

CROSS-GENERATIONAL RALLY DAY FESTIVAL

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Theme:

My Word: the Bible for Everyone encourages participants to embrace God's Word as our book of faith and the primary tool through which God speaks to us.

Key Verse:

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. Col. 3:16

Opening Activity:

Participants will make a group Bible chain with favorite verses and stories on it. The chain serves to remind the people that we are linked with others from every time and place who share the love and respect for God's Word.

Large Gathering:

A skit, *There's a Bible On Your Eyelid?* introduces Martin Luther in a modern setting, as he encourages people to embrace the availability of God's Word and read and study it.

Rotations:

Three rotations focus on Luther and his regard for the Word; the key verse—letting the word of Christ “dwell” in us; and our call to teach about and praise God. At each rotation, participants will make part of a project that will be assembled during the closing activity to form a “Luther Rose Mezuzah.”

Rotation A

MARTIN LUTHER, EVERYDAY DISCIPLE

In this rotation, Martin Luther is introduced as a person whose life was changed by reading the word of God. Participants will make a Luther Rose out of felt as they hear about and discuss Martin Luther.

Rotation B

'DWELL IN YOU' RELAY

Our verse for today, Colossians 3:16, instructs us to “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” Participants will run a relay race that “gets them comfortable” with the Word of Christ. They will also get an illustration and key verse to decorate and discuss.

Rotation C

TAKE THE LID OFF-TEACH AND SING

Participants will use the Bible verse chain created during the Opening Activity to practice teaching a Bible verse or story to someone else. They will be reminded

to take the lid off—and not just keep the word inside them. Participants will write their plan for sharing the word of Christ on a small container lid.

Closing:

Participants will glue their Luther roses onto lids and place the Bible verse into them, in order to make a Luther Rose mezuzah.

The rally day ends with the *Holy Wisdom, Holy Word* song and a closing litany.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

Read through the Rally Day Festival materials below. Supplies and equipment needed for each activity are listed at the introduction to each section.

SUGGESTIONS FOR LEADERS

♥ Invite everyone in your congregation, not just parents of school-age children, to attend your rally day event. Cross-generational interaction can be a fun and mutually enriching experience for participants of all ages including youth, young adults, and older adults.

♥ Read through the Rally Day Festival beginning on page xx. Pay careful attention to the introduction to each activity where you will find advance preparation, supplies, and equipment listed.

♥ Begin collecting margarine (or cottage cheese, sour cream) lids early to get enough for all participants. The project will be easier if the lids are all close enough in size that one size Luther Rose will fit all.

♥ Recruit rotation leaders for each rotation, and have them gather the supplies and enlist the additional help they may need to do the rotation. This event is divided in segments so that the labor can be divided among many as well. Giving others a chance to be leaders helps them grow in faith, too.

♥ Martin Luther is a remarkable man, though even children in Lutheran congregations confuse with Martin Luther King, Jr., whom most learn about in school each year. Try to set the record straight, by introducing the one who used God's Word, rather than human teachings, to shape and form the church. (Wait a minute—they both did that.) Perhaps you can make a Venn diagram showing the difference between the two. Consider scheduling a congregational viewing of the movie "Luther," (2003) to further enhance understanding.

♥ God's Word is our book of faith. Use Rally Day to launch adult Book of Faith small groups, as well as Sunday school classes. Remind all generations that they are never too old to stop learning, and that the word of Christ speaks to us in new ways every time we open the book and our hearts to receive it.

My Word: the Bible for Everyone

CROSS-GENERATIONAL RALLY DAY FESTIVAL DETAILS

OPENING ACTIVITY

Advance Preparation for Opening Activity:

Cut various colors of construction paper into 1” x 9” strips.

Decide whether you will use tape, glue, staples, or a combination to make paper chains.

Be familiar with how use a concordance, looking up key words from a Bible verse.

Gather Materials:

Many versions of Bible including different translations, children’s Bibles, Bible story books, or Bibles in other languages

Bible concordances or charts that tell where to find certain verses or stories

Construction paper cut in 1” x 9” strips

Tape, glue, or staplers and staples

Pens or thin markers

Instructions:

As participants arrive, invite them to write their favorite Bible verses or stories on strips of paper, and add them to a group chain. The links should be made with the words facing out, so that they can be seen by others. Younger children could write the names of favorite characters, or stories from the Bible, rather than a full verse. Encourage participants to use the Bibles and the concordances to find additional verses to write down.

Strips might read, “In the beginning God created the heaven and earth. Gen. 1:1” or “Noah and the Flood” or “Joseph and his brothers,” or “I bring you good tidings of great joy. Luke 2:10” Participants could also use foreign language Bibles to look up familiar verses to write in another language.

