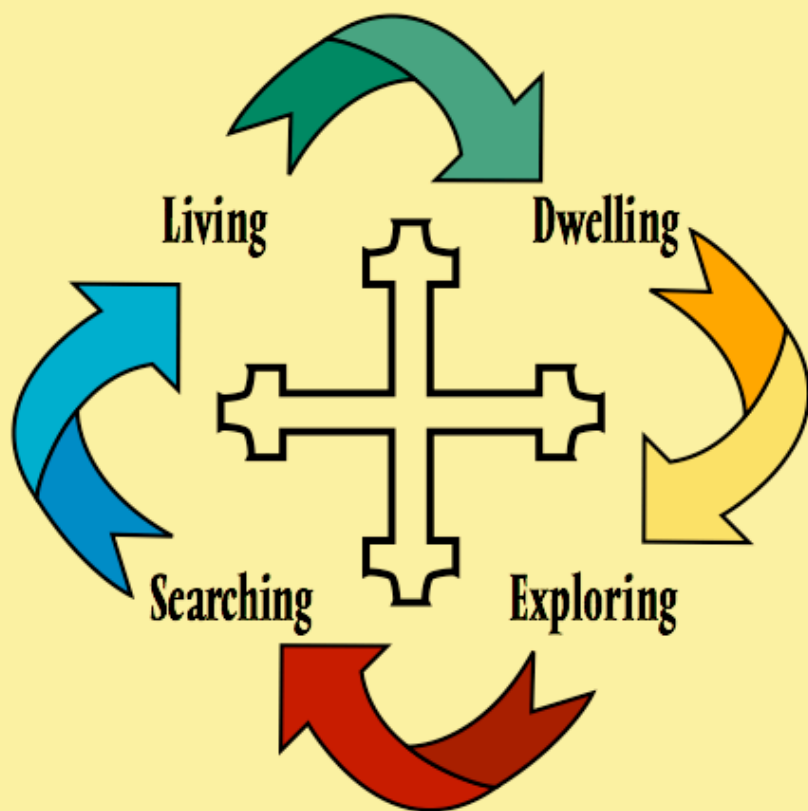


LEARNING LUKE THE APOSTOLIC GOSPEL



LEADER GUIDE

BY DR. DAVID L. TIEDE

Leader's Guide

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Learning Luke

The Apostolic Gospel

Leader's Guide

A Word of Encouragement for All Leaders

As you prepare to lead your group in using this course, your **first step** is to **pray for the participants, focusing on what they need to learn**, and the **first learning goal is to experience the word of Christ in a community**. You may or may not be a Bible expert. God only knows what they finally need to learn. Yes, God does know. So, relax and “dwell in the Word,” then let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly by joining your people in moving at the pace that is right for them. If you guide them on the journey by hosting the gathering and identifying the signposts of each session, you will do well.

In making the video, our group was blessed by knowing we were joining with other gatherings around the world. We tried to offer helpful information and begin deliberations that will move farther and wider in various locations. Some will also take the discussions much deeper in formal study. But we ourselves experienced what one scholar called “Lukan Joy” as we listened with the hearing of the heart, looked deeper with the eyes of the mind, and sought courage to be the hands and voices sent by Christ into the world. May you also sense the joy of a learner (disciple) who is called and sent (apostle).

Your **second step** as the leader will be to **help them hear the whole story**.

This course is designed to provide people with an opportunity to become acquainted with and think about the whole Gospel according to St. Luke.

By the standards of modern literature, Luke is not a long book. In the ancient church, it was read aloud. Few people could read, and the only copies were handwritten and expensive. Even when Luke is read as the “Third Gospel” in worship throughout a church year, many of the stories are never heard, and the flow is lost. So whatever sessions of the video course you select, plan how participants will read or hear the whole story.

The course comes with a recording of the whole of Luke, with permission to download the recording to *iPods* or *MP3* players for portable listening. Some participants will be glad to read the narrative between the sessions, and others will appreciate hearing it read, like early Christians, radio listeners, or exercise walkers. Thus whatever video sessions you select for your group, make sure they read or listen to the intervening portions of Luke's story. Learning to know and love a whole gospel will be a blessing.

To guide their reading and listening, you need a plan that fits your course. Participants may wish to read ahead of the meeting or explore the story after a session. The following chart is keyed to the session numbers (see the "Learning Luke" signposts chart below) to suggest reading/listening options.

Sessions in the Course	Possible Video Selections	Reading/Listening Guide
If you have only four sessions, you still can sample the beginning, middle and end of the story.	#1: Caesar and Lord #4: Messiah and Prophet #7: Parables and Revelation #12: Crucified and Raised	Luke 1:1-4:44 Luke 5:1-9:50 Luke 9:51-19:27 Luke 19:28- 24:53
In eight sessions, your group will begin to probe the story more deeply and hear each other more carefully.	#1: Caesar and Lord → #3: Jesus goes Public #4: Messiah and Prophet #6: Jesus is Determined #7: Parables and Revelation #9: Sinners and Saints #11: The King of the Jews #12: Crucified and Raised	Luke 1:1-2:52 Luke 3:1-4:44 Luke 5:1-9:50 Luke 9:51-13:35 Luke 14:1-19:27 Luke 19:28-21:38 Luke 22:1-23:56 Luke 24:1-53
In twelve sessions, your group will become acquainted with a greater breadth of Luke's story and gain a fuller experience of the power of the Gospel truth in one another's lives	#1: Caesar and Lord → #2: Prophecy and History #3: Jesus goes Public #4: Messiah and Prophet #5: Jesus enacts Scripture #6: Jesus is Determined #7: Parables and Revelation #8: Looking for Signs #9: Sinners and Saints #10: An unholy Alliance #11: The King of the Jews #12: Crucified and Raised	Luke 1:1-2:20 Luke 2:21-3:20 Luke 3:21-4:44 Luke 5:1-7:50 Luke 8:1-9:50 Luke 9:51-13:35 Luke 14:1-15:32 Luke 16:1-18:17 Luke 18:18-19:47 Luke 20:1-22:13 Luke 22:14-23:56 Luke 24:1-53

As an alternative strategy, plan to use all twelve sessions, but break the course into two six week or three four week blocks through a church year.

Your **third step** as a leader is to read the "signposts" of the 12 sessions (see the chart on the next page) for four *ways* we **learn to hear God's call to us**.

