

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

# Grow to Go

Disciples on a Mission!



2007-2008 CHRISTIAN EDUCATION PLANNING GUIDE  
*An ongoing expression of the Call to Discipleship*

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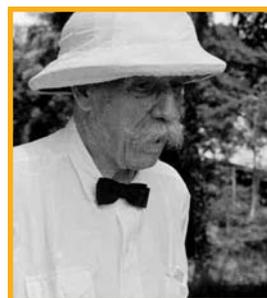
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# Welcome Disciples!

## Welcome to *Grow to Go!*

Here's your invitation to take your call as a disciple out into the world! The call to life transformed in Christ compels disciples of all ages to boldly witness to God's creative and loving activity in the world. This program planner is intended to assist Christian education leaders as they engage adults, youth, and children in a life of discipleship.

**Grow to Go** is designed to especially help you equip children to be "disciple-makers" and to instill an assurance in their identity that they too are called to "go tell" in the world. What does a child's world look like? Well, perhaps it is the home, neighborhood, school, community, and even around the globe.

## Three unique features mark this year's planner:

- As we continue with our series of "modern day disciples" the spotlight shines on the life and ministry of Albert Schweitzer. We are reminded that our youngest generation may not have ever heard of Dr. Schweitzer or Dietrich Bonhoeffer (featured in the 2006-2007 Christian education planner). Albert Schweitzer plays a significant part in this year's Intergenerational Rally Day Module (see page 16).
- The **Grow to Go** theme offers a natural link to discipleship through global mission. Even if you don't use all the Intergenerational Rally Day materials, please consider the Village Education Project, (see page 26) a wonderful way to connect children with children across the miles.
- A leader enrichment page devoted to the faith-sharing role of teacher/leader in the classroom, at home, and in day-to-day activities (see pages 28-29).



*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*

**Matthew 28:19-20**

*For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.*

**John 3: 16**



## An Ongoing Expression of Discipleship

This resource is the latest addition to the constellation of resources carrying out the **Call to Discipleship** theme and the fourth emphasis of the ELCA Evangelism Strategy, “Start and Renew Congregations.”

Each annual program planner focuses on one specific aspect of discipleship and the seven faith practices. Find a quick overview of the previous themes, information on Bible studies related to the seven faith practices, and the list of Intergenerational Rally Day modules at [www.elca.org/christianeducation/programplanners/2006CEProgramPlanner/images/ongoingexpression.pdf](http://www.elca.org/christianeducation/programplanners/2006CEProgramPlanner/images/ongoingexpression.pdf)

[www.elca.org/christianeducation/discipleship/](http://www.elca.org/christianeducation/discipleship/) is your one-stop entry point for accessing all the materials mentioned above.

View the entire Evangelism Strategy at <http://www.elca.org/visionevangelism/EvangelismStrategyFinal.pdf>

## How to Use This Resource

Adapt this material to fit your setting.

- Consider using it:
  - As you plan and prepare to launch the 2007-2008 education year.
  - As you pick and choose elements and incorporate them in your educational programs throughout the year.
  - Use this planner in conjunction with materials from previous planners to carry out your own on-going response to the Call to Discipleship in mid-week activities, after-school programs, special-event days, or summer programming.
- Be sure to maximize your use of Web page references found throughout this resource.
- For further support, check out the latest offerings for lifelong learning from Augsburg Fortress Publishers. Visit the on-line store at [www.augsburgfortress.org](http://www.augsburgfortress.org) or call 800/328-4648.

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Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America

*Living in God's amazing grace*

# Grow to Go! Disciples on a Mission

## Bible Study Introduction

Have you ever done a Bible study that encouraged you to rent a goofball comedy before you get started? Well, you're about to.

Will Ferrell is an actor known for making good-hearted comedies about flawed characters who learn enough life lessons to help them grow up in the end. In the movie, *Talladega Nights* (2006, PG-13), Ferrell plays a NASCAR driver named Ricky Bobby (yes, he has two first names!). Mid-flick, Ricky Bobby says a hysterical table grace addressed to "Baby Jesus." Exasperated, his wife chides him, arguing that praying to a baby is "a bit weird and all, don't ya think?" Unaffected, Ricky keeps right on praying to the cute, cuddly, little golden-fleece-diapered, 7 pounds 8 ounces, Christmas Jesus...because that's the one he likes best. Everybody else around this wacky dinner table takes this as a cue to describe how they like to imagine Jesus. The Ninja Jesus, fighting off evil doers, isn't even the most outrageous one. This scene is hilarious!

But after you stop laughing, ask yourself this question: Who is Will Ferrell, ever so gently, poking fun at??

The answer, of course, is that he is laughing at **us** whenever we treat Jesus like *Silly Putty* and act like we can give him any shape we want. He is laughing at us whenever we try to control, manipulate, shrink, squeeze, or box Jesus in. And we laugh, too, because we know it's true. We do try to do these things. As much as we might try to be like Albert Schweitzer (see p. 16), we all carry a little Ricky Bobby inside of us. Albert would probably tell us that he did, too. After all, Jesus can be scary! He claims Lordship over our work, relationships, and money. He tells us we should love our enemies. He is God from God

and light from light. Through him, all things were made! We know how foolish it is to think we can build a box that could keep Jesus in it...even a church-shaped box. And so we can't help but laugh when we see a little bit of ourselves in Ricky Bobby.

The truth is, Jesus can't be kept inside any box we could dream up. Jesus was sent by God to announce and to bring in the transformation of the whole world, a world that God so loves. The world is the point of Jesus' ministry. Jesus isn't "in" the church for MY sake; Jesus is at work through the church (in other words, through you and me!), for the sake of the world.

## That's worthy of repetition!

- Jesus isn't "in" the church for **my** sake.
- Jesus is at work "through" **us** (individually and together, as the church)...for the sake of the world.

## The goal of this Christian education planner is to equip you to help people in your congregation:

- wrestle with these ideas
- see that God is up to something much bigger than taking care of "my" needs
- understand that, in fact, the point of God's mission is to save and bless the whole world
- hear Jesus' call to follow him out into the world that God so loves
- embrace their call to be disciples right in the middle of their everyday lives.

In other words, it'll help straighten out the little bit of Ricky Bobby we all carry around inside of us.





# Leader Bible Study

## For God So Loved The World!

John 3:16

### Theme:

This Bible study searches the opening and closing scenes in Jesus' ministry, according to Matthew's Gospel, looking for clues about what in the world God is up to in and through the lives of those who follow Jesus.

### Purpose:

The goal of this Bible study is to feed the spirits—and the minds—of congregationally-based Christian Education leaders. It invites teachers and leaders to reconnect with the God who is at work in and through them, making a difference in the lives of people in their congregation, for the sake of God's mission in the world. It will help teachers, and leaders think about and more fully embrace what it means to be disciples of Jesus Christ in their own lives, so that they can help others think about and more fully embrace this in their lives, too.

### Key ideas:

- The opening and closing scenes in Jesus' ministry, according to Matthew's Gospel, offer key insights into God's loving mission in the world...and our role within it.
- The story about what Jesus said and did at the very beginning and at the very end of his ministry on earth shows us that:
  - God is not a "temple God" but is, rather, at work in and through history for the sake of the whole creation
  - God's kingdom has broken into and is breaking into the world, bringing light & life, and making everything new
  - God works through those who have been called by Jesus to share the good news of the kingdom with everyone

- God meets us as we do the work we are called to do in the world
- God works through people to bring in the kingdom and, in the end, it is God who will make it happen

### Diving into the Word:

As every credible contestant on American Idol knows, the beginning and the ending of a performance carry special significance. It's not that the middle doesn't matter, but people remember that first awesome—or awful—note...and the last one. It's the same for authors. The way an author begins and ends a story has special significance. The start and finish of a narrative frames the whole rest of the story and provides the context for everything that comes in between. In this Bible study, we're going to explore the "beginning" and the "ending" of the story of Jesus' public ministry, at least the way Matthew tells it, to see what we can learn about God, about our world, and about ourselves.

### This Bible study contains three main sections:

- The world is where the action is
- Jesus calls us to follow him to the crossroads
- Be ready for surprises along the way!

