

claim

claim

proclaiming
THE

STORY

2004/05 Christian Education Planning Guide
An ongoing expression of the Call to Discipleship

“...for we cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard.”

Acts 4:20

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How to use this resource

Adapt this material in the way that works best in your setting. Let it be your guide as you plan and prepare for the 2004-2005 education year.

For further support, check out the latest offerings for lifelong learning from Augsburg Fortress Publishers. AFP provides congregations a wealth of excellent curricula and studies for people of all ages. Visit the on-line store at www.augsburgfortress.org or call 800/328-4648 and order a FREE 2004-2005 Supply Catalog (ISBN 6-0001-9151-0) or the new FREE interactive Sunday school CD-ROM—with information, teacher training, web links, and more (6-0002-1076-0)! [Shipping charges apply.]

This planning guide is intentionally designed to be both a print and electronic resource. The Web page address for all material related to this resource, including the full contents of the print resource itself is found at:

www.elca.org/dcm/christian_education/resources/2004CEProgramPlanner

If you, or someone in your congregation, is unable to access the electronic resources, you may obtain a print copy by calling 800/638-3522 x2594.

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Introduction to the Theme

Claiming the Story

We are people of THE STORY—not any story or some story—but THE STORY. We are people who know and proclaim THE STORY of God’s love in Christ— “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).

Our world is filled with stories—books, news stories, TV programs, the latest gossip. We hear and repeat stories all the time. But there is one story that is different from all the rest. It is THE STORY of God’s love for us and God’s actions in Christ for our salvation. As people of that story, we own it and tell it and retell it—“for we cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).

As teachers, we are not charged to entertain those who gather with us to learn. We are not those who simply pass on information or help shape new skills. We are those who are called to embrace THE STORY and to tell it and retell it to every person.

Watch people in conversation. They never grow weary of telling their own story—they tell about their experiences with excitement. Because they tell their own story, they are involved, alive in the story, eyewitnesses, and eager for others to share what happened to them. The salvation story from the Word is not that story, some ancient story, some story to simply repeat. It is our story. “O God, from my youth you have taught me, and I still **proclaim** your wondrous deeds” (Psalm 71:17). We eagerly tell the story because we have claimed the story as our own. We know the wondrous things God has done and is doing in our life and in our world. And we cannot but speak of them to all those who will hear.

That’s what it means to “teach.” It means to be one who helps others claim and cherish THE STORY. It means encouraging all to be proclaimers of the story. “But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent?” (Romans 10:14-15a).

What a privilege! What a joy-filled challenge! Among the many things we can do as God’s people in God’s world, nothing is more important and more vital than telling, proclaiming, announcing THE STORY—the story of God’s love in Christ, the story of salvation. “In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I solemnly urge you: proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching.” (2 Timothy 4:1-2).

Claiming the Story Bible Study

The ELCA Mission Statement: “Marked with the cross of Christ forever, we are claimed, gathered, and sent for the sake of the world.”

Vision Statement: “Sent by God’s grace for the sake of the world, we will proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed. . .” As we live out that mission and vision we will “assist members, congregations, synods, and institutions and agencies of this church to grow in evangelical outreach.”

“...for we cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard.”

Acts 4:20

Intent

Consider using this Bible study as a teacher orientation to this year’s theme, as a Rally Day offering for adult or youth Sunday school classes; or as a mid-week opportunity to set the stage for a year-long focus on study and witness.

Opening

Begin with a prayer offered by one or more of the participants and sing or speak a hymn or song together. You might use “I Love to Tell the Story” (LBW #390) or something similar.

Getting Started

- Write the words *Claim* and *Proclaim* on the board or newsprint. Ask participants to write a few words about what the two words mean to them. Talk about their responses.
- Write *Claim the Story* and *Proclaim the Story* on the board or newsprint. Allow time for participants to write some responses. Talk about them. How do the phrases describe the Christian life? What is the place of claiming/proclaiming in our relationships with others. What is the place of claiming/proclaiming in our life together in this community of faith?

Into the Word

1. Read Acts 2:1-36 aloud. Let someone take the part of Peter preaching to the crowd.
 - How would he “tell the story”?
 - Peter tells the story with conviction. Why?
 - What do you think the story meant to him?
 - How did Peter claim the story? In what way had the story that he told become his own story?
2. Read Luke 24:13-35 aloud.
 - Why was it important for the two disciples to tell their story first?
 - What story did Jesus tell?
 - Why did their “hearts burn” as they heard the story?
 - How did they react to the story?
 - How did they claim the story—how did the story become their story?

3. What does it mean to you to **claim** the story of God's love in Jesus Christ?
 - What does it mean to you to claim the story of God's love?
 - How does claiming the story equip us to proclaim the story?
 - How would you speak that story in a way that has meaning for you?
 - If someone asked you to tell "the story"—what would you say?
 - What does claiming have to do with teaching?