This activity is one in which all ages can work together, with older helping the younger, or older participants writing while younger ones tape, glue, or staple. Participants may make as many links as they wish, using the reference materials for new ideas.

When everyone has gathered, and while they are still working on the chain, explain that we, and all Christians around the world, are linked by our book of faith—the Bible—the word of Christ.

If you will **not** be doing the skit, you may also wish to talk about “chained” books in ancient monasteries. The books were chained by the spine so that they could be pulled out and read, but were kept in place in the library, for reference only. Prior the invention of the printing press around Martin Luther’s time, many Bibles would have been chained up in monastery libraries.

The chain will be used again in Rotation C.

Afterward, the chain can be draped around a doorway or used to decorate the sanctuary, a hallway, or another gathering place. Let this be an on-going project by inviting others to contribute to the chain. Gather the supplies in a basket and leave it in close proximity to the chain. From time to time, use the church newsletter, announcements in worship, and other communication efforts to make this an easy activity for all generations to participate in. Make it a special “ritual” on special occasions in the life of the congregation or to honor visitors.

LARGE GATHERING

Advance Preparation for Large Gathering:

Recruit a child and two older teens or adults to perform the skit. Have the actors rehearse with microphones prior to the event.

Gather the props for the skit.

If you will use the sanctuary or other large common area, be sure to make arrangements for the availability of the space.

Enlist a musician to learn the *Holy Wisdom Holy Word* song and be prepared to teach it.

Gather Materials:

Copies of *There's a Bible On Your Eyelid?* skit

Skit props

Microphones

Song handouts or overhead projection for *Holy Wisdom Holy Word*

Instructions:

Opening prayer:

Dear Lord, as we gather today, fill our hearts with a yearning for your Word, that it may dwell in us. Enable us to teach others about your love and grace, and lift our voices in praise to you. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Song:

Learn and sing *Holy Wisdom, Holy Word*

Skit:

Find the skit script in another attachment on this Website. Perform the skit.

ROTATIONS

Divide the group into three sections to begin rotations. Having a mixture of ages within each group will enhance intergenerational interaction and allow for older members to help younger children. Have leaders ready to guide each section to their first rotation.

ROTATION A MARTIN LUTHER, EVERYDAY DISCIPLE

Advance Preparation for Rotation A:

Use a small margarine or sour cream container lid to trace circles on sky blue felt.

Trace roses onto white felt using pattern found elsewhere on this site.

Cut red felt into 2” squares.

Gather Materials:

Sky blue, white, and red felt prepared as stated above

Gold or yellow yarn or braid

Black felt or braid, or black permanent markers

Glue

Scissors

Locate the Luther Rose explanation in the Martin Luther, EveryDay Disciple section found elsewhere on this Web site **or ...**

Photocopy *The Luther Rose for Children* found else where on this Web site

Background for Leaders:

Martin Luther is commemorated in Lutheran churches on Feb. 18, his death day.

Sundays and Seasons writes on his day: “**Martin Luther, renewer of the church, died 1546**”

Though he began his adult church life as a simple Augustinian monk, Luther challenged the abuses he saw in the church, and his work eventually led to the Protestant Reformation. Luther's accomplishments included liturgical reform, translation of the Bible, and creation of the Small and Large Catechisms.” --Sundays and Seasons on-line edition

Additional information can be found in the *New Book of Festivals and Commemorations*, p. 87-89 or *Festivals and Commemorations*, p. 79-83 (Your pastor may have a copy). Luther is probably more often commemorated on Reformation Day, when we remember his posting of the 95 theses on the church door in Wittenberg, which set the wheels in motion to reshape the church.

Numerous books about Martin Luther exist. *Martin Luther: A Man Who Changed the World* by Paul L. Maier is a picture book that was available from Thrivent a number of years ago and may be in your church library.

Instructions:

Martin Luther used the word of Christ as the basis for his faith. As he read the Bible, he realized that some of the church’s teachings were wrong, and worked to change them. While participants work to make a Luther rose out of felt, distribute, read, and discuss the page about our everyday disciple, Martin Luther.

Make a Luther Rose

Directions for participants:

1. Cut out a blue circle
2. Cut out a white rose
3. Fold red square in half and cut out heart (younger children may need help)
4. Glue red heart on white rose, and white rose onto blue circle
5. Glue gold yarn or braid around edge of circle
6. Cut braid into short pieces to form cross, glue in place; or draw black cross with marker.

Martin's Luther Story

As participants work on their roses, invite older participants to take turns reading Martin Luther's story aloud and then involve participants in discussion using questions such as:

How did reading the Bible change Martin Luther's life?

How was Luther's childhood different from those of children today?

Name some times when Martin might have been frightened. What gave him courage? What can give us courage?