### There are a couple of options for how you do the Bible study:

- Take on all three of these sections in one long, 90–120 minute session.
- Spread the study over several weeks and take it one section at a time. This option would give you the most time to really dig in to the Bible itself and that is, after all, the heart of this study.

#### Each section includes four parts:

- 1 A discussion starter
- 2 Reading and talking about the Bible
- 3 A short reflection about the “point” of the section
- 4 A few “just wondering...” questions to bring it all home.

The whole study is meant to be self-led by the teachers and leaders in a congregationally based Christian education program. No experience – and certainly no seminary training – necessary! Ready? Let’s go.

## The world is where the action is

### FOR Discussion

**True or false:** We’re all tempted, at least once in awhile, to think that having a relationship with Jesus is (or should be!) like having our own personal genie, whose job it is to grant our every wish. Discuss.

### Read

**Read Matthew 4:12-17.**

The most important thing you’ll do in this Bible study is...that’s right...actually read the Bible! God is speaking through this story and has something to say to us. What is it? After you read this passage, spend time talking about what you’re hearing. Listen to each other!

### Reflect

**Use these three questions to get you started:**

- What is God doing in this story?
- What do you hear God saying to you in this story?
- What do you hear God saying to us (as a small group, congregation, etc.) in this story?

Back in Jesus’ day, people had all kinds of ideas about who the “Messiah” would be and what he would do when God finally sent him. They had a whole long list of things they wanted him to take care of. Old scores they wanted him to settle. Enemies they wanted him to destroy. Blessings they wanted him to bestow. In other words, they thought God was sending a holy lump of Silly Putty that they could squeeze into whatever shape they wanted or thought they needed. But Jesus—the Lord of lords and King of kings—will not be molded by human hands or limited by our imaginations. This was clear pretty much from the moment Jesus hit town...because the town he chose wasn’t Jerusalem, the obvious choice. Unexpectedly, Jesus started his ministry in Capernaum, by the sea, a rough and tumble town right in the middle of “Galilee of the Gentiles.” It was there, not in a temple or on a sacred mountain or in a holy city, but rather standing in the crossroads of the nations, that Jesus announced, “The kingdom of heaven has come near!” Jesus didn’t come to be anybody’s wish-granting genie. Jesus came to do something beyond anything we could ever have dreamed or hoped for. Jesus came to change the world.



### JUST Wondering...

- Have you ever been totally surprised by God? What happened?
- You may have experienced the presence of Jesus in “the temple” (i.e. at worship) before. But when have you seen Jesus “show up” out at the crossroads?
- What do you think Jesus meant when he talked about “the kingdom of heaven?” When and where has it felt “near” to you?

## Jesus calls us to follow him to the crossroads

### FOR Discussion

**Fill in the blank:** I can tell that a person is a good Christian because he/she always:

---

OK, what popped into your head first? Why?

### Read

**Read Matthew 4:18-25.**

Remember, this is the heart of the Bible study. While you're reading the story from Matthew, listen for what God is saying to you. Then, spend time listening for what God is saying to you through each other.

### Reflect

**Use these three questions to get you started:**

- What is God doing in this story?
- What do you hear God saying to you in this story?
- What do you hear God saying to us (as a small group, congregation, etc.) in this story?

"The kingdom of heaven is near!" Jesus cried. "The world is about to change!" And then what's the first thing Matthew says he did after this big announcement? He grabbed the first couple of guys he saw and said, "Wanna help?" Through Jesus, we are reminded that God uses ordinary people like us to get things done. Notice what Jesus doesn't say to those

fishermen. He doesn't say, "Hey ya'll, come follow me to church!" or "Yo there, come follow me to a prayer meeting!" or even "'s'up dudes, wanna do some Bible study?" Instead, Jesus called his disciples to follow him into a crazy, busy life of healing and teaching and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom everywhere they went to whoever would listen. The fact is, when Jesus says, "Follow me," it always means action. Jesus calls us to follow him into the crossroads, right into the middle of everyday life. Disciples do get together for worship, of course, and for prayer and Bible study. But that's not the point. Disciples do those things because it equips and energizes them for the real work Jesus calls them to do in the real world. How can you tell that a person is a Christian? They're the ones serving Jesus and loving their neighbors in the middle of their crazy, busy, everyday lives.

### JUST Wondering...

- How has God been at work through you, making a difference in somebody else's life, lately? Describe it.
- Which "spiritual disciplines" energize you for your everyday ministry the most? Which ones equip you for your work as a disciple? Is there something you're missing? What will you do about that?
- How is the work you do inside the congregation (i.e. teaching or leading in the Christian education program) helping equip and energize others for their everyday ministries? What can you do to make sure that happens more intentionally?

## Be ready for surprises along the way

### FOR Discussion

Choose the letter you think best answers this question:

#### What is evangelism?

- 1 Telling people the good news about Jesus
- 2 The scariest thing you could ever imagine doing
- 3 Both of the above

### Read

Read **Matthew 28:1-20**.

When it comes to listening for what God is trying to say to us through the biblical story, everybody has something to offer. No experience is necessary!

### Reflect

Really listen to each other as you talk about these three questions.

Let yourself be surprised by what you hear...and who you hear it from.

- What is God doing in this story?
- What do you hear God saying to you in this story?
- What do you hear God saying to us (as a small group, congregation, etc.) in this story?

Did you notice how the story ends exactly where it started? The angel who is waiting for the women at the tomb tells them to dry their

eyes. Jesus is on the move! And he is headed, the angel says, for Galilee...crossroads of the nation Jesus' work continues, right in the middle of the everyday world, as it continues through us. "Go quickly and tell!" the angel says. The women, to their credit, do as they're told even though they're filled with fear. Thankfully, it doesn't take long for them to discover this wonderful truth: As we go about the work Jesus calls us to do, he shows up! "Greetings!," Jesus said to them. And they worshipped him. Right there on the roadside. It kind of makes you think that maybe our job, as Jesus' disciples, isn't to "take" Jesus to the crossroads. Jesus is already there, right?! In fact, there is no place we could go that Jesus hasn't already been. Our job is, rather, to recognize Jesus when we see him out there...and worship him. In other words, name his name! Tell people what it is we see. Surprise them with the good news that, indeed, the kingdom of heaven has come near.



### JUST Wondering...

- Where is the most surprising place you have "seen" Jesus?"
- Have you ever dared to tell someone, "You know, I think Jesus is right here with us!" (or something like that)? What happened?
- Who needs to hear a surprising word from you this week?

Written by Kelly Fryer, missiologist with nearly 20 years experience in leading congregations in renewal. She is the author of the *No Experience Necessary Bible Study Series*, *Reclaiming the L Word*, and *Reclaiming the C Word*. Watch for Kelly's latest book, *Reclaiming the E Word*, due out later this year.

# Grow to Go!

Disciples on a Mission



*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*

**Matthew 28:19-20**

## Grow to Go!

“Go, make disciples, baptizing and teaching...” Jesus’ words are the propelling mission of the ELCA! That call is ever-fresh today as Christ’s example leads us out into the world to be a dynamic church of disciples (of all ages) initiating God’s mission in the world God loves so much. Our call to discipleship is an attachment to the heart, mind, and soul of Christ that compels us to act as Christ would in our daily encounters with others and in our growing relationship with God.

When Jesus says, “Follow me,” it always means *action*. Jesus calls us to follow him into the crossroads, right into the middle of everyday life. When we come together for worship, prayer, Bible study, and other practices of the faith, we are being equipped and energized as disciples for the mission God has in mind for us...to tell others about God’s love and grace, to serve Jesus as we love and serve others in our neighborhood and beyond.

As Christians we are people who have received the gift of reconciliation with God through faith in Christ and who are answering the call to share that gift with everyone. We have been created by the Holy Spirit to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed. We are people who have been blessed by God, and through whom God is at work today, loving and blessing the whole world. The church is people who are ready to follow Jesus, to imitate Jesus, everywhere they go!

