

BIBLICAL PASSAGES AND LUTHERAN REFERENCES

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 1:28 & 2:15 God blessed them, and God said to them. “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”...The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. (NRSV)

Exodus 22:21-22 You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt. You shall not abuse any widow or orphan. (NRSV)

Leviticus 19:9-10 When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You shall not strip your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the alien: I am the Lord your God. (NRSV)

Deuteronomy 16:18 & 20 You shall appoint judges and officials throughout your tribes, in all your towns that the Lord your God is giving you, and they shall render just decisions for the people. Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue, so that you may live and occupy the land that the Lord your God is giving you. (NRSV)

Deuteronomy 24:21 When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, do not glean what is left; it shall be for the alien, the orphan, and the widow. (NRSV)

2 Samuel 23:3-4 The God of Israel has spoken, the Rock of Israel has said to me: One who rules over people justly, ruling in the fear of God, is like the light of morning, like the sun rising on the cloudless morning, gleaming from the rain on the grassy land. (NRSV)

Psalms 72:1-4 Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to a king's son. May he judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice. May the mountains yield prosperity for the people, and the hills, in righteousness. May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the needy, and crush the oppressor. (NRSV)

Psalms 82:1-5 God has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods he holds judgement: “How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked?

Give justice to the weak and the orphan; maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.” They have neither knowledge nor understanding, they walk around in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken. (NRSV)

Proverbs 14:21 Those who despise their neighbors are sinners, but happy are those who are kind to the poor. (NRSV)

Proverbs 31:8-9 Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute. Speak out, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy. (NRSV)

Isaiah 1:17 ...cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow. (NRSV)

Isaiah 10:1-2 Woe to the legislators of infamous laws, to those who issue tyrannical decrees who refuse justice to the unfortunate and cheat the poor among my people of their rights, who make widows their prey, and rob the orphan.

Isaiah 32:1-8 Some day there will be a king who rules with integrity, and national leaders who govern with justice. Each of them will be like a shelter from the wind and a place to hide from storms. They will be like streams flowing in a desert like the shadow of a giant rock in a barren land.

Their eyes and ears will be open to the needs of the people. They will not be impatient any longer, but they will act with understanding and will say what they mean. No one will think that a fool is honorable or say that a scoundrel is honest.

A fool speaks foolishly and thinks up evil things to do. What he does and what he says are an insult to the Lord, and he never feeds the hungry or gives thirsty people anything to drink. A stupid person is evil and does evil things; he plots to ruin the poor with lies and to keep them from getting their rights. But an honorable person acts honestly and stands firm for what is right. (TEV)

Isaiah 42:6 "I, the Lord, have called you and given you the power to see that justice is done on earth."

Jeremiah 22:3 Thus says the Lord: Act with justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor anyone who have been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the alien, the orphan, and the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place. (NRSV)

Ezekiel 16:49 This was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy. (NRSV)

Amos 5:21-24 I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon.

Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever flowing stream. (NRSV)

Amos 8:4-6 Hear this, you that trample on the needy, and bring to ruin the poor of the land, saying, "When will the new moon be over so that we may sell grain; and the sabbath, so that we may offer wheat for sale? We will make the ephah small and the shekel great, and practice deceit

with false balances, buying the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals, and selling the sweepings of the wheat.” (NRSV)

Micah 6:8 He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (NRSV)

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 23:23 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others. (NRSV)

Matthew 25:34-36 Then the king will say to those at his right hand, “Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was in prison and you visited me.” (NRSV)

Matthew 25:44-46 “Then they will answer him, ‘When, Lord, did we ever see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and we would not help you?’ The King will reply, ‘I tell you, whenever you refused to help one of these least important ones, you refused to help me.’ These, then, will be sent off to eternal punishment, but the righteous will go to eternal life.” (TEV)

Luke 1:46-53 And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. (NRSV)

Luke 2:14 Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!

Luke 3:11 In reply he said to them, “whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.” (NRSV)

Luke 6:27 “But I say to you that hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you.”

Luke 18:1-5 Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. He said, “In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, “Grant me justice against my opponent.” For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, “Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.”

Luke 20:22-25 “Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?” But he perceived their craftiness and said to them, “Show me a denarius. Whose head and whose title does it bear?” They said, “The emperor’s.” He said to them, “Then give to the emperor the things that are the emperor’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” (NRSV)

John 19:10&11 Pilate therefore said to him, “do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?” Jesus answered him, “You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.” (NRSV)

Romans 3:23 All of us sin and fall short of the glory of God.

