in their decision to apply. David was teaching in grade 3 while Helen was involved in English and SOSE classes in the upper school. Both had been having a very busy term which included some professional development days relating to the introduction of new government curriculum perspectives. This morning they had been reminded again that they would be involved later in the week in the *Pathways* program for accreditation as Lutheran teachers. Both of them were a little annoyed about this as it meant losing more time in their busy schedules.

'I can see why this is necessary for you, David,' said Helen. 'You have to teach Christian Studies in your class, but I'm not so sure why I have to do it. It seems that we have to meet the requirements of both the government and the Lutheran church.'

### Participant theological notes

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#### A biblical insight

##### Preamble

The Bible provides a number of insights into the way in which God cares for all of his creation. God cares for each one of us as creator, relating to all which God has made. God also cares for each one of us as the God who came as Jesus Christ to bring us back into a special relationship with him as our saviour. These two ways in which God cares can sometimes be seen in creative tension with each other.

##### Narrative: Jesus is challenged by the Jewish leaders [Mark 12:13-17]

Jesus was frequently challenged with the question of authority. Jesus' own authority was questioned especially by the Jewish leaders who saw his claim to be the Son of God as a direct challenge to the sovereignty of God. The Jewish nation was also under Roman rule and this raised considerable resentment. Since they were 'the people of God' and owed their allegiance in the first place to God, did the Jews also have to respect the Roman authorities, especially when there seemed to be some conflict with their religious regulations?

##### Paying taxes

In this incident, the Jewish leaders thought that they finally had a way to trap Jesus so that he would be discredited and people would no longer be influenced by him. In asking whether or not taxes should be paid to the Roman emperor, they assumed that Jesus would have to give a simple 'yes' or 'no' answer. If Jesus answered that taxes should not be paid, then the Jewish leaders could hand Jesus over to the Roman authorities as a revolutionary. If Jesus said yes, then this would not only be very unpopular with the people, but in paying the tax the Jews would be recognising the emperor as their ultimate ruler in the place of God, especially since the Roman emperor was regarded as a god.

[The tax involved here is a 'poll tax' which was paid directly as a tribute into the treasury of the emperor. The Jews also had to pay other taxes on their agricultural produce, etc. This tax was very much resented but did not have the same significance as the poll tax.]

##### Jesus' response

Jesus is not threatened by the question. His answer leaves the Jewish leaders dumbfounded. He asks for a silver denarius and questions them about the image and inscription on the coin. When they identify it as being that of the emperor, Jesus replies, 'Give to the emperor what belongs to the emperor'. But he also adds, 'Give to God what belongs to God!'

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Just as the denarius belongs to the emperor because it contains his image, so we who were created in the image of God belong to God. That image may now be damaged by sin, but through faith in Jesus Christ we now bear Christ's image as well and the Holy Spirit is working in us to form us more and more into the image of Christ.

### Participant theological notes

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#### Aspects of the theology of the two ways God cares

##### Introduction

In this situation of the discussion about paying taxes, as in other places in the gospels [eg, Jesus in the trial before Pilate (John 18:33-37; 19:8-12)], Jesus distinguishes between the different ways in which God works in the world. On the one hand he cares for all of the creation through the structures of society such as family, work, government and the church [as organisation], but he also cares for Christians who belong to the family of believers through the gifts of faith. We therefore respond to God's care through whatever channel it comes to us. As this incident with the denarius shows, we have an obligation to those in authority in society and also to God.

##### General and specific care

One way of seeing how God works in the world is to speak about the two ways God cares. On the one hand, God cares for the whole of creation and all people in that creation. All of creation belongs to God. This is God's 'general care' for the whole world. However, God also has a 'specific care' for those people who belong to him through faith in him [the 'people of God', the 'body of Christ' or 'all Christians'].