## Commitment and Affirmation of Disciple-Leaders

*The pastor may welcome children, youth, and adults to come forward to bless their teachers, guides, and facilitators for the coming year. At the appropriate time, teachers and leaders of all the congregation’s educational ministries are invited to come forward.*

### **A lay assisting minister begins:**

The following leaders have been called to teach and disciple in our midst this year: *Names are read as individuals come forward.*

### **The pastor continues:**

Today we give thanks and seek God’s blessing on those who have lovingly presented themselves for the teaching ministry of our congregation.

### **The pastor addresses the teachers and leaders:**

In the words of the Great Commission, Jesus compels us to go and teach. Do you hear the Word of God and do you embrace the joy-filled privilege of nurturing Christian growth in those you teach?

### **The teachers and leaders respond:**

I embrace this privilege and ask God to help and guide me.

### **The pastor continues:**

Will you look to the author and replenisher of our faith as you seek to grow in your role as a daily disciple at home, in this congregation, and in the world?

### **The teachers and leaders respond:**

I will and ask God to help and guide me.

### **The pastor addresses the congregation:**

It is our privilege to affirm and send forth those who are called to the teaching ministry of our congregation and God’s kingdom in this place. Will you commit to support them in their spiritual well-being through prayer, encouragement, and service?

### **The congregation responds:**

**We will, and we ask God to help and guide us.**

### **The pastor continues:**

Let us pray.

Gracious God, we come to you with thanksgiving for your son, Jesus Christ, sent among us to show us the way to love the world. Pour out your Holy Spirit upon all those who teach and learn that we may be filled with a desire to GROW as disciples and GO forth as bold witnesses to your love and grace. In Jesus’ name we pray.

**Amen**

# Overview: Intergenerational Rally Day Module

## Grow to Go

**Grow to Go** invites us to grow in our faith, so that we can go out into our world and make disciples. Adults, youth, and children will participate in activities that encourage spiritual growth, discipleship, and a greater appreciation of mission in the world. All these things contribute to renewing and growing congregations.

### Key verse

*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*

Matthew 28:19-20

### Opening activity

Participants will discuss how they “measure up” spiritually by using tape measures and making a growth chart on a wall.

### Large Gathering

A skit, “I don’t have a passport and I don’t know how,” will show that even children can make disciples in their own world. Scripture reading, hymn, and prayer are also included.

### Rotations

Three rotations will focus on mission, the key verse, and spiritual growth and renewing congregations. At each rotation, participants will receive a craft foam triangle on which they will write “Grow,” “2” and “Go.” At the end of the rotations, the triangles will be strung together on a paper clip to reveal a hidden message.

**Note: The complete rally day format and instructions begin on p. 13.**

#### Rotation 1: Albert Schweitzer

**Mission: “Go and make disciples of all nations”**

Participants will learn about Albert Schweitzer, a medical missionary to Africa. Though Schweitzer went great distances to heal the sick, he also exemplified mission in daily life.

Participants will make a sun helmet magnet to put on their lockers, file cabinets or refrigerators to remind them of their mission to go and make disciples in their daily world.

Participants will receive a craft foam triangle on which to write the word “Go.”

#### Rotation 2: Great Commission Relay

**Key verse: “I am with you always”**

Participants will move through an obstacle course relay that will help them remember today’s key verse.

Participants will write “2” on a craft foam triangle to remind them that they are never alone. God is always with us, giving us the strength and courage to be and make disciples.

#### Rotation 3: Growing Sonflowers

**Spiritual growth and renewal of congregations: “Teaching them to observe all I have commanded”**

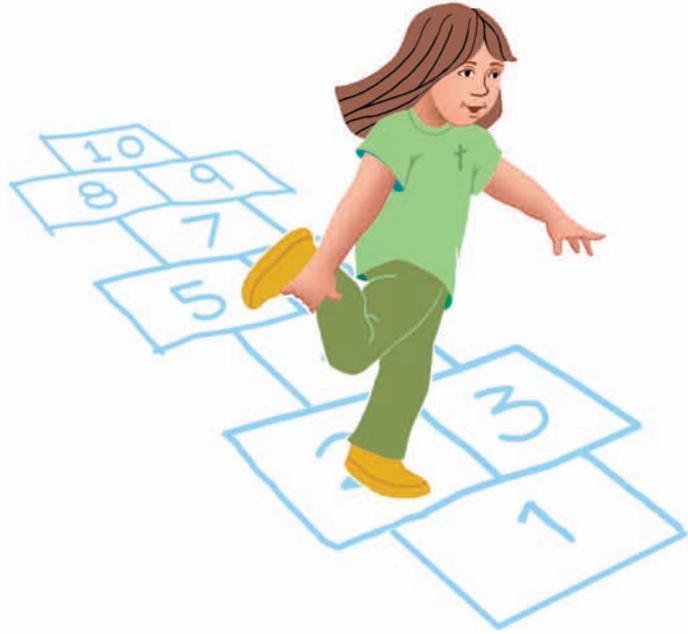
Participants will discuss how to make disciples by being disciples within their congregation and in their world. They will witness to the congregation by making “Sonflowers” for the growth wall to remind others of our great commission.

Participants will write “Grow” on a craft foam triangle.

#### Closing

Participants will slide their triangles onto a large paperclip or key ring. The message can read both “Grow-2-Go,” or “Go-2-Grow,” which is what mission is really about. These can later be hooked onto backpacks, purses, or key chains. When we reach out to others in faith, our faith grows. When we reach out to churches around the world, their witness strengthens us.

Participants will learn about an opportunity to give to a village education project in the Central African Republic (CAR) (page 26).



#### 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.
- Choose someone to head the CAR village education mission project. He or she can visit the Web site [www.elca.org/globalgifts/carschools.html](http://www.elca.org/globalgifts/carschools.html) for additional information. A Central African Republic country packet is also available on the ELCA Web site. It includes background information, current issues, a craft project, and other interesting information. Set a realistic, but challenging giving goal for your congregation, and a timetable in which to reach the goal.
- Recruit rotation leaders for each rotation, and have them gather the supplies and recruit 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.
- Take advantage of the mix of generations. Are the children or the Baby Boomers more excited about seeing the clip from *Mary Poppins*? Who remembers reading about Albert Schweitzer in magazines or newspapers? Invite adults and children to share ways in which they can be disciples in their worlds. Keep the original groups of three together throughout the morning so that the older person can help the younger ones with crafts and activities.
- The fourth objective of the *ELCA Evangelism Strategy* is to “Start and Renew Congregations.” Revitalizing congregations begins by building disciples. Disciples are those who are growing in their faith, actively seeking ways to strengthen their relationship with and knowledge of God and ready to go forth and serve others. Everyone who shows up for the rally day event is a disciple. The event is designed to uplift and encourage that fact. Try to encourage the discipleship and evangelism discussed on rally day to continue throughout the year.

# Grow to Go: An Intergenerational Rally Day Module

## Opening Activity

### Advance Preparation for Opening Activity

Obtain a video or DVD copy of *Mary Poppins*.  
Arrange for TV/DVD projection equipment.

Find an empty wall or walls in the church (parish hall, hallways, classrooms) where participants will be able to put up a paper sunflower garden.

### Materials needed for the garden:

- Green crepe paper streamers or wide green ribbon (6 feet for every 3 people)
- 6" Brown construction paper circles (Hint: Use a bowl or plate to trace a circle. Stack several sheets together and cut out together. Circles could be cut out during the event by each small group.)
- Black markers or felt-tip pens
- Masking tape that will not damage walls
- Scissors
- Tape measures
- (Yellow construction paper for the Sunflower petals will be needed in a later rotation)

## Rotation Details

**Divide participants** into groups of three people as they arrive. Pair a tall person (adult or teenager) with two shorter ones. Try to divide families to encourage interaction with others.

**Show the segment from *Mary Poppins*** when Mary Poppins measures Jane and Michael. (It's about 30 minutes into the film.) Explain that Mary Poppins measured not for size, but for character. Today we're going to talk about our spiritual character, or spiritual growth. Unlike Mary Poppins, we are not "practically perfect in every way," but God loves us despite our faults. Ask participants, "What label might God put on you if God wanted to see how you measure up spiritually?"