Learning Luke

1. Dwelling in the Word →

2. Exploring → God's Story

3. Searching → the Scriptures

4. Living the → Gospel Truth

(#1) Exploring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∞ Introduce the study ∞ Caesar: Lord & Savior ∞ Hear Luke 1:1-4 and 2:1-20 ∞ Appreciate the story ∞ Invite discussion 	(#2) Searching: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∞ Prophecy & History ∞ Hear Luke 2:21-40 ∞ Identify the Oracles ∞ Search the Scriptures ∞ Invite discussion 	(#3) Living: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∞ Jesus goes public ∞ Hear Luke 4:14-30 ∞ The Messiah's program ∞ Why Jesus offends ∞ Invite discussion
(#4) Exploring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∞ Messiah and Prophet ∞ Hear Luke 7:1-17 ∞ Appreciate the stories ∞ Deeds and Words ∞ Invite discussion 	(#5) Searching: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∞ Jesus enacts Scripture ∞ Hear Luke 9:28-36 ∞ Departure & Exodus ∞ Search the Scriptures ∞ Invite discussion 	(#6) Living: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∞ Jesus is determined ∞ Hear Luke 9:51-56 and 13:31-35 ∞ The desire of God ∞ The necessary passion ∞ Invite discussion
(#7) Exploring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∞ Parables & Revelation ∞ Hear Luke 15 ∞ Appreciate the details ∞ Amazing grace ∞ Invite discussion 	(#8) Searching: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∞ Looking for signs ∞ Hear Luke 18:1-17 ∞ The Son of Man ∞ Search the Scriptures ∞ Invite discussion 	(#9) Living: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∞ Sinners and Saints ∞ Hear Luke 18:18-27 and 19:1-9 ∞ Shameless hospitality ∞ Financial freedom ∞ Invite discussion
(#10) Exploring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∞ An unholy alliance ∞ Hear Luke 20:20-26 and 22:1-13 ∞ Watch the players ∞ Follow the money ∞ Invite discussion 	(#11) Searching: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∞ The King of the Jews ∞ Hear Luke 23:26-49 ∞ The Chosen Messiah ∞ Search the Scriptures ∞ Invite discussion 	(#12) Living: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∞ Crucified and raised ∞ Hear Luke 24: 36-53 ∞ God's promises ∞ Apostolic mission ∞ Invite discussion

Called as Disciples ← → Sent as Apostles

The Apostolic Gospel

The first paragraph in the Leader's Guide for all 12 sessions states:
"All sessions of this course are designed to help people learn to read, hear, and "dwell in" the Third Gospel as 1) a narrative that tells God's story; 2) an interpretation of Israel's scriptures in light of Jesus; 3) a testimony to the Gospel truth."

The second paragraph for each session reminds you as Leader about which dimension of Luke's account will receive particular attention in this session.

As the "signposts" chart (above) shows, Sessions #1, #4, #7, and #10 pay attention to ***Exploring God's Story***. This means the video presentation and Leader's Guide will highlight Luke's skill as a narrator. The narrative art of Luke's account invites explorations of how the story works. The Leader's Guide for each session will try to help your group appreciate the story Luke tells, by raising a set of consistent narrative questions. For example:

1. Where does this episode fit in Luke's larger story or all of Luke-Acts?
2. Which details give you insight about what Jesus or God will do next?
3. How does Luke's story bring Christ to us?

Sessions #2, #5, #8, and #11 focus more on ***Searching the Scriptures***.

This means the video presentation and Leader's Guide will highlight Luke's ability as a scriptural interpreter. In Luke's story, watching how Jesus enacts Israel's scriptures invites more searching. The following questions may help:

1. Where is this episode based (directly/indirectly) in Israel's scriptures?
2. How does reading the scriptures shed light on details in this episode?
3. Where do the scriptures reveal the Spirit?

Sessions #3, #6, #9, and #12 direct us more toward ***Living the Gospel Truth***.

This means the video presentation and Leader's Guide will emphasize the conviction that "Learning Luke" is only complete when those who are called as disciples (learners) are sent into the world to live as apostles of Jesus.

1. How does Jesus' determination and purpose come through the story?
2. How will Jesus' reign give new hope to the whole world?
3. Who is God calling us to be, to do, and tell?

Leaders who will use these presentations in formal courses for Associates in Ministry or candidates for ordination will pursue these *ways* as *methods* to interpret Luke's narrative more deeply. Pastoral study groups may also find help in the more academic resources listed below in order to understand how interpreters circle in on the scriptures, then circle out into the world, at first

interpreting the text, then the world. A great teacher, J.A. Bengal once said, *“Apply yourself totally to the text, and apply the text totally to yourself.”*

Both the delight and discipline of Biblical scholarship, moreover, are enhanced by serving the straightforward questions thoughtful Christians raise when they read scripture. This course is designed to welcome the wonder and wisdom of just such people, lay and rostered, young and elder, with a trusted Bible scholar as host. Thus those who will use these video sessions for further study will do well to begin with deep respect for how the Spirit inspires and calls the people of God through their reading of scripture. The video sessions seek to practice this respect and enrich people’s faith.

For those who will study further, the four *ways* or *methods* will be pathways into Biblical scholarship. For all participants, the questions, marked by the arrows, seek to serve their understanding: **What? How? Where? Who?**