##### The two hands of God

Another way in which Lutheran theology speaks about the two ways God cares is to speak about God using 'two hands' in order to deal with the problem of sin and evil in the world. Martin Luther first developed this because he saw two dangers in his day. On the one hand there were those who said that Christians should withdraw from the world which was seen as evil and live in some 'holy huddle' apart from the world. Christians should not therefore participate in government, the legal profession, the army, or any other 'secular' activity. On the other hand there were those who said that Christians should take over the world and try to 'christianise' it so that it was in fact ruled by the church.

Luther however wanted to emphasise that God works in the world through all people. He works with his 'left hand' using people as his servants to maintain peace, good order and justice in the world with people working in all kinds of situations and circumstances whether or not they realise that they are serving God's purposes. On the other hand, God works with his 'right hand' when he works in mercy, forgiving sins and bringing people to faith in Jesus. But it is important to realise that God is ambidextrous – he works with both hands at the same time.

Note: This theological teaching is often referred to as the 'doctrine of the two kingdoms'. This is perhaps an unfortunate designation since it can seem to suggest that there are two different realms or areas in which God operates which are distinct from each other. There is also a tendency to speak about the 'sacred' and the 'secular' or the 'spiritual' and the 'temporal' and see them as separate entities. However, as Christians we live in both at the same time and are responsible to both. But as Jesus also points out, as Christians we are to be 'in the world' but not 'of the world' [John 17:6-19].

##### God operating with the 'left hand' – 'general care'

All people are part of God working with his 'left hand'. This is where God operates with law and order including rewards, penalties and punishment to promote peace, harmony, justice and goodness for all people and societies. God works with the 'natural law' which is written on the consciences of people [Romans 2:14-16] and through reason and common sense which is available to all. Operating with his 'left hand' God helps the world to function as he created it to function despite the advent of sin.

### Participant theological notes

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Wherever people are working for justice, peace, goodness, care for the world and the environment we can see God's care at work. This can be through institutions such as the government [Romans 13:1-8; 1 Timothy 2: 1-6; Titus 3:1-2, 1 Peter 2: 13-17], the structures of marriage and family, through work and the interaction within society and also through religious practices. It includes the provision for education through schools provided by the government and other agencies, including the Lutheran church. Teachers, whether they recognise it or not are serving in this area of general care for the world under God's 'left hand'.

#### **God operating with the 'right hand' – 'specific care'**

God works in the community of Christians with his 'right hand'. Under God's 'special care' Christians live in the forgiveness of God which they receive through their God-given faith in Jesus Christ. They are sustained by the word of God and the sacraments and they celebrate in worship. They are supported by the grace of God as they live out their life of service in the world as people who are forgiven but still remain sinful and in need of forgiveness. God's 'right hand' is the hand of mercy and grace.

#### **God is in control**

God works in the world with both hands. This means that everything in the world is under God's care and control. While there is still the influence of sin and evil in the world, Jesus Christ has defeated sin, death and Satan through his death and resurrection. However, the struggle between good and evil continues in the world and in each individual Christian as 'saint and sinner' [Romans 7:14-25]. But God is ultimately in control operating with both the 'left and right hands', controlling sin and evil through his 'left hand' and showing mercy and forgiving sin through his 'right hand'.

#### **Christians live and serve in creative tension**

Because Christians are people whom God has created, they live and work under God's 'left hand' care. This means that they use their God-given gifts and abilities and the opportunities which they have in their various areas of responsibility to serve the world and their fellow humans beings to the best of their ability. This also means that they respect the various authorities which God has placed in the world.

However, as Christians, they also live and serve under God's 'right hand' care, working in and through the church as the people of God. As forgiven people of God, they have been set free from the power of sin and given the power of the gospel to live in the world as witnesses to the gospel.

This means that Christians live in a creative tension as they relate to the will of God in the world. On the one hand they are concerned with using the law of God ['political use' which applies to all people, whether they believe in God or not], to promote social justice, peace and wholeness ['shalom'] using the law to protect and preserve God's creation and to help it to work in the way in which God created it to function. On the other hand, as those who have faith in the saving work of Jesus Christ, they seek to spread the good news of forgiveness in Jesus Christ in their various areas of responsibility.

