

BEGINNING A NEW BIBLE STUDY

Our ancestors in faith believed that studying Scripture was not only a way to learn, but a way to be in the presence of God, a way to pray. As we gather for study, we thank God together.

PREPARATION

Tell people in advance that the group will pray together to rejoice in the gift of Bible study before the session begins. This ritual will take no more than five minutes.

Create a focal point in your meeting room by spreading a cloth on a table in the front or center of the room. On the cloth, place a candle, a glass bowl of water, a cross, and a Bible open to Paul's letter to the Romans. Have ready matches or a lighter.

You may also wish to place a few *LWT* subscription envelopes and promotional brochures, as well as Women of the ELCA individual partnership brochures, in a basket by the door so that participants may pick them up as they leave. (Call 800-638-3522, ext. 2730, to request materials.)

OPENING

SPEAKER 1: The Lord be with you.

ALL: **And also with you.**

SPEAKER 1: Jesus our Savior promised us that where two or three

are gathered in his name, he is here with us. (Light the candle.) Let this flame remind us of his presence in our hearts, in our words, in our Scriptures (touch the Bible), in our sacraments (touch the water), and in our gathering together.

ALL: **Amen.**

SPEAKER 2: God's inspired word in the Bible is ever ancient, ever new. Over the centuries, God's word has touched the hearts and souls of millions of people all over the world.

ALL: **We thank God together for God's great gift.**

SPEAKER 1: Our ancestors in faith saw study of God's inspired word in the Bible as a way to be in God's presence; they saw study of Scripture as a way to pray.

ALL: **We thank God together for God's great gift.**

SPEAKER 2: Lutheran women have gathered to study the Bible together for generations. This rich tradition is a great gift to the church.

ALL: **We thank God together for God's great gift.**

SPEAKER 2: As we gather today, we know that we are united with Lutheran women all over the country in studying this same text.

ALL: **We thank God together for God's great gift.**

SPEAKER 1: Our Lord told us to go out and preach the Good News to all people. Our studying Scripture together empowers us to do that.

ALL: **We thank God together for God's great gift.**

Pause

SPEAKER 1: Each one of us knows at least one woman who would rejoice in being welcomed to study the Bible in community.

SPEAKER 2: Each one of us knows at least one woman who would rejoice in being welcomed to our community of women.

ALL: **We ask God, what shall we do? How shall we take action?**

Pause

SPEAKER 2: Let us pray.

Blessed Lord, you bring us together in community around your holy Bible. We offer thanks and ask your blessing on all the women who gather to feast upon your word through this Bible study. Now inspire us, we pray, to generosity in sharing your many great gifts, so that we may be mutually encouraged by one other's faith. In the name of Jesus our Savior, we pray. Amen.

ALL: **Amen.**