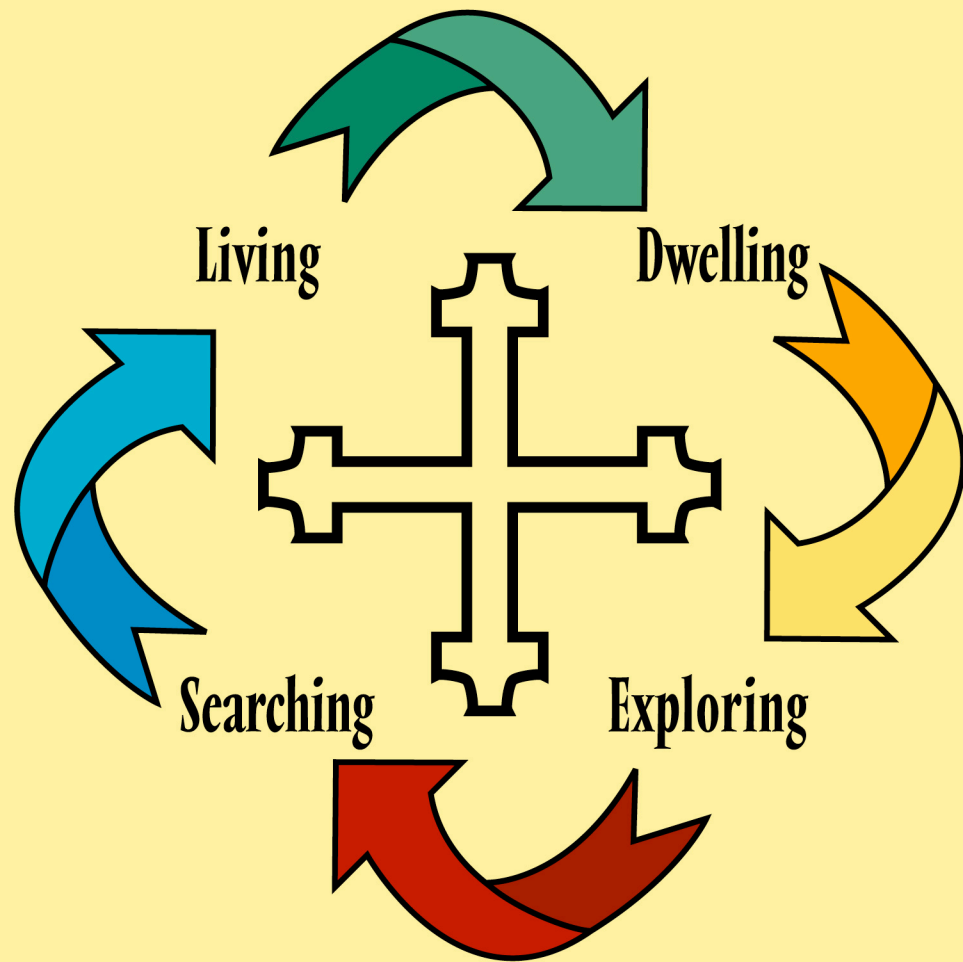
We begin with our experience in hearing, then draw into the story, then deep into the scriptures, then out into the world God loves. We learn by listening as the evangelist teaches the people, then we also sense the depths still to be sounded. More significantly, we begin to see how the Spirit turns disciples into apostles, learners into witnesses and agents of God’s reign in the world.

1. Dwelling in the Word, learning to hear God among us, together.
“**What** touched your hearts with hope or fear?”
2. Exploring God’s Story, learning to explore Luke’s narrative:
“**How** does this story bring Christ Jesus to us?”
3. Searching the Scriptures, learning to discover God’s promises:
“**Where** do Israel’s scriptures reveal the Spirit?”
4. And Living the Gospel Truth, learning to hear and act:
“**Who** is God calling us to be, to do, and to tell?”

The logo for “Learning Luke: the Apostolic Gospel” is a graphic reminder:

LEARNING LUKE

THE APOSTOLIC GOSPEL



Your **fourth step** as a leader will be to design an approach to teaching and learning appropriate to your participants and their learning experience. The following instructions are reinforced in the Leader's Guide for each session.

No matter how plain or fancy your ***Learning Luke*** group may be, many realities are common, beginning with the facts that a good number of people are nervous or even suspicious of "Bible Study" and how can a video presentation help you think for yourself? Then again, some of the people who are most eager for adult education may shut others out by presuming they know all about a topic. Your calm, thoughtful preparation will be a gift.

Finding 50 minute blocks for a group without interruptions is an act of spiritual leadership in itself. Don't just line up the chairs and turn on the video. Welcome people into the experience of ***Learning Luke***. Let them know this will be an opportunity for them to hear or read a whole gospel and together to explore the meaning of this greatest story ever told. Session by session, the video will stir their minds and hearts for their conversations. Alert them the video presentations will be about 30 minutes in length, with the first session a bit longer to introduce the study. Assure them: *1) no one will be called on to read aloud unless they have agreed in advance! 2) all honest questions are good.* If the group is small, still welcome each other. If the group is large, get acquainted in small groups before watching the video.

The more you make the video work for you, the better the group experience. The course will be a success if people want to take more time talking with one another. You may only want to run portions of the video in a particular session. You may also want to cue up the video so that you do the opening prayer and/or hymn and someone who has prepared the reading recites it, with Bibles closed and ears open. Otherwise, you will find these steps done for you in the video, and that can work too. Make sure, however, that the room is comfortable, the people are at ease, the session will begin and end on time – without interruptions, and the participants are in your care.

Time the various segments in advance of every session. This means you will watch the video you have chosen, decide how to use it, calculate how many minutes you need for updating or information, and plan when the session will end – including who will close with prayer.

You who are leading formal study courses will have at least a **fifth step** of building a **syllabus or course of study** for the group. Suggested helps related to the passage are also included in each session.

For Certificate and Synodically Authorized Ministry Students

You who are leading courses for certificate and Synodically Authorized Ministry students may well begin by encouraging your students to join in the congregational experience that is outlined above. Some may already be able to lead their own congregations or groups through the course. All should be able to do so after they go through your course. If they are preparing to lead or teach this material, they could experience the first session as a group and then take additional time together to:

1. Interpret the circular diagram:
 - a. *Dwelling in the Word*: Why is this step the basis for everything?
 - b. *Exploring God's Story*: How does the larger story reveal meaning?
 - c. *Searching the Scriptures*: Where are the biblical connections?
 - d. *Living the Gospel Truth*: Who obeys God's calling in the story?
2. Examine the outline of the lessons:
 - a. What special care will you take to make everyone feel welcome?
 - b. How well do the twelve selected readings represent the whole gospel?
 - c. Are there other passages your group should read together?
 - d. How will you help them appreciate when they are interpreting the narrative (Exploring the Story), interpreting the story as a fulfillment of scripture (Searching the Scriptures), and/or interpreting the Gospel as a calling (Living the Gospel Truth)?
3. Introduce the following resource material that will be useful to them:
 - a. A study Bible: Our presenter, David Tiede, wrote the notes on Luke for The Access Bible (1999) and The HarperCollins Study Bible (1993 edition). See excellent introduction and brief notes by Richard Swanson in Lutheran Study Bible. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing, 2009.
 - b. Michael F. Patella, The Gospel According to Luke. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2005: Volume 3 of The New Collegeville Bible Commentary.
 - c. David L. Tiede, Luke. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing, 1988: The Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament.
4. Work with them to design a study plan to guide them through the course:
 - a. What will be their learning goals?
 - b. How will they use the video and audio resources?
 - c. What additional study or writing will they accomplish?
 - d. How will they help each other lead in congregational studies?

