

CHILD of GOD ... Let your light so shine!

What a privilege to nurture the faith of children!

Teaching children

Living our baptism includes the faith practices described in the Affirmation of Baptism (see below) which is often used when people join the church and at confirmation. Within the phrases of the Affirmation of Baptism, we find a comprehensive teaching tool on faith practices to share with children and youth.

Affirmation of Baptism *Take a moment to affirm your own baptism.*

Do you intend to continue in the covenant God made with you in Holy Baptism:

- to **live** among God's faithful people,
- to **hear** the word of God and share in the Lord's supper,
- to **proclaim** the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,
- to **serve** all people, following the example of Jesus,
- to **strive** for justice and peace in all the earth?

RESPONSE: I do, and I ask God to help and guide me. (*Evangelical Lutheran Worship, p. 236*)

Five Gifts of Discipleship

Inward Gifts:

LIVE among God's faithful people
HEAR the word of God and **SHARE** in the Lord's supper

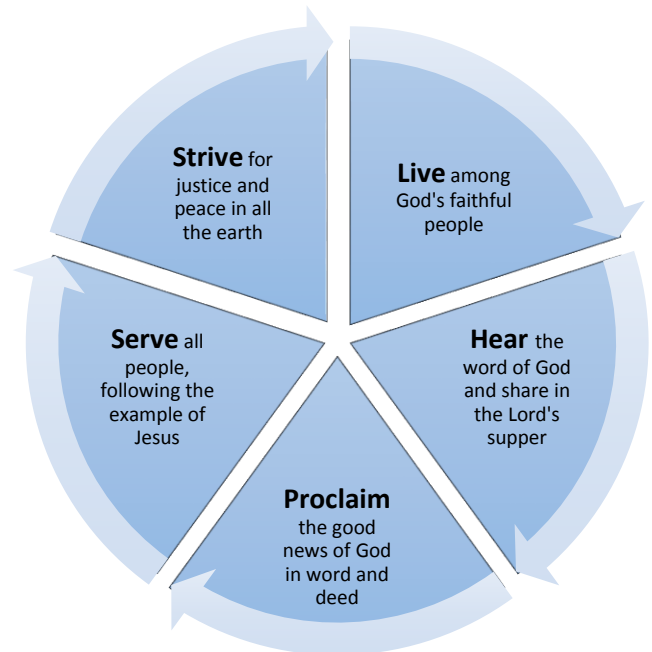
Outward Gifts:

PROCLAIM the good news of God in Christ through word and deed
SERVE all people, following the example of Jesus
STRIVE for justice and peace in all the earth

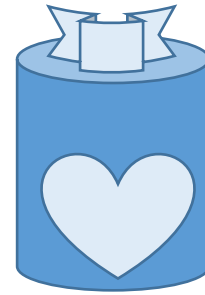
How are these gifts to be used?

Each of the five gifts of discipleship has the potential to deepen our understanding of what it means to follow Jesus. The Holy Spirit provides these gifts of discipleship with each of the five gifts flowing and overlapping with the others.

On a daily basis, we are invited to live, hear, share, proclaim, serve, and strive—in the name of Christ. God guides and shapes us in the living of our baptism and in the newness of life in Christ as we practice our faith each day. These five gifts help us to practice our faith and serve as a reminder of the One who has claimed us in baptism. Use the following activities at your church or at home.



Devotions: Unwrapping the Gifts



Setting

- Sunday School classes
- Children sermons
- Family meals at home
- Bedtime prayers (Adapt for daily prayers, Monday-Friday)

Preparation

Display 4 large boxes wrapped in beautiful paper with lids which are easily removed. In each box, include a phrase from the Affirmation of Baptism. (See below for list of phrases.) Each week, open one of the boxes and read the gift. Monthly schedule:

- Week 1: **Live** among God's faithful people & **hear** the word of God and share in the Lord's Supper
- Week 2: **Proclaim** the good news of God in Christ through word and deed
- Week 3: **Serve** all people, following the example of Jesus
- Week 4: **Strive** for justice and peace in all the earth
- Week 5: Celebration of Gifts

Opening Prayer

Gracious God, thank you for bringing us together to hear your word. Teach us the ways to live together. In Christ, we pray, Amen.