Labels suggested might include: "Work in progress" "Learner's permit" "Diamond in the rough" "Disciple in training" "Close, but not there yet" "Tries hard, still needs work" or "Sings well, but dozes during sermons" Chances are that adults will have descriptions similar to the children, reminding children that spiritual growth does not stop with physical growth.

**Distribute brown paper** or pre-cut circles to each person, and give each group a tape measure, scissors, streamer or ribbon, and black marker or pen. Each group should hang a streamer or ribbon as high as the tallest person in the group on the wall. (This will create the sunflower's stem.) Each participant will write their name, and a spiritual growth designation for themselves on the brown circle.

Take turns measuring each person in the group, and placing their circle next to the streamer to mark their height. Alternate putting names on the right and left side of the streamer.

**As the groups do the activity**, they can discuss two questions: What makes you grow? What makes you grow in faith?

We grow with food, exercise, sleep, and taking care of our bodies. We need to avoid things that are not healthy, such as smoking, drugs, junk food, etc.

Our faith needs the same types of things—the food of God's Word, exercising our faith by following God's commandments, taking time to rest on the Sabbath, and avoiding temptations of this world. These are things that help us grow in faith.

Remind participants that by coming to Rally Day, they are growing in faith, through hearing the Word and talking about what being a disciple is all about. As time allows, let each person share his or her "measurement" with the group before moving to the gathering spot.

As you move to the next spot, you may wish to sing "We are Marching in the Light of God," (ELW 866/WOV 650) or another suitable song.

## Large Gathering

### Advance Preparations for Large Gathering

You may wish to use the sanctuary for this part of the event. Make sure the space will be available. Don't forget to tell the altar guild or choir or music director that you will be using it for a short time.

The gathering will involve a skit that doesn't look like a skit. The only props necessary are a laptop computer. The leader begins from the front and center, and the rest of the actors speak their parts from their seats. The script has some blanks where you will personalize it with your congregation's and leader's names. Fill these in before making copies to distribute to actors. Assign parts and practice running through it a couple times before rally day. Decide on appropriate places for the actors to sit during the rehearsal. Use wireless microphones, if necessary, so that actors can be heard.

Recruit a song leader to lead the song "Listen, God Is Calling."

### Gathering Details

Once the participants have been seated, begin the skit. The script is found on pages 23-25 .

After the skit, sing "Listen God Is Calling" (ELW 513/WOV 712). Introduce the song by mentioning that it comes from Tanzania, a country in East Africa. The song has a call and response. The song leader will sing the call, and the congregation will respond.

#### Prayer

Dear Lord,  
You have called us to be your disciples.  
Strengthen us to go into our everyday world  
and make disciples of others. Help us to love  
others, reaching out to meet their needs, and  
inviting them to become disciples also. Be  
with us this day and always. In your name we  
pray.

**Amen.**



## Rotations

### Advance Preparation for Rotations

Find leaders to lead each rotation. Allow about 15 minutes per rotation. If you have a large Sunday school, you may need more than one location for each rotation.

Cut triangles out of craft foam using the pattern found at [www.elca.org/growtogo/triangles](http://www.elca.org/growtogo/triangles). Each rotation will need enough triangles for each participant. Remember to use ink pens to write on the craft foam, as markers tend to smear.

Participants will move through the rotations in different orders. Think about dividing and assigning rotation patterns before rally day.

The three Rotations begin on page 16. They are:

### Rotation 1: Albert Schweitzer

*Pages 16-19*

### Rotation 2: Great Commission Relay

*Page 20*

### Rotation 3: Growing “Sonflowers”

*Page 21*



## Rotation 1:

### *Albert Schweitzer*

#### Advance Preparation for Rotation 1

Familiarize yourself with the Albert Schweitzer story found on pages 18-19.

Download the image of Albert Schweitzer wearing his sun helmet (see Resources at [www.elca.org/growtogo/schweitzer](http://www.elca.org/growtogo/schweitzer))

#### Materials needed for sun helmet magnets:

- Scissors
- Magnet strips or old refrigerator magnets
- Thin cardboard or cardstock or old business cards
- Khaki fabric, or ask for a donation of a pair of discarded khaki pants.
- Brown or black markers or fabric markers
- Glue fabric to thin cardboard and cut out a sun helmet, then glue to a magnet strip. Or glue fabric directly to a thin piece of magnet and cut it out.

#### Other materials include:

- Craft foam triangles
- Ink pens
- Dry-erase board and markers

## Background for Leaders:

### Albert Schweitzer

Lutheran Book of Worship commemorates Albert Schweitzer on September 4. He is given the designation “missionary to Africa.” But this is hardly sufficient to describe the life of this remarkable man.

*Lutheran Book of Worship: The Manual on the Liturgy* (Messerli & Pfatteicher, Augsburg, ©1979) offers this description:

“Schweitzer was born in 1875 in Alsace and was educated at Strassburg, Berlin, and Paris. In 1899 he became a parish pastor in Strassburg and in 1902 began to teach at Strassburg University. His *Quest of the Historical Jesus* appeared in 1910, expounding his interpretation of Jesus’ eschatological vision; in 1912 he applied the same principles to St. Paul. During that year he also received his medical degree and, in the following year, gave up his distinguished academic career to devote himself to the care of the sick and to missionary activities at Lambarene in Africa. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1954. In addition to his theological, medical, and missionary accomplishments, he was a highly regarded organist and interpreter of Bach.” (pp. 70-71)

The much-abbreviated story of his life given below shows that at every point in his life, Schweitzer found ways to serve God. He played the organ in church from a young age; as a child he was aware of the suffering and needs of others. He used his preaching, writing, and music skills, but decided that was still not enough, and became a doctor. When imprisoned during World War I, he turned his skills to writing a book, until he could get back to doctoring. He spoke out against the evils of nuclear weapons, and was a man of peace. He is an example of a true disciple, with God at the center of all aspects of his life, and living in service to others.

## Rotation 1 details

Begin the rotation by asking the group to describe what a missionary does. Where do they work? What do they do? Write the answers on the dry erase board. Answers may include countries in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia, Europe. Some missionary “jobs” may include: pastor, teacher, nurse, agriculturalist, doctor, water resource specialist, theology professor, librarian, and musician.

Now say that you will be reading the story of Albert Schweitzer who was a missionary for many years found on pages 18-19. Then use the following discussion questions to discover what Dr. Schweitzer’s life teaches us about discipleship. Continue with the Learning Activities. (You may wish to have participants work on their sun helmet magnets while you read the story).

## Discussion Questions

- What are some of the things that Albert Schweitzer did to make the world a better place?
- How did Albert Schweitzer live out the command to “go and make disciples”?
- How did he use his various talents to serve the Lord?
- How was Albert a missionary wherever he was?
- How does the work Albert Schweitzer did differ from our ideas of what a missionary does?
- What can we learn from Albert Schweitzer about how to live our lives?
- Albert Schweitzer said that we should “seek always to do some good, somewhere.” How can you do good in your own daily world?

## Learning Activities

Albert shows us that one person can serve the Lord in many ways. Just as he tried to do some good in the world, we too, should try to do some good in our lives. Albert wore a sun helmet for protection from the intense heat and sunshine of the tropics. We will be making sun helmet magnets to put on your locker, file cabinet, or refrigerator to serve as a reminder that we serve the Son of God as missionaries, whenever we seek to do good.

Distribute fabric, cardboard, and magnet pieces to participants. Have them glue the fabric onto the cardboard or magnet, then cut out a sun helmet using the pattern provided. Use markers to draw the band or other lines on the helmet.

Distribute a craft foam triangle to each participant and instruct them to write the word “Go” on both the front and back of it. Keep the same flat side down, with a point facing up, when writing on each side.