For TEEM, Online and Cohort Seminary level Courses:

You who are leading courses for TEEM, online, and cohort seminary level courses may also begin with the congregational experience as outlined above, then review their learning objectives and syllabus of the course. Teaching is excellent way for participants to learn. If your participants plan to lead or teach this material in their own settings, they could experience the first session as a group and then take additional time together to:

To interpret the circular diagram at the level of a seminary course, you will teach your participants to understand the “hermeneutical circle” of the diagram. The first questions are the same as for less formal study, but now they call for more knowledge and study:

- a. *Dwelling in the Word*: Why is this step the basis for everything?
 - i. Seminary level study will also require attention to “establishing the text.” What are the Greek manuscripts upon which this translation depends? Those who are able to read Greek will find the manuscript “apparatus” at the foot of the text helpful for exploring particular readings. Those who are working solely in English will find it helpful to read an article on New Testament manuscripts in a good Bible Dictionary.
 - ii. Attention to the resources in an English language Study Bible will increase understanding of how the NRSV, for example, differs from other versions and why it is the preferred standard.
- b. *Exploring God’s Story*: How does the larger story reveal meaning?
 - i. Seminary level courses will regularly introduce the literary studies of a previous generation which were based on “source analysis” or “redaction criticism” with meticulous attention to Luke’s use of the Gospel of Mark and the Sayings Source (“Q”). In some of the sessions, suggestions will be made about the possible use of a Greek or English “Synopsis.” This tool is invaluable for appreciating the care and art by which Luke constructed the narrative.
 - ii. More contemporary literary studies of Luke’s narrative focus on the author’s abilities in writing in both Hellenistic and Biblical styles. The resources cited below will introduce the participants to these worlds and encourage further study.
 - iii. Discussions of historical verifiability probably belong in this section, but few commentaries pursue them. The work of such authors as N.T. Wright and Marcus Borg could be examined fruitfully in these questions.

- c. *Searching the Scriptures*: Where are the biblical connections?
 - i. The presentations will regularly highlight how profoundly Luke's narrative is a biblical commentary. Some of the most exciting scholarship of the past quarter century has focused on the recovering the thoroughly scriptural and Jewish character of Luke's gospel, pointing also toward the Acts of the Apostles. Seminary level session should attend to the scriptural precedents upon which the passage relies. Students will be perplexed, at times, by which "Old Testament" passages Luke uses, but their appreciation can grow for Luke's conviction of the living witness of God's Spirit in Israel's scriptures.
- d. *Living the Gospel Truth*: Who obeys God's calling in the story?
 - i. The underlying witness of ***Learning Luke*** is that the Third Gospel is "The Apostolic Gospel." This is not a negative comparison to Matthew, Mark, or John, but it is an interpretive conviction about how deeply this evangelist has explored the story of Jesus as prologue to the church's mission "to the ends of the earth." Seminary level students will do well to pay attention to how their interpretation is not complete until they have asked what the story means for God's social, political, and spiritual mission in the world God loves.
 - ii. Those who will be using this course to prepare for preaching should be encouraged to become acquainted with resources such as workingpreacher.org and the New Proclamation companion volumes for preaching (Fortress Press).
 - iii. Seminary level students (learners – disciples) in the course may also examine how Luke's story can best be used in "missional church" settings. Excellent resources are emerging from such places as the "Gospel in our Culture Network."

In building a syllabus for a seminary level course, the leader will include a study plan with learning objectives, a strategy for the use of the video, and a design for the writing or presentations the participants will prepare.

The general resource materials mentioned above are still an excellent place to begin:

A study Bible: Our presenter, David Tiede, wrote the notes on Luke for The Access Bible (1999) and The HarperCollins Study Bible (1993 ed). See excellent introduction and brief notes by Richard Swanson, Lutheran Study Bible (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing, 2009).

Michael F. Patella, The Gospel According to Luke (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2005: Volume 3 of New Collegeville Bible Commentary).

David L. Tiede, Luke (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing, 1988): The Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament.

In addition, a seminary level course could introduce:

Literary or narrative studies of Luke such as:

Paul Borgman, The Way according to Luke: Hearing the Whole Story of Luke-Acts (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006).

Mikeal C. Parsons, Luke: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2007).

Mark Allan Powell, What are They Saying about Luke? (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989).

Richard W. Swanson, Provoking the Gospel of Luke (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2006).

Robert C. Tannehill, The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts Vol. 1 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1986).

Scholarship that attends to Luke's historical place and claim such as:

Marcus J. Borg and N.T. Wright, The Meaning of Jesus: Two Visions (San Francisco: Harper, 1998).

Mark Allan Powell, What are They Saying about Luke? (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989).

Marilyn J. Salmon, Preaching without Contempt: Overcoming Unintended Anti-Judaism (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006).

David L. Tiede, Jesus and the Future (New York: Cambridge, 1990).

N.T. Wright, The Challenge of Jesus: Rediscovering Who Jesus Was and Is (Downers Grove: IVP, 1999).

“Scriptural” studies of Luke such as:

David P. Moessner (ed), Jesus and the Heritage of Israel Volume one of Luke the Interpreter of Israel (David P. Moessner and David L. Tiede editors: Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 1999).

Joseph B. Tyson (ed), Luke-Acts and the Jewish People (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988).

Comprehensive commentaries on Luke's witness such as:

Francois Bovon, Luke Vol. I (1:1-9:50 Hermeneia Commentary: Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002).

Luke Timothy Johnson, The Gospel of Luke (Sacra Pagina, Daniel J. Harrington, ed: Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1991).

Eduard Schweizer, The Good News According to Luke (trans. David E. Green: Atlanta: Knox, 1984).

Digital tools of Biblical Studies (i.e. *Bibleworks*) and Synoptic Gospel studies:

Kurt Aland, Synopsis of the Four Gospels (RSV), (New York: American Bible Society, 1985).

Kurt Aland, Synopsis Quattuor Evangelorum (Greek), (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1996).

Burton H. Throckmorton, Jr. Gospel Parallels (5th Edition: NRSV), (Nashville: Nelson, 1992).

Learning Luke: Leader's Guide

Curriculum Plan: Session 1: Exploring

Jesus the Savior, Lord, and Messiah: Luke 1:1-4 and 2:1-20

All sessions of this course are designed to help people learn to read, hear, and “dwell in” the Third Gospel as 1) a narrative that tells God’s story; 2) an interpretation of Israel’s scriptures in light of Jesus; 3) a testimony to the Gospel truth.

This session, along with sessions #4, #7, and #10, focuses on exploring the power and beauty of Luke’s narrative. In his prologue to the whole narrative (Luke 1:1-4) and his account of Jesus’ birth (Luke 2:1-20), the evangelist establishes Jesus’ royal identity in the terms that fulfill Israel’s scriptures and surpass the claims of the Roman emperors. Within chapters 1-2, Luke’s story “brings Jesus the Messiah (Greek: Christ) to us” accompanied by angels, shepherds, and prophetic precedents. One of the most widely known biblical stories, Luke’s account of Jesus’ birth causes believers and unbelievers to join Mary in wondering what in the world will become of this child?

