

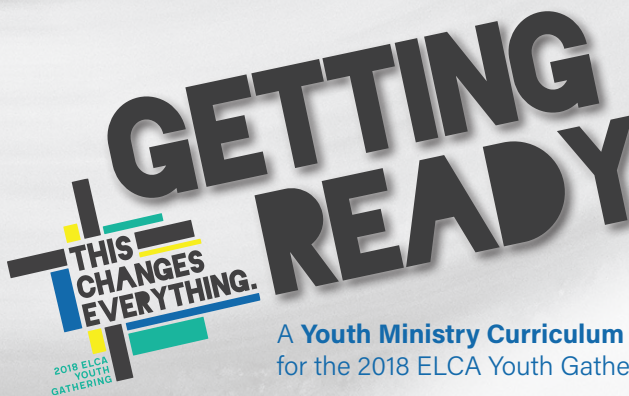
OCTOBER:

GATHERING FOR REFORMATION

PART 1



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



**GETTING
READY**
A Youth Ministry Curriculum ramping up
for the 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering

This month we observe the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. (Martin Luther posted 95 theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenburg, Germany, sparking the Reformation.)

WE ARE A CHURCH FOUNDED ON CHANGE.

As we observe this milestone, we remember that we are to be an ever-reforming church, living into our daily lives as Christ has commanded us. This session will give a brief re-cap of the Reformation, look at where we are as a church today and ways we can move into the future, bringing the good news of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ to the world.



Check out the section "Plan for the Unexpected" on Page 44 of "The Official Gathering Handbook." (The world wasn't expecting a reformation!)



SOCIAL MEDIA SHARING:

Join the reformation! Tweet your ideas for how your congregation can continue to reform.
#Reformation2017 #ELCAYG2018



GATHERING CONNECTION:

The Reformation changed everything! It changed the way people understood faith, the Bible became accessible to more people, how church structure works changed, and it led to a break from practices that did not come from Scripture.

As we observe the 500th anniversary of Reformation, we are reminded how one person can start a massive reform. While the Reformation began 500 years ago, we are a church that continues to reform, reshape and renew in many ways. Reform isn't just one thing. It shapes our theology, our life, our worship, our thinking and our doing. The Gathering is a catalyst for reform. Your group will hear and see things that will spark something new in them. How will they reform your congregation or community upon returning from the Gathering? Look for ways to engage in new insights to continue reform into the future.



HANDBOOK TIMELINE:

October 2017 | shift from informational meetings to group bonding and growing spiritually.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Bible
- Christ Candle
- warm-up sheet in large print
- markers

GATHER (15 MINUTES):

Warmup

As the youth enter the space, encourage them to use the large-print version of the word "reform" to write down what they think it means or examples of reform they have seen or heard of.

Call the youth together when you are ready to begin the session. Ask them to share what they wrote and why.

The Intro

This month we observe the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. The Reformation occurred during what is known as the Renaissance. It was a split in the Catholic Church by which a new form of Christianity was born. We know this as Protestantism.

During the Middle Ages, very few people other than monks and priests, knew how to read and write. With the Renaissance, more and more people became educated and learned how to read and write. Around that same period, the printing press was invented allowing for new ideas, as well as excerpts of the Bible, to be printed and distributed. People could read the Bible for themselves for the first time!

Martin Luther, a monk, began to question the practices of the Catholic Church as he studied the Bible. He struggled with many areas where he felt the Bible and the Catholic Church disagreed. On Oct. 31, 1517, Luther took a list of 95 points that detailed how he thought the church had gone wrong and nailed it to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenburg, Germany. This began the Protestant Reformation.

Let's watch a quick video synopsis of the Reformation. [youtube.com/watch?v=1o8olELbNx&t=36s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1o8olELbNx&t=36s) (15:06 min.)

Gathering Prayer

Adapted from the Small Catechism

Ask for a volunteer to lead the gathering prayer.

Martin Luther's Morning Blessing:

We give thanks to you, God, through Jesus Christ your dear Son, that you have protected us through the night from all harm and danger. We ask that you would also protect us today from sin and all evil, so that our life and actions may please you. Into your hands we commend ourselves; our body, our soul, and all that is ours. Let your holy angel be with us, so that the wicked foe may have no power over us. Amen.