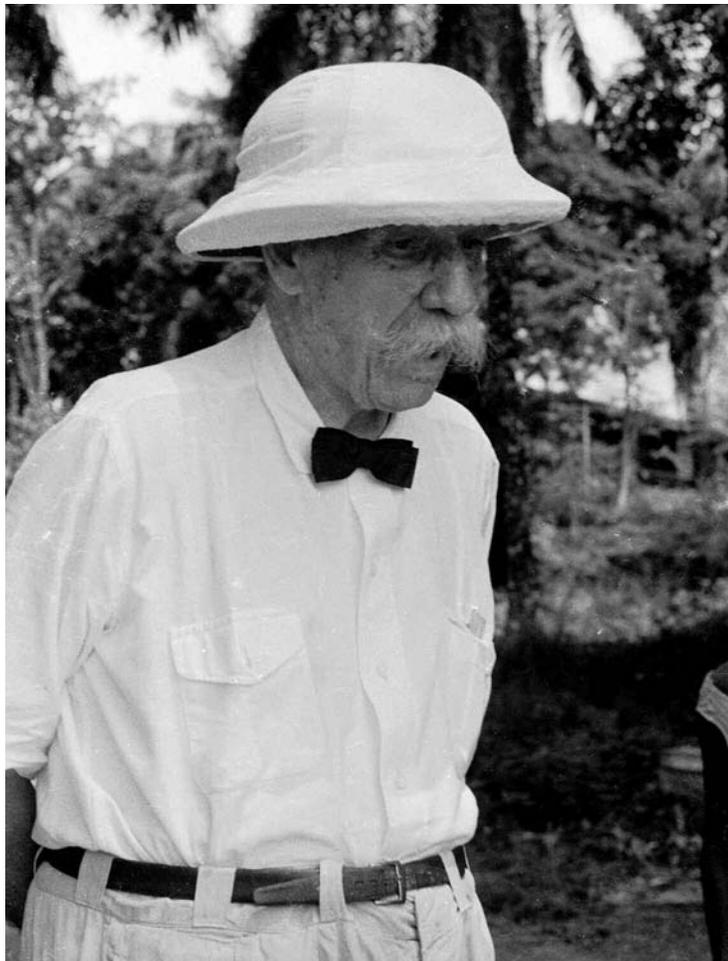
## Albert Schweitzer

Albert Schweitzer is most remembered for his work as a missionary doctor in Africa. He often wore scruffy clothes and an old sun helmet, which shaded his face with its bushy mustache. He hardly looked like a man who was also a pastor, a concert organist, an author of numerous books and a winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. But Albert Schweitzer was all these things.

Albert was not a perfect child. Growing up in Alsace in the 1880s, he once got into a fight with a boy from school. When Albert won, the other boy declared, "If I got soup with meat twice a week as you do, I would be as strong as you are." That made Albert think about the needs of others. He did not want to have any more than the other children. When his mother gave him an overcoat, he wouldn't wear it, because the other boys in the village didn't have any.

Albert loved music. He started piano lessons at age five. When he was 14, his organ teacher was so impressed with Albert's playing that he asked him to play the organ for the church choir. The church was a familiar place to Albert. Both his grandfather and father were Lutheran pastors, and Albert enjoyed studying the Bible. He couldn't decide whether to study music or theology at college, so he did both.

Albert graduated and became a pastor, but also continued playing the organ. He especially liked the music of Johann Sebastian Bach. Albert preached, wrote books, gave organ concerts, and even rebuilt organs. But for Albert, it was not enough. He knew there was suffering in the world, and he wanted to do something about it.



Albert read in a magazine that doctors were needed in Africa. So at 30 years old, he went to medical school. Eight years later he and his wife sailed to Africa and opened a hospital in the jungle near Lambarene, in what is now the country of Gabon. The day after Albert arrived at Lambarene, sick and injured people came to him for medical help. He quickly converted an old chicken coop into a hospital room, and began his vital work.

But just as he was getting his hospital started up, World War I broke out. The Schweitzers were arrested because they were Germans working in a French territory (at that time, Alsace was part of Germany.) So Albert began writing a philosophy book while he was imprisoned. He wrote about "reverence for life," saying that the greatest good is to love all life, and that the greatest evil is to destroy life.

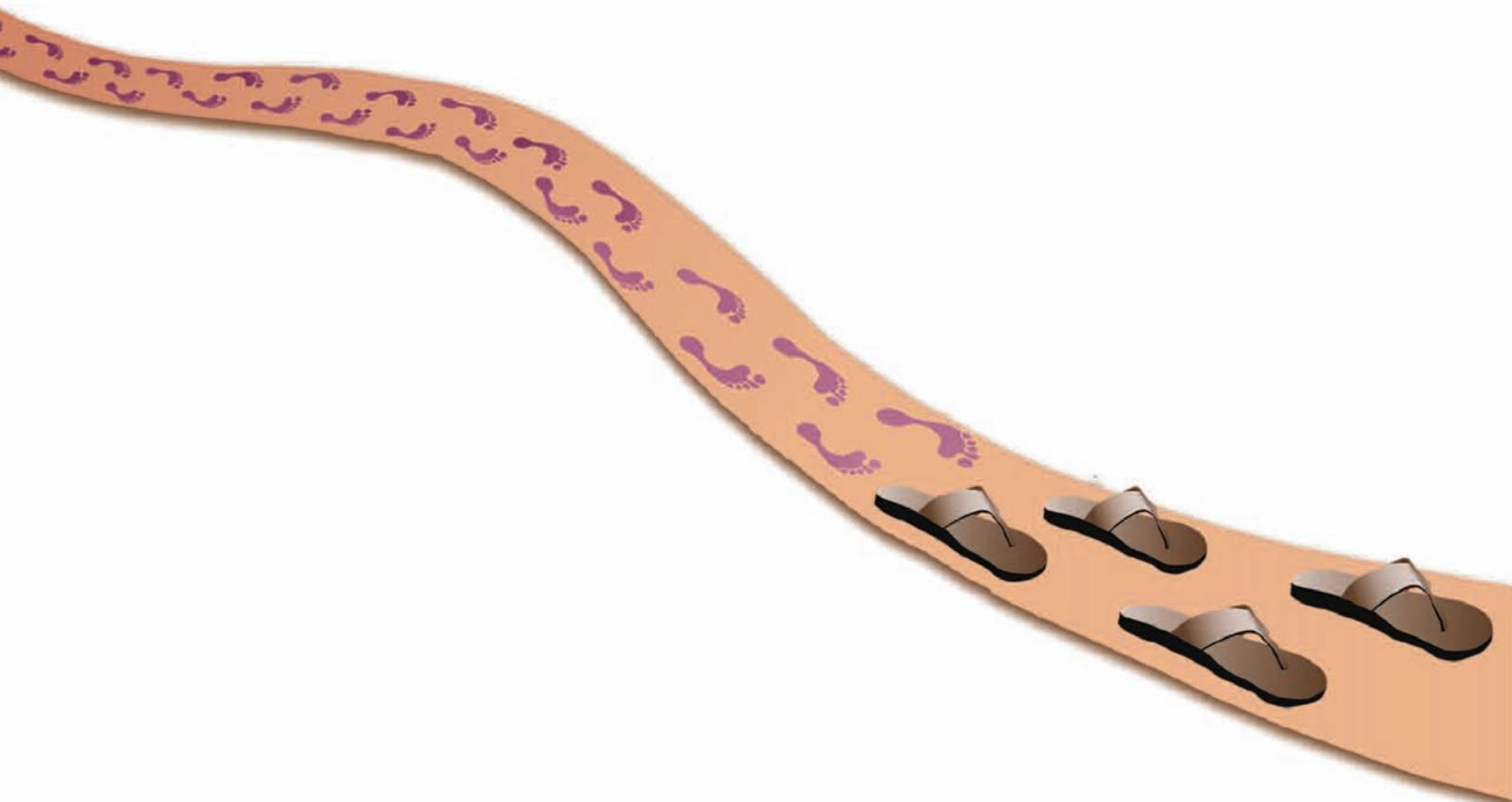
# Grow to Go! Disciples on a Mission

ELCA Christian Education Planning Guide 2007-2008

After the war Albert divided his time between Europe and Africa. He gave organ concerts in Europe to raise money for his hospital in Africa. He wrote books and gave lectures about his work and respecting all life. His books and work brought him fame, and Life magazine called him “the greatest man in the world.” But fame was not of much interest to Albert. He was more interested in seeing that his hospital served those who needed it. When visitors came, they saw Albert doing what he loved—working at the hospital in his old sun helmet and old clothes. He never liked to spend money on new things for himself, because that would mean less money to spend on the African people he served at the hospital.