Through the ministry of caring which grows out of the 'right hand' work of God in the church, Christians operate in partnership with institutions of the 'left hand' to bring care and compassion to those in need. For Christians this is a response to the gospel.

### Participant theological notes

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#### **The role of Christians as conscience in society**

Because Christians know the will of God and the way God created this world to function according to that will, Christians have a particular responsibility and motivation to work for establishing and maintaining peace and justice in the world and to uphold the dignity of all human beings as people who have been created by God. This may mean playing a role as 'conscience' within society by pointing out specific sins of a society and nation, opposing inappropriate social trends and proposed legislation [Proverbs 31:8-9]. Christians need to be aware of systemic evil entrenched in the systems and structures of society and there may be situations where this may mean opposing laws or practices which support or practice obvious injustice [for example, the opposition of Dietrich Bonhoeffer to evil policies and practices during the Nazi era]. Christians may be called on 'to obey God rather than human beings' [Acts 4:19].

### Participant theological notes

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#### Responding to issues relating to the two ways God cares in Lutheran schools

##### 1. The Lutheran school

As a school providing formal education, the Lutheran school as an educational institution is part of God's general area of care under his 'left hand'. Education is seen in the first instance as the responsibility of parents. The school serves parents, the society and the state by providing education for children. Teachers whether or not they are Christian are serving students, parents and society in this way. This means that government requirements in relation to funding, curriculum, policies and the everyday running of the school need to be taken into account. The Lutheran school must therefore be the best educational institution it can be, using the most appropriate pedagogy, curriculum, care of students, etc.

The church also has a ministry of teaching. However, the church cannot neglect the general educational responsibility of the school in order to use the school in the first instance as an opportunity for teaching the Christian faith. The challenge for the Lutheran school is to combine the best educational theory and practice with a sound understanding of Lutheran theology [cf LEA documents *The LCA and its schools* and *A framework for Lutheran schools in A vision for learners and learning in Lutheran schools*]. It could be said that Lutheran schools strive for a 'dual excellence' – to prepare students to be well educated and well equipped citizens ready to serve their fellow human beings and also, for those who are Christians, to be committed and faithful Christians who serve in response to God's service of them on the basis of a developing Christian worldview.

##### 2. Teachers in Lutheran schools

Teachers in Lutheran schools have a dual responsibility. First they need to be the best educational practitioners they can be. This means excellent preparation as teachers and then continuing professional development to remain as well qualified and pedagogically skilled as possible to support the best learning experiences for their students. This they have in common with all teachers, but there is the added responsibility if they see their teaching as their God-given vocation.

Within the Lutheran school there are also those who belong to the community of faith [under God's 'right hand'] because the Holy Spirit has worked faith in them. They see the Lutheran school also as a place in which they can witness to their faith in Jesus Christ. This they are able to do not only through their teaching but also as they live out their faith in the community of the school. Here the teacher's spiritual as well as personal and professional beliefs, values and abilities provide an important witness to everyone in the school community. This is another aspect of their vocation as Christian teachers.

##### 3. The freedom to learn

What can be taught in a Lutheran school? The freedom of teachers as professionals and the needs of students for a well rounded education should be respected. The formal education of students comes under God's 'left hand'. Lutheran schools recognise that the requirements of the government in relation to all aspects of schooling have to be met. Curriculum decisions need to be in keeping with the requirements of the state. Here the teacher in a Christian school is working as a servant of God in the area under the 'left hand' of God. The school is seen as serving the community, society and the world in general, and consequently God in particular.



### Participant theological notes

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Students need exposure to a wide range of topics which will promote their understanding of the world about them. Lutheran schools must be wary of developing a very narrow and pietistic approach to learning. At the same time, if the topic is controversial from a Christian perspective, due consideration and respect should be given to the Christian view. Depending on the age of the students, students should begin to grapple with different and even conflicting views.