Romans 13:1 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God. (NRSV)

Ephesians 6:15 As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace.

1 Timothy 2:1-3 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior. (NRSV)

James 2:15-17 If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and eat you fill,” and yet you do not supply their bodily need, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. (NRSV)

1 John 2:1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

1 John 3:16-18 We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help? Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. (NRSV)

ELCA CONSTITUTION

This church shall advocate dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, and standing with the poor and powerless and committing itself to their needs. (Chapter 4.02c)

This church shall study social issues and trends, work to discover the causes of oppression and injustice, and develop programs of ministry and advocacy to further human dignity, freedom, justice, and peace in the world. (Chapter 4.03l)

ELCA SOCIAL STATEMENTS

Abortion Greater social responsibility for the care, welfare, and education and families is needed through such measures as access to quality, affordable health care, child care, and housing. Sufficient income support for families needs to be provided by employers, or, in the case of the unemployed, through government assistance. As a society we need to provide increased support for education, nutrition, and services that protect children from abuse and neglect.

Caring For Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice Humans, in service to God, have special roles on behalf of the whole creation. Made in the image of God, we are called to care for the earth as God cares for the earth.

God's command to have dominion and subdue the earth is not a license to dominate and exploit. Human dominion (Genesis 1:28; Psalm 8), a special responsibility, should reflect God's way of ruling as a shepherd king who takes the form of a servant (Phillipians 2:7), wearing a crown of thorns.

This church will favor proposals and actions that address environmental issues in a manner consistent with the principles of participation, solidarity, sufficiency, and sustainability.

This church will support proposals and actions to protect and restor...the quality of: natural and human habitats, including seas, wetlands, forests, wilderness, and urban areas; air, with special concern for inhabitants of urban areas;

water, especially drinking water, groundwater, polluted runoff, and industrial and municipal waste; and soil, with special attention to land use, toxic waste disposal, wind and water erosion, and preservation of farmland amid urban development.

For Peace in God's World As citizens we are to seek to influence our nation's actions for peace among the nations. Sharing a common humanity with all people, we are called to work for peace throughout the globe.

Human rights provide a common universal standard of justice for living with our differences, and they give moral and legal standing to the individual in the international community.

We therefore will continue to teach about human rights, protest their violation, advocate their international codification, and support effective ways to monitor and ensure compliance with them.

Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture The Christ to whom the Church witnesses is the Christ who breaks down walls of cultural exclusivity (Mark 7:24-29; John 4).

Our advocacy will take place in partnership ecumenically, among corporations and local, state, and national governments. ...We will work for respect of cultures... We will speak against policy initiatives that discriminate on the basis of language.

This church will support legislation, ordinances, and resolutions that guarantee to all persons equally: civil rights, including full protection of the law and redress under the law of discriminatory practices; and to all citizens, the right to vote;

We will advocate for just immigration policies and will promote international respect for human rights, and support the international movement to eliminate discrimination.

Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All Based on this vantage point of faith, “*sufficient, sustainable livelihood for all*” is a benchmark for affirming, opposing, and seeking changes in economic life. Because of sin we fall short of these obligations in this world, but we live in light of God’s promised future that ultimately there will be no hunger and injustice. This promise makes us restless with less than what God intends for the world. In economic matters, this draws attention to: the scope of God’s concern—“for all”, the means by which life is sustained—“livelihood”, what is needed—“sufficiency”, and a long-term perspective—“sustainability” (p.3)

Government is intended to serve God’s purposes by limiting or countering narrow economic interests and promoting the common good. Paying taxes to enable government to carry out these and other purposes is an appropriate expression of our stewardship in society, rather than something to be avoided. Government often falls short of these responsibilities. Its policies can harm the common good and especially the most vulnerable in society. Governing leaders are to be held accountable to God’s purposes.

The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective In witnessing to Jesus Christ, the Church announces that the God who justifies expects all people to do justice. ...This church respects the God-given integrity and tasks of governing authorities and other worldly structures, while holding them accountable to God.

This church shall: work with and on behalf of the poor, the powerless, and those who suffer, using its power and influence with political and economic decision-making bodies to develop and advocate policies that seek to advance justice, peace, and the care of creation.