Martin Luther said, "People are not to believe me, the church, the fathers, the apostles, or even an angel from heaven if we teach anything contrary to the Word of God. But the Word of the Lord should stand forever." [*What Luther Says*, p. 1479]

Tell about a time you made a decision based on following the word of Christ, rather than the people around you. [*Children may not think they have; remind them that anytime they have spoken out for someone who was being teased or bullied; when chosen to do the right thing in tempting times, they have followed the word of Christ.*]

In the time of Martin Luther, families and cities had coats of arms that said something about who they were. The Luther Rose was designed by Martin Luther as his coat of arms. It is still used today as a symbol of the Lutheran church.

When participants are finished making their Luther Roses, read his explanation as written on the Luther handout.

Close Rotation with Prayer

Dear Lord, Thank you for sending Martin Luther, who rediscovered the power of your Word and taught it to the people. Help us, also, to stand firm in our faith in you. Amen.

ROTATION B 'DWELL IN YOU' RELAY

Advance Preparation for Rotation B:

Gather the relay materials listed below

Choose a large room or outdoor space in which to hold relay. Have alternative site in case of rain.

Set chairs about ten feet apart on one end of the room or space. Set a TV tray or small table next to each chair. On the opposite end of the room, or where the lines will begin, set a rug, newspaper, afghan, cup, sandwich plate, Bible, and dog.

Make copies of the “Dwell in You” handout found elsewhere on this Web site.

Gather Materials:

Relay Materials

- Two ‘comfy’ chairs (can be as simple as two lawn chairs, rocking chairs, armchairs from your church building)
- Two TV trays or small end tables
- Two small rugs
- Two newspapers
- Two afghans or small quilts
- Two plastic cups
- Two plastic/melamine plates with sandwich (or plain pieces of bread or crackers)
- Two Bibles
- Two stuffed dogs

(If you expect large numbers, you may wish to have additional sets of items so that you can divide your teams into groups of seven or less. Remember that only one-third of your entire group will be doing the relay at a time.)

Other Materials

- Copies of the “Dwell in You” handout
- Pens or thin markers
- Crayons

Instructions:

The object of the race is to “get comfortable” with the Word of Christ.

Divide participants into two teams. Each group needs to move all their items to their “dwelling.” Explain “dwell” means *to live* and “dwelling” just means *where you live*. Participants can carry only one item at a time. The last item to be taken should be the Bible.

Line up participants. When the race begins, the first person should take the rug, lay it down in front of the chair, sit down in the chair, then get up and run back to tag their next team member. The next team member grabs another item, and takes it to the “dwelling.” (The dog can sit on the rug, the newspaper, plate, and cup can set on the tray, the afghan or quilt can be draped over the chair.)

Each participant needs to sit down in the chair before returning to the team. When all the items have been brought to the “dwelling,” the last person should take the Bible, sit down

in the chair, open it up and start reading. The first team to have someone start reading is the winner.

After everyone has had a chance to race, gather together and pass out the “Dwell in You” handout. Read together the key verse as printed on the handout.

Now look at the illustration. How can each item serve as a reminder that the word of Christ should surround us in our everyday lives? A list of ideas is given below.

Choose one to share, and invite the group to be creative with their answers. Have them write their ideas in their picture. There are no right or wrong answers. Encourage participants to share some of their ideas. Younger children may wish to color the picture as well.

Rug—the word of Christ is our foundation, always underfoot
Newspaper—Share the Good News with others; stay informed
Afghan—God’s love is comforting; wrap yourself in word of Christ
Dog—Care for all of God’s creation; God is “man’s best friend”
Cup—Water of baptism
Sandwich on plate—Not live on bread alone, but the Word of Christ
Cup & plate—Communion
Food—God’s word nourishes us
Fire—light of Christ burning in us; Holy Spirit
Bible—Our Book of Faith, the word of Christ which tells us how God would have us live.

Close Rotation with Prayer

Lord, May the word of Christ dwell in us, even as we dwell in your love. Surround us with reminders of your presence in our lives, and help us lead lives that are pleasing to you. Amen.

ROTATION C TAKE THE LID OFF-TEACH AND SING

Advance Preparation for Rotation C:

Gather margarine, cottage cheese, sour cream or other food container lids (as close in size as possible so that the felt Luther Roses from Rotation A will fit on them)

Drill a small hole near the edge of each lid for hanging up (stack several for drilling) or poke a hole in them using a hammer and nail.

Gather Materials:

- Food container lids with holes
- Permanent fine line markers
- Newsprint or white board with the key verse (Col. 3:16) written on it
- White board, chalk board, or newsprint and markers
- Chain of verses from Opening Activity
- Hymnals and or Christian song books

Instructions:

Invite participants to read the key verse aloud together.