Unwrapping the Gifts

Open the gifts in a sequential order (see above) or select a gift based on current events. Ask the children to reflect on the newly-opened gift. Here are sample questions for week 4:

- Describe someone who "did this" during the last week. Example: *Describe someone who "worked for justice and peace" during the last week.*
- When did YOU get to "do this" during the last week? Example: *When did YOU get "to strive for justice and peace" during the last week?*
- How do you feel when you have an opportunity to "do this"? Example: *How do you feel when you "bring justice and peace"?*
- What ways might you "do this" during the coming week? Example: *What ways might you "bring justice and peace" in the coming week?*

Fifth Session: Celebration of Gifts

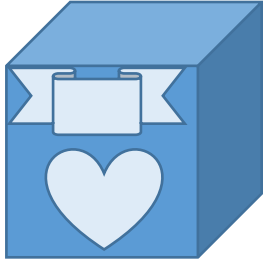
Create a Celebration of Gifts with food and special activities. Here are several examples:

- Create thank-you cards to give to each other. (Make them personal and specific.)
- Distribute copies of the Celebration Chart. (See page 4.) Add stickers.
- Gather at the baptismal font to celebrate God's covenant of baptism. Use water to mark the sign of the cross on each person's forehead and say these words, "[Name of the person,] child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever." (If the font is not available, use a bowl with water.)

Closing Prayer

Send us to proclaim your good news, to serve as Jesus, and to strive for peace and justice. In Christ, we pray. Amen





Unwrapping the Gifts: Activities

The following are samples of activities to unwrap the gifts of discipleship.

- **COLLAGES:** Create collages for each of the five gifts or a montage of all five gifts. Supplies needed: old magazines for cut pictures and words, glue, scissors, list of the five gifts
- **PHOTOGRAPHY:** Photograph people who “do” each of the five gifts of discipleship. Share these photos on your church’s web page or a bulletin board. Use disposable cameras if the children do not have access to a cell phone. Supplies: cameras, list of the five gifts
- **VIDEOS:** Record people telling their own stories about living their baptism on a daily basis. Encourage your guests to give examples from their own lives of each of the five gifts of discipleship. Supplies: cell phones, list of the five gifts
- **SCAVENGER HUNT:** This scavenger hunt can be done virtually, inside or outdoors. Be clear about boundaries, keeping the safety of the children foremost. (Example: Make sure no adult has an opportunity to be alone with a child.) Divide into teams. Set a time limit.

SCAVENGER HUNT LIST OF ITEMS TO FIND:

- Word of God
 - God’s faithful people
 - Something to hold bread
 - Something to hold wine
 - Something used to serve other people, but not used with food or a meal
 - Something people fight over
 - Brings peace
 - Shows justice
- **MUSIC:** Write a new piece of music which captures the gifts of discipleship. Or, find a unique song for each of the five gifts. Arrange a concert using this music. The concert could be online or in person. Expand the concert to be a “Gifts of Discipleship” talent show.
 - **JOURNALS:** Record examples of people who model each gift of discipleship. This could be done with words or drawings. Consider the following questions.
 - Which gift is most difficult to depict? Why so?
 - Which gift is the easiest example to find? Why so?
 - Which is YOUR favorite gift?
 - Which gift might you expand your actions? How so?Supplies: booklets, papers, pens, crayons, markers



Unwrapping the Gifts: Celebration Chart

1. Draw a picture of YOU in the center!
2. Draw a star or put a sticker when you get to "open" one of these gifts.
3. Celebrate God's gifts to YOU!