When World War II began, Albert stayed in Africa. After that war he spoke out against the atomic bomb, which had radioactive materials that were harmful to all life. In 1952, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for all he had done. In his acceptance speech, he talked about the need for world peace. He wanted the nations of the world to trust one another, and get rid of nuclear weapons.

When Schweitzer died in 1965, he was buried in Lambarene. During his ninety years of life he had worked to make the world a better place. He once said, “It is not enough merely to exist. ... Seek always to do some good, somewhere. ... Even if it’s a little thing, do something for those who need help, something for which you get no pay but the privilege of doing it. For remember, you don’t live in a world all your own. Your brothers [and sisters] are here too.”



## Rotation 2:

# Great Commission Relay

### Rotation 2 Details

Today's Bible verse is packed with a lot of important commands. It is often called "The Great Commission" passage. Each of you will run through an obstacle course that will help you learn and remember the verse.

The rotation leader should walk through the obstacle course, explaining how each section fits the verse.

#### Go therefore and

*Hop on one foot to the chalk or dry erase board.*

#### make disciples of all nations,

*Draw (make) a disciple on the board (can be a stick figure, person praying, a face with a beard, a friend, yourself, etc.).*

#### baptizing them

*Use the spray bottle on your drawing (clean-up person should erase the picture as the participant moves on to the next obstacle).*

#### in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

*Throw three rings over the stake.*

#### and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.

*Open up Bible and read a verse from it (If you wish, place bookmarks and mark familiar passages).*

#### And remember, I am with you always

*Write a number "2" on the front and back of a craft foam triangle to remember that we are never alone, there are always two of us, because God is always with us. Keep the same flat side down, with a point facing up, when writing on each side.*

#### To the end of the age.

*Skip to the end line, bringing your triangle with you.*

### Advance Preparation for Rotation 2

This rotation will consist of an obstacle course relay. Depending on the numbers of people, consider setting up several courses to run simultaneously. The emphasis should be more on making the journey than beating another team.

### Materials needed for each obstacle course relay:

- Dry-erase board or chalkboard
- Dry-erase markers or chalk
- Erasers or paper towels or rags
- Water spray bottle
- Three rings and a stake to toss them onto (If you don't have a ring toss game, you could use the inside wood hoops of embroidery hoops)
- Large Bible
- Craft foam triangles
- Ink pens
- Posterboard with the text of Matthew 28:19-20 written on it, each phrase written in a different color.

Read through the obstacle course instructions so that you can choose an appropriate place to do this rotation. Gather the materials, make the poster, and set up the course prior to the rally day event. Weather permitting, the course could be set up outside.

Use the posterboard with the Bible verse so that others can recite the verse as each participant moves through the obstacle course. Once several participants have gone through, see whether the group can recite it without using the posters. By the end, many will have memorized the verse, and all will have walked through it in such a way that they should be able to remember it.

Emphasize that God is with us always. It is only with God in our hearts that we are able to go into the world to be disciples and make disciples.

## Rotation 3:

### *Growing "Sunflowers"*

#### Rotation 3 Details

Explain that sunflowers turn their faces to the sun. As Christians, we grow in faith when we turn our face to the Son of God. We turn to Jesus when we obey his command to love God, love and serve our neighbor, and care for the earth and all things.

Participants will make construction paper petals to add to the circles that were put on the wall during the opening activity. On each petal, participants will write one way they can grow in faith and go into the world as a follower of the Son of God....as a disciple!

Brainstorm as a group things that participants do to grow in faith. (Use suggestions from the list below to get started.) Write the ideas on the dry erase or chalkboard. Be specific to your own congregation or neighborhood. What needs or ministries can you serve? How can each person use their talents to serve God?

Participants should cut one end of their strips into a point (Hint: cut a small stack at the same time.) Then use orange markers to write one thing on each petal that they can do to grow and go as a disciple of Jesus. Since it takes almost 20 petals for each flower, participants may wish to write on every other petal. (Hint: Write closer to the point since the other end will be glued to the back of the brown circles.

Have each participant take down his or her brown center, glue the petals in place, and put the flower back on the wall for a "Sunflower" Garden. This garden can serve to remind the rest of the congregation about the ways in which we go into the world as children of God.

Distribute a craft foam triangle to each participant and instruct them to write the word "Grow" on the front and back. Keep the same flat side down, with a point facing up, when writing on each side.

#### Advance Preparation for Rotation 3

##### Materials Needed:

- Yellow construction paper cut into 1 by 4 inch strips. Each participant will need about 20 strips.
- Orange markers
- Scissors
- Glue
- Dry erase board/markers or chalkboard/chalk
- Craft foam triangles
- Ink pens

#### Petal possibilities

*Many more exist. Each suggestion could be shortened or expanded as desired.*

**Come to worship**

**Attend Sunday school**

**Pray before meals**

**Pray at bedtime**

**Read the Bible**

**Invite others to church**

**Invite friends to Sunday school**

**Sing in choir**

**Serve as lector**

**Be kind to everyone at school**

**Recycle papers and cans**

**Only speak well of others**

**Show respect to everyone**

**Tell others about Jesus**

**Play fairly in games**

**Help around the house**

**Treat colleagues with respect**

**Be just in business activities**

**Volunteer at \_\_\_\_\_**

**Give financially to church or other charities**

**Support a missionary**

**Find out about companion synod**

**Show reverence for life**

**Share**



## Closing

Gather everyone back together after the rotations.

Participants should place their triangles in front of them, and be able to read “Grow 2 Go.”

Slide the triangles onto a large paper clip in that order. Have older students or adults help the younger ones poke the paper clip through the top corner of the triangle. (Hint: Don’t go to close to the point or it will rip more easily.) Fan the triangles open to read “Grow 2 Go.”

Now flip the pile over. It should read “Go 2 Grow.”

## Grow to Go...Go to Grow!

Today we talked about how we grow in faith, as preparation for going into the world to make disciples. But we also need to remember that when we go into the world, we also grow. We might think we are only teaching others about God, but in reality, our faith grows when we share with others.

Albert Schweitzer knew famous people from all over the world. But he thought one of the finest men he knew was Oyembo, a local schoolteacher in Lambarene. Oyembo was refined, smart, modest, kind, and patient. Albert learned from him. Most missionaries would admit that they gain at least as much as they give when living and working in another culture and sharing God’s love with others.

This week, you go can into the world and make disciples. You’ll be doing many of the things that have been written in our Sunflower garden. Some of you will put sun helmet magnets in your lockers, so that you remember to be missionaries, or disciples of the Son of God even at school, by the way you treat others.

Introduce the project coordinator to tell about the Village Education Project as described on page 26.

## Advance Preparation for Closing

Have large paper clips for each participant.

Recruit someone to serve as the Central African Republic village education mission project coordinator. Have him or her introduce the project and the goals established for your congregation. (See suggestions for leaders on 12.)

## Closing Prayer Litany

*Distribute copies so that participants can read along.*

Lord, we have been watered in baptism

**Help us grow, so we can go**

Lord, we have been fed and nourished at your table

**Help us grow, so we can go**

Lord, we have been enriched by the study of your Word

**Help us grow, so we can go**

Lord, as we exercise our hearts in service to others

**Help us go, so we can grow**

Lord, let us be examples of disciples

**Help us go, so we can grow**

Lord, encourage us to reach out to your children in far corners of the earth

**Help us go, so we can grow**

Lord, make us ready to give an account for the hope that is in us

**Help us go, so we can grow**

Lord, we grow to go into the world.

**We go to grow in our love for you.**

Be with us always to the end of the age.

**Amen**

# Rally Day Skit

## I Don't Have a Passport and I Don't Know How

**Characters:** Leader, Adult 1, 2, and 3,  
Child 1, 2, 3, and 4.

**Leader:** Welcome to this year's Rally Day at \_\_\_\_\_ Church. It's nice to see so many of you back again, and it's always a joy to see new faces. We should have a terrific year in Sunday school. We'll be using \_\_\_\_\_ curriculum and focusing on \_\_\_\_\_. But this morning, for Rally Day, our theme is "Grow to Go."

