



DVD Script

for

Six Challenges – Six Mysteries A Charter for Lutheran Education

**The following six DVD scripts
are essentially the text of the Narrator used in the DVDs.**

**These scripts do not include the text of students,
staff or principals of the various schools involved in the DVDs.**

**These scripts are included in this manual
to assist groups and group leaders in their deliberations.**

Six Challenges - Six Mysteries

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Challenge Five

Sequence 1 – Introducing the Challenge

This is a Lutheran School. As we look across the schoolyard we see students playing games, talking in groups, enjoying themselves.

But often, as in many schools we see a child by himself or herself.

The child is alone. Why?

The child is facing away from the school. Why?

Do these children just want to be alone? Or is there something more?

What will a future Lutheran School be like for lonely children like these? What if they are more than just lonely? What if they in pain or depressed?

What SHOULD Lutheran Education be for children who are lonely, hurting or depressed?

The 2004 ACLE Conference threw out a number of challenges for Lutheran Schools to consider children like these. And these challenges have been condensed into a new charter for Lutheran schools to explore.

Today we look at the fifth of these challenges.

Challenge Five

A 2020 Lutheran School will be a school with a heart caring for the inner needs of students and staff in their struggles with social, psychological and emotional challenges

A school with a heart! Our 2020 Charter looks for Lutheran schools that have a heart.

Not easy! Not easy at all!

In an era when the system celebrates schools where students get high scores in year 12, where pride is taken in old scholars who make a name for themselves in sport, where success is measured by obvious achievements, having a heart seems to be—well—a secondary concern.

Having a heart is hard to measure, hard to see.

But in a Lutheran School it ought to be just as important as goals and grades!

Sequence 2 – The Challenge of Peter Hart

At the 2004 ACLE Conference, Peter Hart reported on his research into the morale of staff in Lutheran schools.

In Lutheran schools, most staff experience the stress, anxiety and emotional struggles true of any school.

So do students!

According to Hart, Lutheran schools need to provide the leadership and guidance necessary to empower staff, to build morale and create a community of care.

That means empathy for staff and for students!

Staff well-being means learning to grow together emotionally as well as professionally.

One school that deliberately sought to develop high morale since its beginning is Cornerstone. Every Friday morning they celebrate together, no matter what the pressures around them.

Sequence 3– Exploring the Challenge

School well-being means a staff sensitive to the emotional struggles of the students.

In Australia, we live in an affluent society that is quite safe compared to most other parts of the world.

Yet, there are numerous young people who struggle with the dark, with emotional and psychological conditions that lead them to the edge of despair.

Something of this is captured in the songs of a group called Evanescence.

The following words from one of their songs say it much better than I can.

*Wake me up inside,
Call my name
And save me from the dark.
Bid my blood to run
Before I come undone,
Save me from the nothing I've become.*

Save me from the dark!

What is this dark? Depression, loneliness, despair?
Emotional pain and anguish? Self-harm of various forms?
Post-traumatic stress? And what causes it?
Hell at home? Stress at school?
Peer pressure? Or other forces in society?

Sequence 4 – Voices from Students and Schools

This is the way that some students at our schools describe how they experienced and faced the dark.

We need to face the harsh reality that in every school in our present society, there is a significant number of students (and staff) who, at any given time, are going through hell emotionally—even if they seem to be having a ball.

Some are depressed but hide it.
Some harm themselves and try to mask it.
Some are ostracized but pretend to be happy.
Some seem to have no hope of happiness.

And these students often do not turn to counsellors, chaplains or teachers for help.
They suffer alone!

How does a Lutheran School develop a heart? How do we show a genuine empathy for students in pain, students in the dark?

Some schools, like Immanuel College, have been trialling a program called ‘Beyond Blue’ to gain the skills to deal with students in emotional pain.

At the outset, we need to ask ourselves how we relate to students burdened by depression, despair and darkness.

Do we publicly acknowledge that just as some students may have different skins or skills, so some students may have different kinds of pain. And through no fault of their own!

Do we hide this reality?
Do we subtly pass judgement and view such students as ‘problem cases’?

Do we separate them out as ‘different’?

Do we have the skills to identify students who are in pain and learn to listen to their cries within?

A number of our school counsellors have concentrated on how to handle depression in our schools

We need to go beyond the work of counsellors, however, and find a way for staff to walk with these students through the valley of the shadow of darkness.

And, as some student have said, many students need fellow students to be their support, friends they can trust when they feel the pain deep inside.

Do we have the courage to develop programs in the school that help build emotional resilience in the face of these crises? Are we ready to identify students who will function as listeners for those facing crises?

Sequence 5 - Introducing the Mystery

In a school community of where students are expected to shine and where there is tremendous pressure to succeed, the 'darkness syndrome' will continue.

Where do we find light? Where do we as Lutherans find hope when we walk through the valley of darkness with these students?

Where?

In a suffering God! Because this challenge of our charter is grounded in another mystery of our faith, a mystery known in Latin as **Deus crucifixus**: God crucified!

Mystery Five

Deus Crucifixus and the heart principle!

The mystery that the God who became flesh and suffered on the cross continues to suffer with those who struggle with despair.

Sequence 6 - Exploring the Mystery

Central to our faith is our belief that God was born as a little child, with human flesh and human feelings. As a human being God knew all the pains and traumas that are part of being a human child.

Our God too suffered with darkness and despair in the garden of Gethsemane.

Our God knew a level of suffering, despair and shame on the cross that we can barely imagine. Naked and battered, he was abandoned, alone and left to die.

It is easy to view the suffering of our God on the cross as an event that happened long ago.

But for Lutherans, the God who suffered for us, is also the God who suffers with us, here and now!

Christ is suffering with each child in his or her depression, despair and darkness. Christ is walking the valley of the shadow of darkness with them. For so long we have prayed to Christ to save us from our sins. And rightly so!

But the need of youths today is for someone to save them from the dark.

Save me from the dark!

Sequence 7 – The Closing Challenge

Have a heart!

Yes, we are challenged to have a heart, to have empathy!

Some Lutheran schools are seriously searching for ways to walk with students through the valley of their darkness- whether that be depression, anorexia or some other deep pain.

These emotional problems have been masked and hidden for too long. Too long!

The time has come to face these problems openly and to empathise with those students who suffer the pains of living in modern society.

When we do, we know that our God will be suffering with us, or more precisely, with our students.

Our God not only suffered for us. In Christ, our God suffers with us not matter how deep or dark the pain.

Yes, it's time to have a heart.