Learning Goals of Session 1:

- ∞ let Luke teach us how to experience, explore, search and live the story
- ∞ appreciate Jesus’ birth story within Luke’s telling about John and Jesus
- ∞ sense the public impact (power) of Jesus’ being Savior, Messiah, and Lord
- ∞ grasp how Mary and the shepherds had apostolic callings

Leader Preparations for the Session:

- These sessions are designed so that the leader does not need to be an expert, but investigating some interpretive resources may be helpful and informative.
 - Look up & read the scriptural passages cited in a study Bible’s notes.
 - On Luke 1:1-2:52 (context), read: Michael F. Patella, The Gospel According to Luke, New Collegeville Commentary (2005), pp. 5-22.
 - On Luke 1:1-4 and 2:1-20, read: David L. Tiede, Luke, Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament (1988), pp. 33-38, 45-47, 65-73.

- Several days before the session, communicate with the person who is working with you as the host for the group. Ask if everything is in order for the arrangements, such as the room, video equipment, directions, name tags, contact information, and refreshments. Inquire about insights the host has for improving the experience of participants and knowledge of crises in people's lives. Encourage the host to join you in praying for all the participants.
- Consult the reading/listening guide prior to the session to remind participants of the schedule of reading or listening they are requested to do between sessions in order to hear or read the whole Gospel during the course.
- Encourage participants to bring their Bibles to the session and ask the host to have additional Bibles available.
- View the video to refresh your understanding of the learning goals.
- Ensure the monitor and DVD player are working, and cued to the session.
- Walk through the whole session with the host to make sure the room arrangements and supplies are in order, especially for small group work.
- Think about the room as an environment for deep and personal learning. What can you do to make it comfortable? Would some pictures or posters bring the session alive? Lighting a candle may help people sense the illumination of learning scripture. Where in the room might you place a cross or a pitcher and bowl of water with a towel to recall the apostolic/servant vocation of baptism?
- Provide hymnals or secure copyright permission to copy hymns and prayers.

Welcoming and Opening Devotion (10 minutes):

- Seat people in conversation groups of 5-8 people, around tables, if possible. To make sure they all know each other by name, supply name tags or tent cards for their names.
- **Start on time** by welcoming all participants. Move directly into the session.
- Remind the group of where we are in the course. You may say something like: "Today we will hear the introduction to the whole Gospel, listen together to two key passages, and begin interpreting the story in our own lives."

- Offer a prayer of your own or use a Christmas prayer, such as: “Shine into our hearts the light of your wisdom, O God, and open our minds to the knowledge of your word, that in all things we may think and act according to your good will and may live continually in the light of your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. AMEN.” (ELW p. 21).
- Sing one of the great Christmas hymns, such as “from Heaven Above to Earth I Come” or “O Little Town of Bethlehem”.

View Video (13 minute introduction; 19 minutes on Luke 2:1-20: total 32 minutes):

Note: The video introduction takes more time for the first session, which means the discussion will be briefer. In other sessions, more time is allocated for discussion.

Discussion (10-15 minutes)

Exploring God’s Story (10 minutes: deal with at least one question):

1. Review the story of Jesus’ birth in the context of Luke’s account of the annunciations, births, and childhoods of both John and Jesus. How is God entering the human story through Jesus’ birth?
2. Listen to Luke’s story against the backdrop of the Roman emperors. Why were the emperors acclaimed as “Savior” and “Lord”?
3. To sense what all of this means for God, pay careful attention to the testimonies of exuberant joy by the angels and the shepherds.

Called as Disciples ← → Sent as Apostles (10 minutes: save time for this part!):

1. In the video, Annie Glasco is touched by Mary’s “pondering.” What do you find yourself “pondering” concerning what will become of Jesus in this story?
2. Kelly Chatman offers an illuminating insight about the powers of Rome and Jesus’ vulnerable strength. What kind of power is this?
3. When have you experienced God’s power at work in tender love?

Closing (5 minutes)

Checking in:

When you call for the full group's attention, ask quietly – don't fear silence:

“What one thing did you learn today about Jesus?”

Looking Ahead

Remind people of the following:

- when and where the next session will meet
- which portions of Luke they are encouraged to read or hear in advance
- how suggestions for improving the course can be registered
- invite prayers for the participants, congregation, community, and world

If time permits, sing another great Christmas hymn.

Go in peace, serve the Lord!

For Certificate and Synodically Authorized Ministry Students

People who are using the resources of this course for certificate coursework should do the reading recommended above in the **Leader's Guide** for congregational use and follow the questions proposed for those discussions as simplified introductions to the passage.

In addition, these students could explore the topics more thoroughly that are introduced in the “Exploring God’s Story” discussion questions (above).

The following assignments and questions are intended to take the study deeper:

1. Take time to read this episode in its larger literary context of Luke 1-2. Study an outline of the narrative in a good commentary, paying particular attention to how this outline tracks with Israel’s stories of Samuel and David.
 - ∞ Why is Jesus’ Davidic identity so important in Luke’s story?
2. Look up Isaiah 43:9-13 and 45:20-23.
 - ∞ When the angels announce Jesus as Savior, what are they saying about the gods of the empires?
3. Read 1 Corinthians 2:6-8.
 - ∞ How do you understand Jesus as God’s wisdom or word and why was this wisdom obscure to “the rulers of this age?”

For those using *Learning Luke: The Apostolic Gospel* in an online study, write a brief reflection to be shared with your virtual classmates on the following topic:

How can you tell Luke’s beautiful story in such a way as to communicate its powerful claims about God’s reign in Jesus?

For those using the materials from *Learning Luke: The Apostolic Gospel* in an TEEM, Online, or Cohort Seminary level course, these stories provide an opportunity to:

- a) Interview a few elders in your community who could tell the stories of the birth and childhood of people who are deeply admired. What were the signs of promise or giftedness? What worries did people have?
- b) Think about the many Christmas sermons you have heard or preached. Which of them communicated the deep power of Luke’s story, and how did they do it?

This session could be a good occasion to examine how students of Luke’s literary art interpret the details of the story of Jesus’ birth as anticipating his mission.

For example, compare:

Paul Borgman, [The Way according to Luke](#) (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006).

Richard W. Swanson, [Provoking the Gospel of Luke: A Storyteller’s Commentary](#) (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2006).

Robert C. Tannehill, [The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A literary Interpretation, Vol. I: The Gospel According to Luke](#) (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986).

Learning Luke: Leader’s Guide

Curriculum Plan: Session 2: Searching

Prophecy and History: Luke 2:21-40

All sessions of this course are designed to help people learn to read, hear, and “dwell in” the Third Gospel as 1) a narrative that tells God’s story; 2) an interpretation of Israel’s scriptures in light of Jesus; 3) a testimony to the Gospel truth.