#### 4. Policy development in Lutheran schools

Many policies within Lutheran schools are written to meet the necessary requirements as set down by the government authority. Although they can be seen to reflect a Christian perspective, they are primarily formulated to promote good order and to ensure the effective and efficient running of the school. Christian beliefs give an additional insight which can inform policy making. For example, the understanding of people as sinners by nature will mean that a behaviour management policy may need to consider an approach such as restorative justice. However, this insight can also be recognised by Christians and non-Christians alike, through their association with life in the world. Once again, we need to recognise that education exists under the 'left hand' of God and yet, the school community is to be a place where that which comes under God's 'right hand' is also evident. The school setting therefore is to be a place where both law and gospel are seen in action.

#### 5. The Lutheran school and the mission and ministry of the Lutheran church

While the central function of the Lutheran school is educational, those learning and teaching in the Lutheran school will come into contact with the word of God and hence the working of the Holy Spirit through worship, Bible reading, prayer, conversation, etc. The LCA sees the Lutheran school as providing an important avenue for ministry to those who share in a faith relationship with Jesus Christ and for outreach ['mission'] to those who have not yet come to faith through the work of the Holy Spirit. However, those working in the school need to be sensitive to the consciences of the members of the school community and under no circumstances should any pressure be put on members of the community to make a declaration of faith in Jesus Christ unless they wish to do so [cf notes on 'worship']. It must be recognised that there will be those in the Lutheran school community who are not open to the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

#### 6. The dialogue of theology and education

Lutheran schools provide the context for a dialogue of theology and education. As issues arise in Lutheran schools, insights from educational theory and practice are brought into dialogue with theological insights. Theology and education need to listen to each other and respond to each other if both theology and education are going to contribute to discussion and decision-making in Lutheran schools. This is a crucial approach to 'doing theology' in the school context which keeps in balance insights developed by individuals taking seriously both God's 'left and right hand' working in the world.

#### 7. Lutheran schools and creation

All people have a responsibility towards creation regardless of whether they are believers or non believers in God. Care for people and the environment should be a topic which is given priority in Lutheran schools as it comes under both the 'left hand' and 'right hand' of God. Discussion of issues which promote the protection and care for people in particular and creation in general should exist within the Lutheran school setting. Topics such as the environment, global warming, Indigenous issues, social justice questions, human dignity, ethical living, etc, can be seen as examples of the way in which God cares for the world.

### Discussion questions

- 1 What does living under the 'left hand' of God mean for us in the Lutheran school community?
- 2 What impact does living under God's 'right hand' have for everyday life in the Lutheran school?
- 3 Why does the Lutheran church require teachers to undertake some theological studies?
- 4 To what extent should 'the religious' ('right hand' of God) determine the policy statements of our school? Does this also apply to issues such as curriculum design and enterprise bargaining?
- 5 In what ways can the Lutheran school be part of the ministry and mission of the Lutheran Church of Australia?
- 6 How does the LCA policy document *The LCA and its schools* illustrate the way the Lutheran school responds to the two ways God cares ['left and right hands']?
- 7 Discuss the creative tension of working in a Lutheran school in response to God's 'left and right hands'.
- 8 How can Lutheran schools help the school community to recognise its role to function as a 'conscience' in society?

### References and further reading

BLS (2001). Session 4 The two ways God cares, *Theological Orientation Program for Staff (TOPS)* 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (pp. 4-8) Adelaide: BLS.

LEA (2005). A framework for Lutheran schools, *A vision for learners and learning in Lutheran schools* (p. i) Adelaide: LEA.

LEA (2005). Key idea 3 Christians have a responsibility in and for the world, *Christian Studies Curriculum Framework Theological Notes* (pp. 46-48). Adelaide: LEA.