4. The Greek word for **proclaim** is *karusso*. The word is related to *kerygma*—often translated *gospel* or *good news*. *Karusso* means to announce, make known, proclaim aloud, mention publicly, spread the story.
 - In what way do you consider yourself a proclaimer?
 - What does proclaiming have to do with teaching?

5. Read this text aloud: "But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without **someone to proclaim him**? And **how are they to proclaim** him unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!' But not all have obeyed the good news; for Isaiah says, 'Lord, who has believed our message?' So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ" (Romans 10:14-17).
 - What does this text have to do with hearing, claiming, and proclaiming the story?
 - Why could we be described as people of the story?
 - The story is central to Christian living. True? Why? How is that true for you?
 - The story is central to Christian teaching. True? Why? How is that true for you?
 - In what way are you equipping others to claim and to proclaim the story?

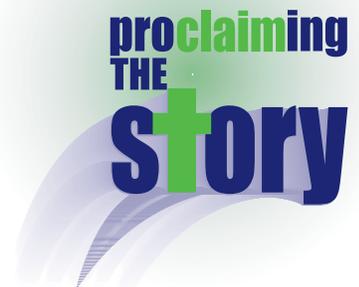
The Word in Action

- Make it a point to share the good news with someone this week. In what way does that action make you one who claims the story? How are you a proclaimer?
- Form a small group of people who can meet together regularly...
 - to pray for those who have yet to hear the story
 - to plan ways to share the story with others in your community
 - to seek ways to help members of the congregation become more effective proclaimers of the story.
- Spend time in prayer this week. Seek the Spirit's guidance as you claim the story of God's love in Jesus Christ for yourself. Discover ways to become a claimer/proclaimer of the story in your household, your circle of friends, your neighborhood.
- Pray for those who proclaim the good news in your community.

Closing

Close with a prayer that all may claim and proclaim the story in all of their lives. You might join in singing a hymn like "I, the Lord of Sea and Sky" ("Here I Am, Lord") (*This Far By Faith* #230) or a similar song or hymn.

Duplicate the Commitment and Affirmation of the Faith Community found on the next page. Use the reproduced copies (1/2 page, two-sided) as a bulletin insert in worship or as discussion tool for a teacher-orientation meeting.



claim proclaiming THE STORY

*“...for we
cannot keep
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and heard.”*

Acts 4:20

We are people of THE STORY—not any story or some story—but THE STORY. We are people who know and proclaim THE STORY of God’s love in Christ. We eagerly tell the story because we have claimed the story as our own. We know the wondrous things God has done and is doing in our life and in our world. And we cannot but speak of them to all those who will hear.

God’s living story is the source and centerpiece of our faith. The salvation story from the Word is not just a story that happened long ago but a story that lives within each of us. It is a sacred story told for thousands of years around fire-pits, altars and the kitchen table as parents and preachers and “every-day theologians” of every age tell one another about God’s activity in the salvation of all creation and the incarnation of love, grace, and eternal life. It is a story made sacred as God scripts an imaginative, compelling, textured narrative in our ordinary, day-by-day lives. It is a story of the body of Christ, living in precious, delicate relationships with one another.

As we boldly proclaim God’s story, we name and claim our participation in the ongoing journey of love and salvation. It’s the Good News! What a privilege! What a joy-filled challenge! Among the many things we can do as God’s people in God’s world, nothing is more important and more vital than telling, proclaiming, announcing THE STORY—the story of God’s love in Christ, the story of salvation. “In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I solemnly urge you: proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching.” (2 Timothy 4:1-2).

Commitment and Affirmation of the Faith Community

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 recognize and bless those who have been called to the ministry of leading, teaching, and guiding.

The pastor addresses the teachers:

Do you accept the joy-filled privilege and challenge of teaching the Word of God, sharing the stories of faith, and giving witness to God’s faithfulness in your own life?

The teachers respond:

I accept this responsibility and ask God to help and guide me.

The pastor addresses children, youth, and adult learners:

God is a welcoming storyteller—always inviting us into the story and generously making way for God’s story to be ours. This wonderful news is your invitation to claim the story and to proclaim it to others. Do you promise to love God and to share the good news of Jesus with other children, youth, and adults?

The children, youth, and adult learners respond:

I promise and I know God will help me.

The pastor addresses parents and caregivers:

Will you nurture faith in the home by reading God’s Word, sharing stories of faith, engaging in caring conversations and prayer, and by serving others, together?

The parents and caregivers respond:

I promise and I know God will help me.

The pastor addresses the congregation:

To claim and proclaim the Word of God is an awesome privilege and responsibility to which every Christian is called. Do you promise to make study of the Word a priority in your life and encourage one another in a deeper, fuller, life-long walk with Christ by witnessing to God’s presence and activity in your own life?