This session, along with sessions #5, #9, and #11, pays particular attention to how Luke depicts Jesus as “enacting scripture.” When he was presented for circumcision in the temple (Luke 2:21-40), old Simeon and Anna speak prophetically to identify him. God is moving the plot of the story forward in accord with the prophetic script of history, but that narrative also reveals human resistance to what God has in mind, even rejection and finally murder of the Messiah. Yes, this story interprets Israel’s scriptures in the light of Jesus, but Israel’s scriptures also reveal and interpret what God is doing in Jesus. What God intends is the fulfillment of Israel’s vocation to be a light to all the nations. The early Christian movement will become the apostolic form of the faith of Israel.

Learning Goals of Session 2:

- ∞ appreciate the prophetic “vision” of Simeon and Anna
- ∞ recognize the witness of God’s Spirit concerning what is to come
- ∞ welcome the wisdom of Israel’s righteous elders
- ∞ grasp how God is provoking both Israel’s falling and her rising

Leader Preparations for the Session:

- These sessions are designed so that the leader does not need to be an expert, but investigating some interpretive resources may be helpful and informative.
 - Look up & read the scriptural footnotes to the passage in a study Bible.
 - On Luke 2:21-3:20 (context), read: Michael F. Patella, The Gospel According to Luke, New Collegeville Commentary (2005), pp. 19-26.
 - On Luke 2:21-49 (our passage), read: David L. Tiede, Luke, Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament (1988), pp. 73-79.
- Several days before the session, communicate with the person who is working with you as the host for the group. Ask if everything is in order for the

arrangements, such as the room, video equipment, directions, name tags, contact information, and refreshments. Inquire about insights the host has for improving the experience of participants and knowledge of crises in people's lives. Encourage the host to join you in praying for all the participants.

- Consult the reading/listening guide prior to the session to remind participants of the schedule of reading or listening they are requested to do between sessions in order to hear or read the whole Gospel during the course.
- Encourage participants to bring their Bibles to the session and ask the host to have additional Bibles available.
- View the video to refresh your understanding of the learning goals.
- Ensure the monitor and DVD player are working, and cued to the session.
- Walk through the whole session with the host to make sure the room arrangements and supplies are in order, especially for small group work.
- Think about the room as an environment for deep and personal learning. What can you do to make it comfortable? Would some pictures or posters bring the session alive? Lighting a candle may help people sense the illumination of learning scripture. Where in the room might you place a cross or a pitcher and bowl of water with a towel to recall the apostolic/servant vocation of baptism?
- Provide hymnals or secure copyright permission to copy hymns and prayers.

Welcoming and Opening Devotion (10 minutes):

- Seat people in conversation groups of 5-8 people, around tables, if possible. To make sure they all know each other by name, supply name tags or tent cards for their names.
- **Start on time** by welcoming all participants. Move directly into the session.
- Remind the group of where we are in the course. You may say something like: "This second session is still dealing with the stories of Jesus' infancy. Simeon and Anna appear almost as Old Testament prophets, seeing, perceiving, and discerning that through this child God is fulfilling the people's hopes for "the Consolation of Israel" and "the Redemption of Israel." But the content of that

fulfillment will be the renewal of Israel's calling to be a light to the Gentiles. The hope and the anguish of God's mission are revealed together in the story."

- Offer a prayer of your own or use one of the prayers for Epiphany or the following:

"Blessed are You O Lord our God. You have given prophetic vision to your people through your Spirit, sometimes in the fading of human sight. We pray with your ancient servants, Simeon and Anna, for the restoration of the calling of your people to be a light to the nations of the world through the mercy and justice of the Lord Jesus.

In his name we pray. AMEN."

- Sing a Hymn such as ELW 240: "Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah".

View Video (26:27 minutes):

Discussion (15-20 minutes)

Searching the Scriptures (10 minutes: deal with at least one question):

1. Read Simeon's first prophetic word in Luke 2:29-32 aloud. Why is this a good message for a Christian funeral?
2. Read Simeon's second prophetic blessing in Luke 2: 34-35 aloud. How does this declaration alert us about what will happen to Jesus?
3. In Isaiah 49:6, God declares: "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the survivors of Israel; I will give you a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth." How is God fulfilling this in Jesus?

Called as Disciples ← → Sent as Apostles (10 minutes: save time for this part!):

1. In the video, Annie Glasgow prompts a rich discussion about the visionary perspectives of older adults. When have you experienced this wisdom in your life or in your congregation?
2. Kelly Chatman wonders if the harsh part of Simeon's prophecy is hidden or subtle. David Tiede suggests we simply don't want to admit that our plans may be at odds with God's purposes. What do you think?
3. What will it take for God to turn us toward our callings for the world?

Closing (10 minutes)

Checking in:

When you call for the full group's attention, ask quietly – don't fear silence:

“What one thing did you learn today about Jesus?”

Looking Ahead

Remind people of the following:

- when and where the next session will meet
- which portions of Luke they are encouraged to read or hear in advance
- how suggestions for improving the course can be registered
- invite prayers for the participants, congregation, community, and world

Sing (as time permits) ELW Hymn 545: “Lord Dismiss Us with Your Blessing.”

Go in peace, serve the Lord!

For Certificate and Synodically Authorized Ministry Students

People who are using the resources of this course for certificate coursework should do the reading recommended above in the **Leader's Guide** for congregational use. In addition, these students should be expected to explore the topics more thoroughly that are introduced in the "Searching the Scriptures" discussion questions (above).

1. Thus the following assignments and questions are intended to take the study deeper: This session offers a wonderful opportunity to explore Isaiah 42-49. Simeon and Anna are expanding on Isaiah's vision of how God will restore Israel and her calling. How can non-Jewish Christians read this story without pretending to make God's judgments about Israel's election (see also Romans 9-11)?
2. Look up the terms "the consolation of Israel" and the "restoration of Jerusalem" in a good commentary. What is the enduring meaning of these hopes among followers of Jesus?
3. With a Biblical Concordance, look up all the places the Jerusalem Temple is mentioned in Luke and Acts, and notice how highly the Temple is regarded. What do you suppose the early Jewish Christians felt about the Roman destruction of Jerusalem and the temple?

For those using *Learning Luke: The Apostolic Gospel* in an online study, write a brief essay to be shared with your virtual classmates responding to the following comment:
"Luke's whole story only makes sense where you follow its tap root deep into Israel's scriptures."