LCA (2006). *The Lutheran school as a place of ministry and mission*. Available online <http://www.lutheran.edu.au/tools/getFile.aspx?tbl=tblContentItem&id=66>

LCA (2001). *The Lutheran church of Australia and its schools*. Available online <http://www.lutheran.edu.au/tools/getFile.aspx?tbl=tblContentItem&id=65>

### Short Trails available online at [www.lutheran.edu.au](http://www.lutheran.edu.au)

Login to the member area and select *Resources/publications* then *Pathways* then *TRIAL MATERIAL ONLY Pathways: theological focus*



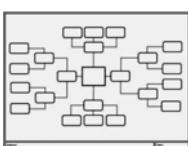
**Art Short Trail:** Study the linked artworks and decide which ones represent God's 'left hand' care, and which ones represent God's 'right hand' care or elements of both – giving reasons for your choices. Use a *Venn diagram* or similar to record your thinking and bring it to the discussion group.



**Music Short Trail:** Listen to a selection of the songs via YouTube links. Several of them show the lyrics. Suggest ways that the lyrics, music and images link with your knowledge of the two ways God cares. A *Tree map* could be used to record your ideas which you should bring to the discussion group.



**Reading Short Trail:** Additional readings can be used to expand, extend and challenge your thinking about the two ways God cares. Record or highlight any significant statements that expand your thinking and add weight to the material already studied. Bring this to the discussion group.



**Graphics Short Trail:** Represent the theology of the two ways God cares graphically using a graphic organiser such as a *Mind map*, *Concept map*, *Double bubble map*, etc. Then compare and contrast yours with another participant's, looking at and discussing the similarities and differences in your representations. If you have time, go to the **Reading Short Trail** and engage with material there to expand your thinking and mind mapping. Bring your map/s to the discussion group.



**Policy Short Trail:** Study the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA) policy document, *The LCA and its schools*, and identify the ways Lutheran schools respond to the two ways God cares. The following documents can also be studied in the same way:

- *The Lutheran school as a place of ministry and mission*
- *LCA support for government schools*
- *Policy statement for Lutheran early childhood education and care*
- *A framework for Lutheran schools from A vision for learners and learning in Lutheran schools*

Findings can be recorded on a two column chart, such as a *T-chart*, and brought to the discussion group.



**Christian Education Short Trail:** All Lutheran schools in Australia are listed in the *School directory* on the Lutheran Education Australia (LEA) website. Visit some of the school websites, looking at a cross section from around Australia. Study the visuals, read the homepages, mission and vision statements, values statements, sub-school pages, school improvement plans and other menu items. Identify the ways Lutheran schools respond to the two ways God cares, organise your data on a two column chart, such as a *T-chart*, and bring it to the discussion group.

### Learning journey reflection

Think about

- your understanding of concepts relating to the two ways God cares
- your feelings about participation in the encounter
- answers you now have to questions about the two ways God cares and the key question: **what does it mean to live (and then work) in a Lutheran school community?**
- the learning process and the choices for you as a learner

Use the prompts to reflect and respond

1. When I first started ...

2. Then I ...

3. After a while ...

4. It was ...

5. Now I ...

The diagram consists of five rounded rectangular boxes arranged in a descending staircase pattern from top-left to bottom-right. Each box is connected to the next by a curved arrow pointing downwards and to the right. The boxes are numbered 1 through 5, corresponding to the prompts: '1. When I first started ...', '2. Then I ...', '3. After a while ...', '4. It was ...', and '5. Now I ...'. The final box, '5. Now I ...', is significantly larger than the others and spans the width of the previous four boxes.

# PowerPoint Slides

*Pathways*: theological focus

**Two ways God cares  
encounter**



Two ways God cares encounter

1

**Purposes**

The purposes of this encounter are for participants to:

- explore the question: *what does it mean to live (and then work) in a Lutheran school community?*
- identify the ways in which God is at work in the Lutheran school
- examine the role and influence of both church and government in what happens in the Lutheran school
- consider how theology informs educational decision making in the school



Two ways God cares encounter

2

## Plan

- welcome and introductions
- orientation to the encounter (*setting out*)
- exploring information, developing understandings (*gathering pace*)
- sharing perspectives, discussing questions, developing understandings (*multiple views*)
- reflecting on learning (*in a quiet place*)
- close



Pathways: theological focus

Two ways God cares encounter

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## Setting out

### Option 1: Walk and talk

In pairs, participants talk about all the things that are pulling them in different directions.