Experiential Learning: Match Game

Have some fun with this match game. Ask the youth to match the event with the date. Have them take turns until they get the matches correct. Write the following on sticky notes or note cards and tape them to the wall in a random order. On your signal have the first person attempt to put the items in order. Give them 45 seconds. Check their work and then send the next person to correct what they believe are the mistakes. Keep this going until several people have had a turn or the list is correct.

95 theses	1517
Luther translates New Testament into German	1522
Martin Luther born	1483
Luther goes to a monastery	1505
Studies at University of Erfurt	1507
Becomes professor of theology at Wittenburg U	1512
Becomes priest of Wittenburg Castle Church	1514
Inquisition of Luther begins	1518
Papal bull is issued	1520
Luther excommunicated	1521
Luther dies	1546

WORD (30 MINUTES):

God's Story – Scripture

Martin Luther struggled as a monk with forgiveness. He didn't think he was worthy of God's forgiveness, even though he tried and tried to do all the things he was told to do to receive God's forgiveness. He went to confession multiple times a day to confess his sins and receive penance, but he still felt unworthy. In 1510, Luther was climbing the Scala Sancta (Holy Stairs) on his knees, saying the Lord's Prayer on each step. Each time anyone climbed them on their knees they got an indulgence of 15 years. An indulgence was a practice of the Roman Catholic Church. If you did a specific task, such as this, or paid a certain price, you could lessen your or loved ones' time in purgatory. Purgatory is described as a place where souls remain to atone for their sins in preparation for entrance into heaven. You could lessen your time in purgatory by doing certain acts approved by the Roman Catholic Church or buying indulgences from the church.

Luther, who doubted the legend about the stairs or the promises of the popes for less time in purgatory after climbing them, nevertheless went there one day to do this holy act. He was climbing the steps on his knees, earning at every step a year's indulgence, when he was startled by a sudden voice, which seemed as if it spoke from heaven, and said, "The just shall live by faith." Luther jumped to his feet in amazement. This was the third time he had heard these words in his mind with such emphasis. It was as if a voice of thunder had said them. It seemed louder than before, and he grasped more fully the great truth in those words. What silliness, he thought, to seek an indulgence from the church, which can last a few years, when God sends me God's Word – an indulgence that will last me forever! What a waste to do these acts when God is willing to forgive me of all my sins not because of the works I do, but freely, in the way of believing upon God's Son! "The just shall live by faith."

From this revelation, the doctrine, or belief, of justification by faith alone – salvation by free grace – stood out to Luther as the one great belief. Luther said it was by deviating from this belief that the church had fallen into sinfulness and had become corrupted under penances and works of self-righteousness. Luther believed that the only way the church could find its way back to truth and liberty was by returning to this belief. This was the road to true reformation.

Let's look at the passage Luther heard in that thundering voice.

Find **Ephesians 2:8-10**

Discuss the following questions:

- Why is it so hard for us to understand grace?
- What commonly held life principle does it demolish?
(That if we do good things, we get into heaven.)
- Translate the words "grace" and "faith" into language a 10-year-old would understand.
- The ELCA Youth Gathering theme verse is Ephesians 2:8 and the theme is "This changes everything" – God's grace changes everything. What does that mean for us today?



Write out the responses from "God's grace changes everything. What does mean for us today?" and keep these posted during the year.

Our Story - Gathering for Reformation

LEARN:

- Ask the youth to name people who have reformed history in some way.
- Ask them to share what these people reformed and how. Ask for help from others to fill in the gaps.
 - *Answers could include Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Teresa, Harriet Tubman, Albert Einstein, etc..*

LISTEN:

Watch the following video clip and discuss what ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton hopes for the ELCA. [youtube.com/watch?v=tQYAkVe0Mtw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tQYAkVe0Mtw) (6:02 min.)

Ask:

- What did you hear?
- What stuck with you?

CONNECT:

Presiding Bishop Eaton shares information about Martin Luther and the Reformation. [youtube.com/watch?v=CmE0O33J-BY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CmE0O33J-BY) (6:12 min.)

Ask:

- What did you learn?
- What was interesting to you?

ENGAGE:

The church is still reforming, it didn't just happen 500 years ago.

Ask:

- What are ways we see our congregation reforming here and now?
- What are ways we can encourage our congregation to continue to reform into the future?
- How can we get the congregation on-board with these ideas?