For those using the materials from *Learning Luke: The Apostolic Gospel* in an TEEM, Online, or Cohort Seminary level course, the story of Jesus' circumcision provides an excellent opportunity to:

- ∞ identify the many places where Luke shows positive regard for Israel's worship practices in both the temple and the synagogue; and
- ∞ explore the Jewish understanding of circumcision as incorporation into Israel in comparison with Christian understandings of baptism.

Learning Luke: Leader's Guide
Curriculum Plan: Session 3: *Living the Gospel Truth*
Jesus' Inaugural in Nazareth: Luke 4:14-30

All sessions of this course are designed to help people learn to read, hear, and “dwell in” the Third Gospel as 1) a narrative that tells God’s story; 2) an interpretation of Israel’s scriptures in light of Jesus; 3) a testimony to the Gospel truth.

This session, along with sessions #6, #9, and #12, direct us toward ***Living the Gospel Truth***. Jesus’ declaration of the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy meets fierce rejection in Nazareth. Jesus’ determination and purpose reveal how his reign will give new hope to the whole world and disclose the resistance of human hearts to God’s mission. This story invites faith and action from all who are called to be Jesus’ disciples (learners) and sent to be his apostles in the world.

Learning Goals of Session 3:

- ∞ understand Jesus’ mission as the Messiah’s enactment of Isaiah’s prophecy
- ∞ notice how people close to Jesus first welcomed, then rejected his message
- ∞ recognize how Jesus’ plan to bring God’s reign uncovers resistance.
- ∞ let the Spirit lead us beyond our self-concern into freedom to serve
- ∞ glimpse the active incorporation of the marginalized in diaconal ministry

Leader Preparations for the Session:

- These sessions are designed so that the leader does not need to be an expert, but investigating some interpretive resources may be helpful and informative.
 - Look up & read the scriptural passages cited in a study Bible’s notes.
 - On Luke 3:21-4:44 (context), read: Michael F. Patella, The Gospel According to Luke, New Collegeville Commentary (2005), pp. 26-34.
 - On Luke 4:14-30, read: David L. Tiede, Luke, Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament (1988), pp. 101-111.

- Several days before the session, communicate with the person who is working with you as the host for the group. Ask if everything is in order for the arrangements, such as the room, video equipment, directions, name tags, contact information, and refreshments. Inquire about insights the host has for improving the experience of participants and knowledge of crises in people's lives. Encourage the host to join you in praying for all the participants.
- Consult the reading/listening guide prior to the session to remind participants of the schedule of reading or listening they are requested to do between sessions in order to hear or read the whole Gospel during the course.
- Encourage participants to bring their Bibles to the session and ask the host to have additional Bibles available.
- View the video to refresh your understanding of the learning goals.
- Ensure the monitor and DVD player are working, and cued to the session.
- Walk through the whole session with the host to make sure the room arrangements and supplies are in order, especially for small group work.
- Think about the room as an environment for deep and personal learning. What can you do to make it comfortable? Would some pictures or posters bring the session alive? Lighting a candle may help people sense the illumination of learning scripture. Where in the room might you place a cross or a pitcher and bowl of water with a towel to recall the apostolic/servant vocation of baptism?
- Provide hymnals or secure copyright permission to copy hymns and prayers.

Welcoming and Opening Devotion (10 minutes):

- Seat people in conversation groups of 5-8 people, around tables, if possible. To make sure they all know each other by name, supply name tags or tent cards for their names.
- **Start on time** by welcoming all participants. Move directly into the session.
- Remind the group of where we are in the course. You may say something like: "Today we will hear Jesus' inaugural address in Nazareth where he revealed the program of God's mission and where he encountered human rejection."

- Offer a prayer of your own or use an Epiphany prayer, such as: “Lord God, we pray not only to understand your will but for the faith and courage to do it. Send your Spirit to free us from our self-concern that we may be agents of your mercy in the world you so love. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.”
- Sing one of the great Epiphany hymns, such as “Hail to the Lord’s Anointed” (ELW 311).

View Video (24:48 minutes, including the concluding segment on Diaconal Ministry):

Note: Each of the four sessions on “*Living the Gospel Truth*” will conclude with a glimpse of apostolic ministries of those who are sent into the world.

Discussion (15-20 minutes)

Living the Gospel Truth (10 minutes: deal with at least one question):

1. Read this story of Jesus in Nazareth in the context of the God’s word to him at his baptism (3:22) and the devil’s tests (4:1-13). What is Jesus’ authority, and what is he commissioned to do as Messiah?
2. Can you tell from Luke’s story why the people in Nazareth were “filled with rage” at what Jesus said to them?
3. When do you find yourself offended by what Jesus says or does?

Called as Disciples ← → Sent as Apostles (10 minutes: save time for this part!):

1. In the video, Kelly Chatman notes that sometimes we believe more in our sense for what is holy or righteous than in God. How does God’s righteous reign challenge and empower our apostolic missions?
2. If Jesus was enacting the reign God promised earlier through Isaiah, what is your vision of what will happen when God’s kingdom finally comes and God’s will is done on earth as in heaven?
3. Noreen Stevens welcomes us into the diaconal world of active witness and service, where they are simply doing what Jesus did. What are your best opportunities to “incorporate the marginalized?”

Closing (5 minutes)

Checking in:

When you call for the full group's attention, ask quietly – don't fear silence:

“What did you learn today about what Jesus is calling you to do?”

Looking Ahead

Remind people of the following:

- when and where the next session will meet
- which portions of Luke they are encouraged to read or hear in advance
- how suggestions for improving the course can be registered
- invite prayers for the participants, congregation, community, and world

If time permits, sing another hymn.

Go in peace, serve the Lord!

For Certificate and Synodically Authorized Ministry Students

People who are using the resources of this course for certificate coursework should do the reading recommended above in the **Leader's Guide** for congregational use and follow the questions proposed for those discussions as simplified introductions to the passage. In addition, these students could explore the topics more thoroughly that are introduced in the "Exploring God's Story" discussion questions (above).

The following assignments and questions are intended to take the study deeper:

1. Read this episode in its larger literary context of Luke 3-4, reaching through the "Sermon on the Plain" to Luke 7 where Jesus rehearses what he has been doing in response to an inquiry from John and his disciples.
 - ∞ How does Luke's Jesus link "word and deed" enacting the kingdom?
2. Look up Isaiah 58 and 61
 - ∞ A good commentary will help you understand how the passage Jesus was reading came from two places in Isaiah. How do you understand what these words meant in the context of Isaiah? What new force do they receive when Jesus cites them?
3. This session would be a good place to discuss why conflict will regularly occur when the Church is doing its work in evangelism.
 - ∞ How can you distinguish mere personal differences from substantial disagreements about God's callings for a community? What kinds of leadership are needed to deal with varied conflicts?