The witness of this church in society flows from its identity as a community that lives from and for the Gospel. Faith is active in love; love calls for justice in the relationships and structures of society. It is in grateful response to God’s grace in Jesus Christ that this church carries out its responsibility for the well-being of society and the environment.

BABIES IN THE RIVER

An urban legend says:

Once upon a time there was a small village on the edge of a river. The people there were good and the life in the village was good. One day a villager noticed a baby floating down the river. The villager quickly jumped into the river and swam out to save the baby from drowning.

The next day this same villager was walking along the river bank and noticed two babies in the river. He called for help, and both babies were rescued from the swift waters. The following day four babies were seen floating in the river and rescued. Then eight babies were rescued, then more, and still more.

The villagers organized themselves quickly, setting up watch towers and training teams of swimmers who could resist the swift waters and rescue babies. Rescue squads were soon working 24 hours a day. Each day the number of helpless babies floating down the river increased.

The villagers organized themselves efficiently. The rescue squads were now snatching many children each day. Groups were trained to give mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Others prepared formula and provided clothing for the chilled babies. Many were involved in making clothes and knitting blankets. Still others provided foster homes and placement.

While the babies that were rescued from the river, now very numerous, could not all be saved, the villagers felt they were doing well to save as many as they could each day. Indeed, the village elders blessed them in their good work. Life in the village continued on that basis.

One day, however, someone raised the question, “But where are all these babies coming from? Who is throwing them into the river? Why? Let’s organize a team to go upstream and see who’s doing it.” The elders countered with: “And if we go upstream who will operate the rescue operations? We need every concerned person here.”

“But don’t you see,” cried the one lone voice, “if we find out who is responsible for throwing them in, we can stop the problem and no babies will drown. By going upstream we can eliminate the cause of the problem.”

“It is too risky.”

And so the numbers of babies in the river increased daily. Those saved increased, but those who drowned increased even more.

Advocacy: A Bible Study

**Prepared for Lutheran Advocacy
Ministry in Pennsylvania, May 2000.
By Kim Kemmerling, Kayko Dreidger,
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Materials needed: The leader of this Bible study will need the Bible Study Guide found at www.lamp.org and copies of the social statements of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) mentioned in the Resources for Advocacy (p. 17) section for the members of the class. Participants are asked to bring their Bibles to each class.

Advocacy has a long history in the Jewish and Christian traditions, and finds its roots in the Bible. Throughout the Old Testament and continued in the New Testament, there are many guidelines on how one should advocate and on whose behalf. This Bible study will attempt to highlight several important Biblical passages in order to raise an awareness of advocacy and to encourage Christians to be voices for the marginalized in our society.

This Study is designed for six sessions, with each session taking approximately 50 to 60 minutes. Participants in the Bible study are encouraged to read the Bible passages of the week to come and to reflect on them as they go throughout their week.

The leader is required to do some preparation prior to each session: survey the entire course prior to the first session, read the key verses for each week, and, if possible contact the local ELCA state public policy office or the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs (LOGA) for additional background information. (See Resources for Advocacy, p.17) The leader may need to omit some portions of the sessions to fit the time constraints of the class. The leader is encouraged to maintain an awareness of current events and public policy issues influencing the lives of the members of the congregation and their neighbors in the community.

During their time together, the study group is encouraged to take advantage of several advocacy activities that take place throughout their city. The best way to learn about advocacy is to do it. It is hoped that, by the end of the Bible study, the group will be able to incorporate aspects of this study into their personal daily lives. Advocacy will be a witness, a way of living the faith.

Following the sixth week, a Sunday morning service could be dedicated to the ministry of advocacy so that the entire congregation can become more informed and involved in this life-long vocation. The leader and participants in the study will need to coordinate incorporating this rite with the Worship and Music Committee of the congregation.

To locate the complete bible study go to - www.lamp.org and click on Advocacy Bible Study.

THE 2 FEET of CHRISTIAN SERVICE †

Service means works of justice as well as works of mercy. In addition to the one-on-one caring for victims of injustice, service means working to change the situation that created the victims in the first place.

DIRECT SERVICE

(Helping people survive their present crisis)

Food pantries
Food baskets
Clothing centers
Visiting Elderly,
Shut-ins and
Prisoners
Hospitality houses
Volunteer work:
Transporting
elderly to church,
doctor, grocery,
drug store
Tutoring
Meals on
Wheels

But you must
move on to
the next foot.
You need both
feet to walk.