SENDING (5 MINUTES):

Gather around the Christ Candle and ask someone to share the following prayer.

Sending Prayer

God of forgiveness, we give you thanks for those who work to reform our church and our society, and we recognize we are blessed by those who through your guidance work to improve our lives. We ask that you help us end injustice and inequality through the removal of faults or abuses. Together, we celebrate Martin Luther, the Reformation, and that it is by the gift of God's grace and through faith that we share in Christ's suffering, resurrection and eternal life. Amen.

Go and Do Likewise - (Blessing and Sending)

When I say, "Stand up," we all stand up. When I say, "Stand with," put your arm around your neighbor's shoulder. When I say, "Stand for," mark the sign of the cross on the forehead of someone beside you.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Presiding Bishop Eaton reminds us to live and grow in God's abundant love and grace. Stir us to a deeper longing for God in our lives that we may boldly bear witness to your Word in all the world.

Stand up – for reform, changing injustices.

Stand with – those working for reform for the benefit of all.

Stand for – justice meant for all people in all places.

St. Paul reminded the community of the Ephesians: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God." This changes everything!

Go in peace, continue reforming!

Thanks be to God.



OCTOBER:

GATHERING FOR REFORMATION

**PART 2:
GOING
DEEPER**

October 31, 1517, is usually identified as the catalyst moment of the Reformation – its beginning. That is the day Martin Luther is said to have posted a protest in Wittenberg, Germany, where he served, against the Roman Catholic practice of selling indulgences. The events that occurred as result of this protest (his 95 theses,) sparked protests and efforts to reform the Catholic Church, which we now call the Reformation.

Luther saw the unjust practice of selling indulgences. There are many injustices in our world today. What are we to do as Lutheran Christians about these? As a church built on reform and justice, we are called to continue to be people of reform. This session will help your group understand the ELCA today and its movement into the future as we continue to be a church of reform through Jesus Christ.



SOCIAL MEDIA SHARING:

Tweet something you would like to reform.
#Reformation2017 #ELCAYG2018



GATHERING CONNECTION:

The Reformation changed everything! It changed the way people understood faith; the Bible became accessible to more people than ever before; how church structure works changed; it led to a break from practices that did not come from Scripture. As we observe the 500th anniversary of Reformation, we are reminded how one person can start a massive reform. While the Reformation began 500 years ago, we are a church that continues to reform, reshape and renew in many ways. Reform isn't just one thing. It shapes our theology, our life, our worship, our thinking and our doing. The Gathering is a catalyst for reform. Your group will hear and see things that will spark something new in them. How will they reform your congregation or community upon returning from the Gathering? Look for ways to engage in new insights to continue reform into the future.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Bible
- Christ Candle
- warm-up sheet in large print
- markers
- computer with Wi-Fi connection or the video clips downloaded before the session
- projector if available

GATHER (5 MINUTES):

Warmup

As the youth enter the space, encourage them to use the large-print version of the phrase "Reformed to ..." to write down things they feel we as a church need to pay attention to as we move into the future.

Call the group together when you are ready to begin the session. Ask them to share what they wrote and why they feel these need reforming.

The Intro

Martin Luther saw practice of selling indulgences was unjust. There are many injustices in our world today. What are we to do as Lutheran Christians about these? As a church built on reform and justice, we are called to continue to be people of reform. This session will help us understand the ELCA today and its movement into the future as we continue to be a church of reform through Jesus Christ.

Gathering Prayer

Ask for a volunteer to lead the gathering prayer.

Martin Luther's Morning Blessing:

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Experiential Learning: True or Not

Write each item from the list below, on slips of paper (one item per piece.) On the wall have two category titles posted: TRUE and NOT. Explain that the youth are to decide what is true about the Reformation or Martin Luther and put those under the TRUE category. The things they believe were not true of the Reformation or Martin Luther should be put under the NOT category.