The congregation responds:

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

The pastor continues:

Let us pray.

Gracious God, Pour out your Holy Spirit upon all those who teach and learn.

Call us to acknowledge and cherish the privilege of dwelling in your Word.

By your abundant grace and love, increase our faithfulness and help us to live

Christ’s way that we may boldly bear witness to your Word in all the world.

Amen

The Proclamation Station

Description

The Proclamation Station is a grand-central time and place to engage people of all ages in a multi-faceted approach to understanding and appreciating the age-old privilege of proclaiming God's story. It provides creative opportunities to discover "who's who and what's what" as children, youth, and adults grow in their commitment and desire to share the Good News.

This resource provides a variety of different program components to explore this theme in age-specific or intergenerational gatherings on Rally Day or anytime throughout the year. A detailed outline of worship exercises and learning activities is provided to plan one 60-90 minute event or several separate occasions. You may download the entire collection of program offerings at

www.elca.org/dcm/christian_education/resources/2004CEProgramPlanner

Key Bible Verses

"...for we cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard." Acts 4:20

"I...beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.... But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift.... The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ."

Ephesians 4:1-3; 7; 11-12

Program Outline and Content

PBN (Public Broadcasting Network) Gathering Activities—A portrait photo shoot and an interactive ice-breaker will engage people in the overall theme and content

Multi-Media Centers—Several interactive crafts and activities will explore the dynamics of storytelling through a variety of different mediums, e.g. audio, video, print, and electronic

Proclamation Celebration—Scripture readings, songs, a litany, and a skit titled "Jeremiah and O-me-o-my-ah" are suggested for a 15-20 minute large group time of blessing and sending

This event will also debut the "Grand Central Proclamation Station," a new interactive resource for parents and other Christian educators to acquaint children and youth with people throughout history who proclaim their faith in a variety of different ways. A description of the content is highlighted on the following page.

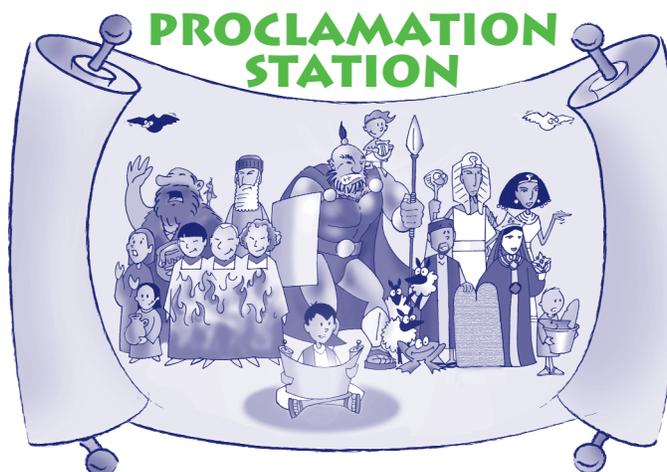


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Acts 4:20

Introducing



Grand Central Proclamation Station

The "Grand Central Proclamation Station" is a new interactive Web site for parents and other Christian educators to download or submit stories that characterize "faith proclaimers" today and throughout history.

Our initial offerings will be focused on Old and New Testament characters who highlight one or more of the roles for proclaiming God's story identified in Ephesians 4:11. Each submission will include an invitation for children, youth, and adults to recognize people of all ages in their homes, churches, and local or global communities who have similar gifts or stories to tell. They may e-mail drawings, pictures and/or stories to share with others online.

Special "I Want to Give a Shout-out to..." certificates will also be available to give formal recognition to the people identified as faith proclaimers.

Check out this new electronic resource at www.elca.org/dcm/christian_education

More on-line support and supplementary materials related to Claiming the Story

This planning guide is intentionally designed to be both a print and electronic resource. Go to www.elca.org/dcm/christian_education/resources/2004CEProgramPlanner for loads of related materials including....

- Suggested Bible versions for various ages and stages in a person's life
- ABC's of suggested Scripture passages for young children
- Resource listings and links
- Storytelling models, practices, and learning and leading suggestions
- Clip art supporting this year's theme and the *Call to Discipleship*
- And much more!