SELECT CHANGE

(Removing the causes of those problems)
Political Action
Voter registration
Legislation:
Write to
legislators.
Organizing:
Get people
together to
work on a
problem.
Educate the
congregation.

WORSHIP SPACE NOTES

It is easy to forget that the uniqueness of our training is our faith basis. We are a holy people and the area we use is a holy space. Environmental cues can help remind participants of this connection.

When you design this space think of your participants and your focus. For example, if you are working on a children's advocacy issue you might:

- ▶ drape a table in a cloth with children's hand prints
- ▶ light a candle between pictures of children who might be the focus of your advocacy program
- ▶ consider some part of your devotions where people physically move toward the worship space and do/place something at the place (i.e. put a penny in a bank, light a candle etc.)
- ▶ have music connected to our faith roots
- ▶ consider placing a cross in the space
- ▶ consider having bread and wine chalice especially if your time ends with communion*.

Other examples for a general advocacy workshop might include:

- ▶ each participant bringing an item that represents advocacy or an advocacy issue
- ▶ participants who come early choosing music
- ▶ a few participants doing a reading and each lighting a candle during devotions

As you plan your worship space, complete the worship space "activity."

A special note on music. Not all participants will necessarily enjoy your particular musical style. Some people pray with chant while others use popular music. Some like the old hymns while others only like folk hymns. Offer your group input to the choices in musical style.

* Please remember, it is an ELCA policy to get permission to celebrate Eucharist outside of a congregation. Permission is granted by a Pastor of the Congregation (if housed in their building) or the Bishop of a Synod.

SMALL GROUP EXERCISE

WORSHIP SPACE/ ENVIRONMENTAL SET UP/ ACTIVITY

Think of a workshop you might provide when you get home.

Describe the group you are working with.

Describe the issue.

How large a space do you want?

Describe the design (candles, cloth, etc.)of the space.

How will you use this space in the workshop (i.e., devotions only or how else you plan on doing it)?

How will you use music? Who will pick what music?

Commissioning our Advocates

As you return home and develop programs, you will become aware that it is the entire synod/congregation must embrace the ministry of advocacy. Individuals may come from a faith basis, but for a group to speak on behalf of their church, it is important to have endorsement at all levels. A Bishop/ Pastor must agree with the work, the synod council/ church council will say this is a necessary program and individual members will know and endorse the ministry. In this light it can be a meaningful experience for both advocates and the congregation/synod to publicly recognize this ministry with a commissioning service.

WHY

Why would advocates who spend most of their time outside the faith community look for a public ceremony?

1. A ceremony is a place where the synod/ congregation publicly and officially accepts this new ministry as part of the life and call for this particular synod/ congregation. Remember, individuals may come and go, but if this is a congregational/synodical ministry, the responsibility for continuation is with a broader group of people.
2. A ceremony endorses, selects and calls forward those from the congregation who will work in this ministry on behalf of the church.
3. A ceremony allows for individual advocates to publicly reaffirm the “yes.” That is, they can publicly state they have answered the call that they privately made when deciding to take on this ministry.
4. A ceremony encourages the synod/ congregation to affirm, bless, and send forth these individuals while promising to keep them and their work in prayer.
5. A ceremony includes prayer for God’s blessing on this ministry.

Format

The format can be arranged by your own group. In general a commissioning service would include:

- an opening prayer with a statement about the advocacy ministry
- calling forward those from the congregation who will do this ministry
- words of affirmation from the congregation/synod
- words of commitment from the members
- sending forth the group with a gesture from the congregation/synod (anointing, blessing, gift)
- closing prayer

Samples

See A Companion to Lutheran Book of Worship: Occasional Services. Augsburg Press
Recognition of Ministries in the Congregation
Commissioning of Missionaries



SMALL GROUP EXERCISE

MY FAITH AND ADVOCACY

Much of our work is the same as when the League of Women Voters works with leaders on advocacy issues. The uniqueness of our work is our grounding in faith.

Each person needs to develop their own way of communicating faith roots.

Areas to bring to your presentation:

1. What are three reasons your faith brings you to advocacy?
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2. What Biblical passages inspire your work?
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3. Where do you look in church documents for grounding?
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4. How do you answer the people who say that church and state should not mix?
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