Lay the Bible chain in front of participants. Pair them off, and ask them each to find a verse or story on the chain that they can share with their partner. Participants could read the verse and explain why they like it; they could share what a favorite Bible story means to them. Pair off younger children with someone older who can ask them questions, if necessary, such as “What is your favorite Bible story?” “Why do you like that story?”

When participants have had a few minutes to share Bible verses and stories, ask them to switch partners. Now ask them to share a favorite hymn or Christian song with their partner. Younger children can share a song they have learned in Sunday School. Favorite hymns do not need to come from a hymnbook—encourage participants to talk about other contemporary Christian songs that they know. Have hymnals available for participants to use.

As a group, sing a verse from one or several of the hymns that the group mentions.

Pass out food container lids and markers to participants. Explain that everyone has just practiced what the key verse asks us to do: teach one another, and sing hymns and songs to praise God.

Talk about the activity. What was easy about sharing a Bible verse or story? What made it difficult? Can any of these things be done in other places?

Suggest to participants that we often want to “keep a lid on” our faith. We think of it as a private thing, between ourselves and God. Perhaps we are embarrassed or afraid to talk about God with others in our daily lives.

If we want the word of Christ to dwell in us, we need to do things to increase our own understanding of God’s word, and to share it with others. Ask participants to brainstorm ideas and write them on the white board.

Suggestions could include:

- Read from the Bible each day
- Share a graphic novel or manga (comicbook-style illustrations originating in Japan) version of the Bible with friends
- Write a Bible verse on a napkin to pack in a lunch
- Listen to Christian music, from a personal collection or a Christian radio station
- Sing a hymn as a family before bed
- Take 5 minutes at lunchtime for a daily devotion
- Ask a friend what his or her favorite Bible story is
- Praise God for the things you see in your backyard, or on the way to school or work

Now ask participants to write on the inside of their lid one thing that we can add or do in our lives to help the word of Christ dwell in them, and to teach or tell others about Christ. They may use a suggestion from the board, or come up with one of their own.

Close Rotation with Prayer

Dear Lord,

Help us to share your story with others, through song and Word and the way we behave.
Help us grow in our understanding of you. Amen.

CLOSING

Advance Preparation for Closing:

Gather a number of glue guns and recruit several adults or older teens to be gluers for the closing event

Enlist someone to help at the cutting and rolling table

Make copies of the Shema located elsewhere on this Website

Two tables set up, one for gluing and one for cutting

Recruit the musician from the opening to lead the *Holy Wisdom, Holy Word* song again

Gather Materials:

Glue guns with glue sticks

Extension cords as needed for glue guns

Copies of the Shema

Scissors

Bible

(optional) yarn

Participants will bring these items from their rotations to the closing:

-Felt Luther Rose

-Food container lid

-Key verse

Instructions:

Ask participants to recall the Bible verse that was read at the end of the skit.

Read again Deuteronomy 6:4-9: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

Explain that these verses are known in the Jewish tradition as the "Shema" which means "hear" in Hebrew. One Jewish tradition is to place a scroll with this verse on the doorpost of the home. The scroll is put in a container, called a mezuzah, which means "doorpost." As one enters and exits a doorway with a Shema, it is customary to kiss

one's fingers and touch the mezuzah, as a sign of respect and love for God and his commandments.

Participants will be making "Luther Rose mezuzahs" with the items from the rotations.

Instruct them to go to the cutting and gluing tables, in either order.

At the gluing table, assistants will put a rim of glue $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way around the circle on the outside top of the food lids. The unglued portion should have the hole for mounting at its center. Carefully place the Luther Rose so that its top lines up with the hole for mounting. Press edges in place along warm glue. (Do all the gluing for children—glue guns are hot.)

At the cutting table, participants will cut the Key Verse off their illustration page and roll it into a scroll. Additionally, they will cut a Shema from the sheets and roll one up. When the glue has hardened, the two scrolls can be inserted into the pocket formed by the lid and the felt.

Encourage participants to mount their mezuzah on a doorpost at home. Cut pieces of yarn and string through the mounting hole, so the mezuzah can be hung on a doorknob or existing wall nail at home.

Sing

Sing the *Holy Wisdom, Holy Word* song.

Closing Prayer Litany

The response is "Let the word of Christ dwell in us."

Lord, through the week at school and work
Let the word of Christ dwell in us

Lord, as we come in and as we go out
Let the word of Christ dwell in us

Lord, as we eat and as we sleep
Let the word of Christ dwell in us

Lord, with our friends and with our family
Let the word of Christ dwell in us

Lord, as we praise and glorify you
Let the word of Christ dwell in us

Lord, in all we say and do
Let the word of Christ dwell in us

In your name we pray, **Amen.**