Earlier we talked about how we grow in faith. And that's important, because I have a job for each one of you. \_\_\_\_\_ Church wants YOU (*with Uncle Sam pose*) to go into the world and make disciples.

**Child 1:** *Raises hand but interrupts before being addressed.* Mr/s. \_\_\_\_\_? How can I go into the world? I don't even have a passport!

**Child 2:** I don't have a passport either.

**Adult 1:** I'm sure s/he didn't mean you. S/he's talking to the adults right now, looking for volunteers for some project.

**Adult 2:** There's quite a waiting list for passports right now, so I guess I can't help.

**Leader:** You don't need passports for the job I have. And it's not a project. It's a mission ... from God.

**Child 3:** Whoa! What can we do? What is it?

**Leader:** Make disciples. God wants you to make disciples.

**Child 1:** How can I make disciples? I've never done it before and I don't know how.

**Leader:** *Shuffles through papers.* This is a bit embarrassing, but no one left me the directions on how to do it. It just says, "Tell everyone to make disciples."

**Child 2:** Mr/s. \_\_\_\_\_? Maybe we can Google it.

**Leader:** Google it?

**Child 2:** On the computer. Go to Google and type "make disciples."

**Leader:** *Sitting down at the computer. Sighs.* This will never work. Types. Wait a minute—look at this!

**Child 3:** What does it say?

**Leader:** Here's the Bible verse I wanted to share. "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." *Continues to look at the computer.*

**Child 1:** That's just a Bible verse. It doesn't tell us how to make disciples.

**Adult 1:** Yes it does. It tells us to baptize, and to teach others the things that Jesus tells us to do.

**Child 2:** Looking around. I don't see Jesus here telling us anything.

**Adult 2:** But he left an instruction manual for us.

**Child 2:** What's that?

**Leader:** *Still scanning the computer.* Old-fashioned Google.

**Adult 1:** *Holding up Bible.* It's all right here.  
"Love your neighbor, heal the sick, do good to those who hate you, feed my sheep."

**Child 3:** I don't have any sheep.

**Child 2:** I don't know anything about healing the sick.

**Adult 2:** That's why God gives many gifts—the gifts of teaching, preaching, healing, caring, singing, cooking, and giving.

**Leader:** *Looking up from computer.* That's right. Do you know there are all kinds of sermons and blogs about making disciples? This one says that we have different tasks, and should use our special abilities to make disciples, wherever we go.

**Child 4:** Mr/s. \_\_\_\_\_? What is a disciple, anyway?

**Leader:** One moment. *Looks back to computer screen.* This says that a disciple is someone who places Jesus at the center of their lives. So whatever they do, they remember that first, they belong to God. *Steps away from computer.* Personally, I like to think of a disciple as someone who is growing in faith. To really be a disciple, we need to keep working at it—by coming to church, reading the Bible, praying, and talking about faith, like we are right now.

**Child 2:** So I'm being a disciple just by coming to Sunday school?

**Leader:** You bet! So, how can you go and make disciples? Where do you go during the week?

**Child 1:** I go to school.

**Child 3:** I go to soccer practice and soccer games.

**Child 4:** I go to the park.

**Adult 1:** I go to work.

**Adult 2:** I go grocery shopping.

**Leader:** *Invites others to add comments.* And how could we make disciples in all the places that we go? How about at school?

**Child 1:** At school, some of the kids were making fun of a new student. I thought it was mean, so I asked them to stop.

**Leader:** Did they?

**Child 1:** I didn't think they would. I thought they would just make fun of me instead, but they stopped.

**Leader:** Sounds like you used your special gift of caring to be a disciple and make disciples.

**Child 1:** But I didn't even talk about God!

**Adult 1:** But you followed the Golden Rule that Jesus gave us. You treated others the way that you would like to be treated, and taught other people to do the same thing.

**Leader:** Any other disciple stories?

**Child 3:** I had a soccer game yesterday.

**Leader:** I know how much you like soccer. Soccer playing is one of your special abilities. How was the game?

**Child 3:** It was a close game, and people started getting angry about some of the calls the ref was making, and not making.

**Leader:** That could get ugly. Did you get angry?

**Child 3:** It's hard not to, when everyone else seemed to be yelling, even some parents.

**Leader:** What did you do, \_\_\_\_\_?

**Child 3:** I glanced over at the next field, where some really little kids were playing. They hardly knew which way to kick the ball, but they were having fun. And I started to laugh about our game, because it seemed a little silly for everybody to be getting upset about a soccer game. I just like to play. And when my teammates saw me laughing, they cooled down a bit, and we had more fun.

**Leader:** Showing sportsmanship and controlling our tempers is certainly a way to be a disciple. And your behavior influenced others.

**Child 4:** I was at the park, too, because my sister was playing soccer. When it was time to go home, I went to throw something away, and the garbage cans were overflowing with water bottles and cans and all sorts of stuff.

**Leader:** Isn't that where garbage is supposed to be?

**Child 4:** But so much of it could be recycled! So we filled a bag with cans and bottles and put them in our recycling bin at home. Now Mom is going to call the city and see about getting recycling cans at the park.

**Adult 3:** That's a great idea. I recycle at home, but I never thought about how much gets thrown away when I'm at the park, or even at work.

**Leader:** Caring for God's creation is another good way to love our neighbor and be a disciple.

**Child 1:** Mr/s \_\_\_\_\_, is this really all we have to do to make disciples, and teach others about God?

**Leader:** If we live our lives as an example of what a disciple is, others can be influenced to do the same thing.

**Child 3:** But how will they know why we do it?

**Adult 2:** I can tell you. Yesterday I went grocery shopping, a task I thoroughly dislike. The store was crowded, and everyone was in a hurry. The person ahead of me was only buying a few things, but she discovered that she was a few dollars short. The store clerk was impatient, and people behind me started grumbling, and I was in a hurry to get home ... So I pulled five dollars out of my wallet and paid the rest of her bill.

**Child 1:** Did she say thank you?

**Adult 2:** She said it many times. And after she left, the store clerk asked why I had done such a thing.

**Child 2:** What did you say?

**Adult 2:** I hadn't really thought about why I did it. It just seemed like a little thing that I could do to help someone who was having a difficult day. I said to the store clerk, "I'm a Christian, and God wants us to help others."

**Leader:** That's a wonderful example of making disciples by teaching others.

**Adult 1:** Peter writes in his first letter that we should "always be ready to give an answer when someone asks about the hope within us." That's when we can tell others why we do something, just like s/he did.

**Leader:** That's right. We make disciples, by being disciples. We teach others the commands of God, by living them out ourselves. We stand ready to tell about Jesus, by studying God's word, so that when someone asks, we have an answer.

**Child 2:** See, you did know how to make disciples!

**Leader:** With a little help from a lot of you. Maybe we all knew how to make disciples. We just didn't know we knew.

**Child 1:** Then I guess we are all ready for our mission to "Go and make disciples."

**Leader:** Even without passports!

# *Grow to Go... in the world!*

## Village Education Project

We have a special opportunity to reach out to children and villagers in the Central African Republic (CAR), not far from Gabon. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in the CAR is working to develop schools and supply teachers to villages without schools. In some places, less than two out of 10 people know how to read.

The church is establishing 20 schools in villages that do not have any. It is forming parent associations and training teachers. Through the schools, the church will not only provide the vital skills of reading, writing, and math, but it will also be able to share the gospel of Christ.

We can be part of this teaching ministry by sending money to support the village education project in the Central African Republic.

**\$20** would support one student.

**\$855** would support a class

**\$3,250** would cover the cost to operate one school for the year. Anyone who pays school taxes can tell you that this is an educational bargain.

**How much can your congregation donate?** Can each family contribute enough for one child? Does one Sunday school class wish to support one student? As one of the wealthiest countries on earth, we are privileged to have enough to share with others.



As we give to others, we also will give thanks for the educational opportunities we have in this country.