HAPPENED DURING REFORMATION:

- Translated the Greek New Testament into German at the rate of 1,500 words per day
- Lived out his life as an "outlaw"
- Luther was a hit! Posters (woodcuts) sold out as soon as they went on sale
- The printing press helped the Reformation take root
- Pope Leo, upon reading the 95 theses, remarked "What drunken German monk wrote these?"
- Luther is said to have created the concept of the community chest, where money and needed items for the poor were collected and distributed
- Proficient at playing the lute
- Earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in the shortest times possible
- Wrote 60,000 pages during his life
- Married a nun who ran away from a convent to live in the Reformation
- Suffered from all kinds of stomach and bowel problems
- Wrote lots of music – more than 40 hymns

DID NOT HAPPEN DURING REFORMATION:

- Michelangelo finished painting the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel (no – it was 1512)
- Christopher Columbus set sail from Spain (no – it was 1492 – Luther was a boy)
- Changed his name from Martin Looney to get more respect (no – it was Martin Luder, changed to sound more academic)
- Was studying to be a doctor (no – a lawyer)
- Almost died from a dagger wound to his leg and promised to live his life as a priest if he lived (no – this promise came from almost being struck by lightning, the dagger wound happened at age 19 but he was saved by a friend who quickly got a doctor)
- Was totally pumped when he finally got to celebrate his first Mass (no – he was so terrified of the presence of Christ that he tried running from the altar. He trembled so much he nearly dropped the bread and cup!)



WORD (30 MINUTES):

God's Story – Scripture

Have the youth read the story of the disciples traveling to Emmaus after Jesus' death and resurrection.

Read Luke 24:13-35

- What happened in this story?
- How are we like these disciples?
- The disciples perhaps lost hope but were reminded of the love of God through Jesus' life, death and resurrection. Hope changes everything!
- We are a people of faith and hope, but we struggle with this at times.
- Just like the disciples in the story, we are reminded of that hope and to share this good news.

Our Story – Gathering for Reformation

LEARN:

Watch the following video clip about the ELCA.
[youtube.com/watch?v=rNkBgGYZn0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rNkBgGYZn0) (4:45 min.)

Ask:

- What did you hear?
- What stuck with you?
- What does the ELCA mean to you?

LISTEN:

Watch the following video of Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton.
<http://www.elca.org/YouthGathering/details/get-ready/video>

- What did you hear?
- How does this inform your life as a Lutheran Christian?
- What excites you about being an ELCA Lutheran Christian?

CONNECT:

- Gather into small groups.
- Give each group a piece of paper and pen.
- Pretend you are in an elevator at the Gathering and someone asks what all these people are doing in Houston. You have one minute to tell them why. Your group has five minutes to create your "elevator speech."
- When the time is up, share the speeches.
- Post these on your walls as a reminder as you prepare to go to Houston.

ENGAGE:

- Encourage your youth to do "person in the pew" interviews next Sunday at your congregation. They should ask people what it means to them to be an ELCA Lutheran Christian.
- Come up with a plan to do this, tasks for people to do, and how these will be shared with the congregation and the broader church. If you share them on social media, be sure to include the hashtags #ELCA and #ELCAYG2018.
- Have fun with this!

SENDING (5 MINUTES):

Sending Prayer

Gather around the Christ Candle, and ask someone to share the following prayer:

God of hope, we give you thanks for those who work to reform our church and our society. Help us to be ever reforming, so we don't become stuck in our ways, but rather meeting our fellow humans where their needs are. Let us live out our hope in you and share that with all the people we meet. Together, we celebrate Martin Luther, the Reformation and the ELCA. We know that it is by the gift of God's grace and through faith that we share in Christ's suffering, resurrection and eternal life. Amen.

Go and Do Likewise - (Blessing and Sending)

When I say, "Stand up," we all stand up. When I say, "Stand with," put your arm around your neighbor's shoulder. When I say, "Stand for," mark the sign of the cross on the forehead of someone beside you.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

The early church gathered together to break bread and to share with one another, to bring the gifts of the many and support any among them as there was need. Around bread and wine, prayer and singing, love and service, we are brought together to be a unique community of the church that gathers in Jesus' name. As a part of this community:

Stand up – for reform, changing injustices.

Stand with – those working for reform for the benefit of all.


Stand for – justice meant for all people in all places.


St. Paul reminded the community of the Ephesians: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God." This changes everything!


Go in peace. Continue reforming!


Thanks be to God.

#ELCAYG2018

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Download the complete, year-long curriculum at www.elca.org/gathering

GET

READY

WITH

US!

QUESTIONS? EMAIL
gathering@elca.org
www.elca.org/gathering