Planning calendar

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

<i>September 2004</i>	Notes, reminders, and connections
5	
12	
19	September 14- Holy Cross Day
26	

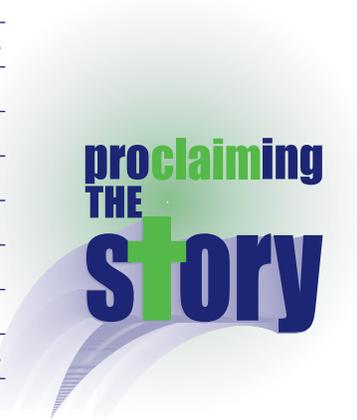
<i>October 2004</i>	Notes, reminders, and connections
3	
10	
17	
24	
31	Reformation Sunday

<i>November 2004</i>	Notes, reminders, and connections
7	
14	All Saints Sunday November 10–Martin Luther's Birthday
21	
28	Christ the King Sunday
	1st Sunday in Advent

<i>December 2004</i>	Notes, reminders, and connections
5	
12	
19	
26	

<i>January 2005</i>	Notes, reminders, and connections
2	
9	January 6-The Epiphany of Our Lord
16	The Baptism of Our Lord
23	
30	February 2-The Presentation of Our Lord

<i>February 2005</i>	Notes, reminders, and connections
6	
13	The Transfiguration of our Lord February 9–Ash Wednesday
20	
27	



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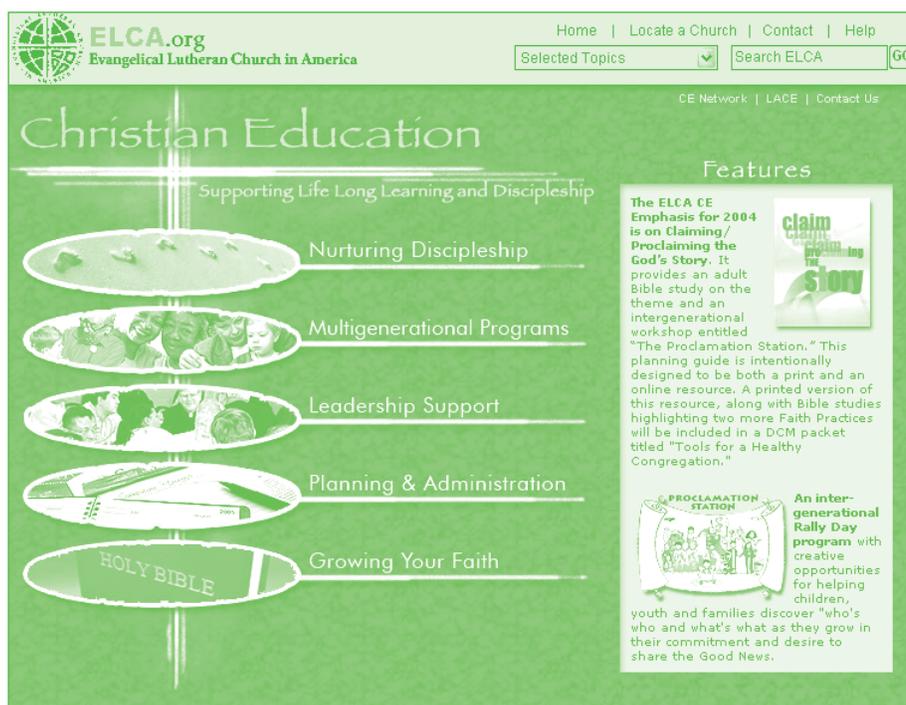
“...for we cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard.”

Acts 4:20

<i>March 2005</i>	Notes, reminders, and connections
6	
13	
20	
27	Palm Sunday
	Easter Sunday; The Resurrection of Our Lord
<i>April 2005</i>	Notes, reminders, and connections
3	
10	
17	
24	
<i>May 2005</i>	Notes, reminders, and connections
1	
8	May 5-The Ascension of our Lord
15	
22	The Day of Pentecost
29	The Holy Trinity
<i>June 2005</i>	Notes, reminders, and connections
5	
12	
19	
26	
<i>July 2005</i>	Notes, reminders, and connections
3	
10	
17	
24	
31	
<i>August 2005</i>	Notes, reminders, and connections
7	
14	
21	
28	

New Christian Education Web site!

The ELCA Christian Education team has a new Web site! It will provide easy access to the many resources available for teaching, learning, and leadership training. Scan through the new categories below and check out the new Web site at www.elca.org/dcm/christian_education



Nurturing Discipleship

- Key Characteristics
- Faith Practices
- Resources for Personal & Corporate Expression
- Adult Resources
- Youth Resources
- Children & Family/Intergenerational
- Specific Emphases on Discipleship
- Leadership Support

Multigenerational Programs

- Special Education
- Children's Ministries
- Youth & Confirmation Resources
- Adult Education
- Family/ Intergenerational Ministries

Leadership Support

- L.A.C.E.
- C. E. Network
- Publishers
- Para-Church Partners
- Upcoming Events

Planning and Administration

- Program Evaluations and Assessment Tools
- Planning Tips
- Rally Day/Special Events

Growing your Faith

- Entry Points for Children
- Entry Points for Youth
- Entry Points for Adults
- Entry Points for Parents/Families

Please route to your primary Christian education leader: Sunday school superintendent, Director of Christian Education or Pastor.

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ISBN: 6-0002-1136-8

Living in God's amazing grace