Invite your Sunday school classes and others in the congregation to visit the Web site [www.elca.org/globalgifts/carschools.html](http://www.elca.org/globalgifts/carschools.html) to see photos of this project and find out more about it.

Distribute envelopes with distinctive labels so that participants can bring money in the following weeks, or collect any offering brought today. You could create labels that simply say VILLAGE EDUCATION PROJECT or use kid-friendly stickers or stamps to signify the envelope as a special gift.

Congregations as asked to write a check made payable to the ELCA with Village Education Project, CAR on the memo line. Mail to ELCA Office for Global Mission Support, 8765 W. Higgins Road, Chicago, IL 60631.

*Grow to Go!*

Disciples on a Mission

ELCA Christian Education Planning Guide 2007-2008

# *A Family Discipleship Calendar*

## *Your Role as Witness-Bearer*

As leaders, teachers, parents, and neighbors we have a joy-filled privilege and awesome responsibility of nurturing faith in others. One way we do that is by first sharing our own faith. We dwell in the midst of a wonderful love story experienced daily as we encounter a God who loves us so deeply that nothing can separate us from that love. But we cannot simply be content to let God's love dead-end in our hearts. We need to let it be mirrored in our thoughts, words, and actions so others, too, come to know that love. Adults who nurture children and youth must be attentive to fostering the spirit-driven occasions where children and youth are led to lead others in their own style of witness.

For Lutherans, grappling with why and how we witness to our faith begins with our understanding of baptism where we are named and claimed as God's own. From that moment we recognize God's activity in our life and our place in the on-going story of salvation and grace.

### **A Quick Faith Sharing Tip**

Sometimes it is not easy to share our faith with others. It may feel uncomfortable, inappropriate or even "pushy" so we just ignore the opportunity God has placed before us. When you find yourself facing such a reluctant-witness moment use Paul's letter to the Colossians (4:3-4) as a three-part prayer to "jump-start" a bold and confident invitation, beckoning others to a relationship with Christ.

*At the same time pray for us as well that God will open to us a door for the word, that we may declare the mystery of Christ, for which I am in prison, so that I may reveal it clearly, as I should.*

**Colossians 4:3-4**

### **Pray for:**

- 1. The opportunity** (that God will open to us a door for the word)
- 2. An open reception** (that we may declare the mystery of Christ)
- 3. Clarity and confidence** (so that I may reveal it clearly, as I should)





### Faith Sharing Opportunities

Here is a starter list of entry points for faith sharing. Add to the list and share it with others!

#### At home

- Love, encourage, support, and listen!
- Regular family devotional moments
- Use the ordinary rhythms and realities of daily life as a time to celebrate God's presence.
- Hold the family accountable for the descriptors they use to name others or to tell jokes.
- Use the discipleship calendar found on page 27.
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#### With those you teach

- Be intentional about setting aside time for prayer (use *Heart Ignite* available from [www.youthandfamilyinstitute.org/](http://www.youthandfamilyinstitute.org/)).
- Encourage the class to "bring a friend."
- Be willing to incorporate these two prompts in every lesson:
  - where you saw God working in your life this week
  - where you saw God working in the world this week

- Over time, ask the class to respond to the same prompts.
- Introduce the class to age-appropriate Christian music.
- Carry your Bible to church and open it!
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#### In day-to-day encounters

- Invite a neighbor, friend, or relative to church with you.
- Wear a cross, prayer bracelet or Christian symbol on your keychain.
- Don't be shy about ending a casual conversation by asking if you might pray for the other person.
- Use volunteer or hobby activities as a time to bring God into the conversation.
- Acknowledge and verbalize God's activity in creation, as you listen to other's "stories," in current affairs, and in times of sadness or grief.
- Chronicle your faith journey. It doesn't need to be linear. Keep a small notebook or your palm-pilot at hand to jot down random "faith thoughts": questions, memories, occasions where God's presence is felt, fears, disappointments, prayers.

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# *Akaloo and the Practices of Faith*

*Akaloo, from Greek (akoloethin) means “to follow.”*

**“Follow me,” Jesus said to the first disciples. He invited them—not just once—but all along the way:**

- “Follow me” (Matthew 9:9, Mark 2:14, Luke 5:27, John 1:43).
- “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people” (Matthew 4:19, Mark 1:17).
- “Take up [your] cross and follow me” (Matthew 16:24, Mark 8:34).
- “My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me” (John 10:27).
- “Whoever serves me must follow me” (John 12:26).

“Follow me,” Jesus still says today. He invites us—not just once—but all along the way, every day of our lives. He invites us to follow him on the journey of discipleship.

Like the first disciples, we sometimes lose our way on this journey. We ignore Christ’s daily invitation. We don’t stay focused on the one we follow. We get off track.

Christians of all ages and times and places, however, have used faith practices as a compass on the journey of discipleship. The Adult Faith Practices course in the 2007 release of new **Akaloo** materials includes a small sample of practices Christians have used and found meaningful over time. There are faith practices you can do on your own, practices you can share with others, and practices like corporate worship, where you join the communion of saints in their songs of ceaseless praise. Some of these practices are more familiar, while others are not.



Many people are already doing a faith practice regularly, without realizing it. Some need encouragement to keep faith practices going in their daily lives. Others never have been involved in any kind of faith practice. Beginners as well as long-time “practitioners” can dive right into faith practices using the step-by-step coaching in each lesson of the course!

People who do faith practices regularly build the practices right into their daily or weekly routines. That is why the adult handbook for the course contains Faith Practices cards. These cards serve as reminders to take time for faith practices. The size of a regular business card, they can be placed in a spot where they can be seen throughout the day and the week.

Faith practices are opportunities, not requirements. They help us stay on track. They help us grow in faith, serve God, and follow Jesus. They are gifts for us to use, to stay focused on Christ. Through faith practices we constantly orient ourselves along the journey of discipleship. Through faith practices we are renewed and equipped to reach out to others and tell the story. Our congregations are renewed and equipped for outreach and evangelism as well.

**Augsburg Fortress Publishers has launched Akaloo, a program of intentional discipleship that covers the entire lifespan, children through adults! Visit [www.akaloo.org](http://www.akaloo.org)**

# Grow to Go 2007-2008 Planning calendar

Utilize these pages to plan and schedule your congregation's activities and offerings in Christian education and discipleship. The right side of the calendar is a place for thematic notes, reminders, and connections to other areas of congregational life. Complete the calendar before distributing it to teachers, staff, and other congregational leaders.

## DATE

## NOTES, REMINDERS, and CONNECTIONS

September 2007

2 \_\_\_\_\_  
 9 *September 14: Holy Cross Day* \_\_\_\_\_  
 16 \_\_\_\_\_  
 23 \_\_\_\_\_  
 30 \_\_\_\_\_

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October 2007

7 \_\_\_\_\_  
 14 \_\_\_\_\_  
 21 \_\_\_\_\_  
 28 *Reformation Sunday* \_\_\_\_\_

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November 2007

4 *All Saints Sunday; November 10: Martin Luther's Birthday* \_\_\_\_\_  
 11 \_\_\_\_\_  
 18 *November 22: Day of Thanksgiving* \_\_\_\_\_  
 25 *Christ the King Sunday* \_\_\_\_\_

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December 2007

2 *First Sunday in Advent* \_\_\_\_\_  
 9 \_\_\_\_\_  
 16 \_\_\_\_\_  
 23 *December 25: Nativity of Our Lord* \_\_\_\_\_  
 30 \_\_\_\_\_

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January 2008

6 *Epiphany of Our Lord* \_\_\_\_\_  
 13 *Baptism of Our Lord* \_\_\_\_\_  
 20 \_\_\_\_\_  
 27 *February 2: Presentation of Our Lord* \_\_\_\_\_

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February 2008

3 *Transfiguration of Our Lord; February 6: Ash Wednesday*

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17

24

March 2008

2

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16 *Palm Sunday*

23 *Resurrection of Our Lord; Annunciation of Our Lord*

30

April 2008

6

13

20

27 *May 1: Ascension of Our Lord*

May 2008

4

11 *Day of Pentecost*

18 *The Holy Trinity*

25

June 2008

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15

22

29

July 2008

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27

August 2008

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31