### Option 2: Interviews

View/observe reflections on and sharing of current decision making processes occurring in the school, and theological-educational thinking that is involved.

### Option 3: Pair and share

Read *A real life scenario* in *Participant theological notes*, then pair up and talk about similarities and differences with your own experiences.



Pathways: theological focus

Two ways God cares encounter

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## Gathering pace

### Part 1: Select one of the options for responding to your reading:

- Individually: work with two colour highlighters, using one colour to mark key words associated with one way God cares and the other to mark key words associated with the other way God cares
- Small groups: identify the specific nature of God's 'left hand' care and God's 'right hand' care. Allocate different coloured post-it notes for each of the two ways and represent this on a *Venn diagram* drawn on chart paper. While there are distinctives, what aspects of this theology overlap?
- Individually: using *Ten word strategy*, construct a ten-word meaning for one or more of the following: *God operating with the 'right hand' – 'specific care', God is in control, Christians live and serve in creative tension, The role of Christians as conscience in society*



Pathways: theological focus

Two ways God cares encounter

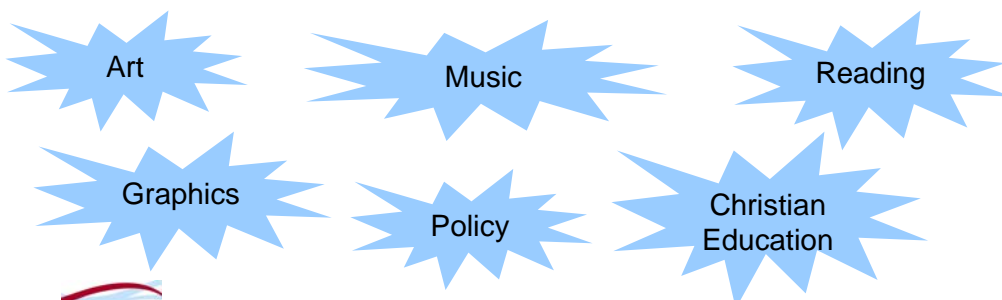
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## Gathering pace

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### Part 2: Short Trails

Explore the two ways God cares individually through any one of the Short Trails available online at [www.lutheran.edu.au](http://www.lutheran.edu.au) login to the member area and select *Resources/publications* then *Pathways* then *TRIAL MATERIALS ONLY Pathways: theological focus*.



Pathways: theological focus

Two ways God cares encounter

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## Multiple views

### Whole group approach

- agree by consensus on a priority order for the questions you wish to discuss
- use the *Talking circle strategy* – everyone sits in a circle and take turns to express their ideas or feelings about the question under consideration

Refer to *Responding to issues relating to the two ways God cares in Lutheran schools in Participant theological notes* as necessary



Pathways: theological focus

Two ways God cares encounter

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## Multiple views

(...cont)

### Small group approach

Form groups of 4-6

- agree by consensus on a priority order for the questions you wish to discuss
- use the *FALL strategy* – each group member:
  - F**ormulates a response
  - A**rticulates their ideas to the group
  - L**istens in turn to other responses and
  - L**engthens their thinking during the subsequent discussion by systematically building upon and elaborating the ideas of others

Refer to *Responding to issues relating to the two ways God cares in Lutheran schools in Participant theological notes* as necessary



Pathways: theological focus

Two ways God cares encounter

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## In a quiet place



Find a quiet spot where you can be comfortable while you reflect on

- your experience
- your thinking
- your learning

Respond to the reflection prompts on *Learning journey reflection*



Pathways: theological focus

Worship encounter

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