For those using *Learning Luke: The Apostolic Gospel* in an online study, write a brief reflection to be shared with your virtual classmates on the following topic:

Assuming that Jesus quite literally meant that his mission is the fulfillment of God's prophetic promises, what is preventing us now from making it happen?

For those using the materials from *Learning Luke: The Apostolic Gospel* in an TEEM, Online, or Cohort Seminary level course, these stories provide an opportunity to:

Review a variety of available evangelism and/or social action programs in the light of Jesus' words in Luke 4. Who is getting it right and why?

This session could also be a good occasion to investigate the significant impact this story has had in varied "liberation theologies." For a place to begin, see Wolfgang Stegemann, *The Gospel and the Poor* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984).

Learning Luke: Leader's Guide
Curriculum Plan: Session 4: Exploring
Messiah and Prophet: Luke 7:1-17

All sessions of this course are designed to help people learn to read, hear, and “dwell in” the Third Gospel as 1) a narrative that tells God’s story; 2) an interpretation of Israel’s scriptures in light of Jesus; 3) a testimony to the Gospel truth.

This session, along with sessions #1, #7, and #10, focuses on exploring the power and beauty of Luke’s narrative. In his account of Jesus’ mighty deeds in Capernaum (Luke 7:1-18), the evangelist portrays Jesus moving forward. His words and actions both were expected from the beginning of the story and anticipate what his apostles will do. Furthermore, Luke’s story “brings Christ to us” in the drama of Jesus’ when he was summoned to help a Roman Centurion and in his life-giving interruption of a funeral. How did these dramatic encounters reveal the mission of the Christ, Israel’s Messiah?

Learning Goals of Session 4:

- ∞ explore what it means to be “worthy” according to the law and/or faith
- ∞ see Jesus unafraid of the high and mighty, with compassion for the widow
- ∞ grasp how this story is based in prophetic precedents from Elijah/Elisha
- ∞ recognize the Messiah’s freedom as the fulfillment of God’s law and reign
- ∞ anticipate how God will send apostles beyond long accepted boundaries

Leader Preparations for the Session:

- These sessions are designed so that the leader does not need to be an expert, but investigating some interpretive resources may be helpful and informative.
 - Look up & read the scriptural passages cited in a study Bible’s notes.
 - On Luke 5:1-7:50 (context), read: Michael F. Patella, The Gospel According to Luke, New Collegeville Commentary (2005), pp. 34-54.
 - On Luke 7:1-18 (our passage), read: David L. Tiede, Luke, Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament (1988), pp. 147-153.

- Several days before the session, communicate with the person who is working with you as the host for the group. Ask if everything is in order for the arrangements, such as the room, video equipment, directions, name tags, contact information, and refreshments. Inquire about insights the host has for improving the experience of participants and knowledge of crises in people's lives. Encourage the host to join you in praying for all the participants.
- Consult the reading/listening guide prior to the session to remind participants of the schedule of reading or listening they are requested to do between sessions in order to hear or read the whole Gospel during the course.
- Encourage participants to bring their Bibles to the session and ask the host to have additional Bibles available.
- View the video to refresh your understanding of the learning goals.
- Ensure the monitor and DVD player are working, and cued to the session.
- Walk through the whole session with the host to make sure the room arrangements and supplies are in order, especially for small group work.
- Think about the room as an environment for deep and personal learning. What can you do to make it comfortable? Would some pictures or posters bring the session alive? Lighting a candle may help people sense the illumination of learning scripture. Where in the room might you place a cross or a pitcher and bowl of water with a towel to recall the apostolic/servant vocation of baptism?
- Provide hymnals or secure copyright permission to copy hymns and prayers.

Welcoming and Opening Devotion (10 minutes):

- Seat people in conversation groups of 5-8 people, around tables, if possible. To make sure they all know each other by name, supply name tags or tent cards for their names.
- **Start on time** by welcoming all participants. Move directly into the session.
- Remind the group of where we are in the course. You may say something like: "Today we are going to learn what kind of Messiah Jesus proved to be. These stories are surprising. Jesus is welcoming of powerful people at the same time he is filled with compassion for the most vulnerable. We will glimpse Jesus'

authority and freedom as he enacts his role of Messiah, and we will sense how the light to the nations is fulfilled in mercy in our apostolic callings.”

- Offer a prayer of your own or use one of the prayers for the C Lectionary 9 time after Pentecost on Sunday on p. 38-39 of ELW or the following:

“Lord Jesus, we are not worthy for you to come under our roofs, but speak the word as you did for the Roman Centurion and heal us and touch the lives and sorrows of those without privilege who rely on your protection.

And may your kingdom come on earth as in heaven. AMEN.”

- Sing verses 1-2 of ELW 610: “O Christ the Healer, We Have Come!”

[View Video \(23:03 minutes\):](#)

[Discussion \(15-20 minutes\)](#)

[Exploring God’s Story \(10 minutes: deal with at least one question\):](#)

1. Consider these stories as a conclusion to Jesus’ “Sermon on the Plain” (Luke 6:17-49: “After Jesus had finished all his sayings in the hearing of the people” 7:1). How is the Messiah now enacting the kingdom of God he announced in the sermon?
2. Read the stories of Elisha’s healing of Naaman “commander of the army of the king of Aram” in 2 Kings 5, and Elijah’s raising of the widow’s son in 1 Kings 17 (see especially verse 23) and Elisha’s raising of the son of the Shunammite woman in 2 Kings 4. Notice the authority of God’s prophets in their healing touch of outsiders.
3. Read Acts 10:1-48. How does the story of Jesus crossing boundaries between clean and unclean anticipate the apostolic mission?

[Called as Disciples ← → Sent as Apostles \(10 minutes: save time for this part!\):](#)

1. In the video, Noreen Stevens identifies Jesus as Savior in his healings. How do these stories reveal the compassion of God's kingdom?
2. Annie Glasgow recognizes Jesus' confidence in dealing with "the high and mighty" as well as those in dire need, and Kelly Chatman sees that the Centurion was "worthy" to Jesus because of his faith. In God's reign, how can both the rich and the poor be found worthy?
3. Can you think of a time when someone broke the rules to rescue you?

Closing (5 minutes)

Checking in:

When you call for the full group's attention, ask quietly – don't fear silence:

"What one thing did you learn today about Jesus?"

Looking Ahead

Remind people of the following:

- when and where the next session will meet
- which portions of Luke they are encouraged to read or hear in advance
- how suggestions for improving the course can be registered
- invite prayers for the participants, congregation, community, and world

If time permits, sing ELW 612: "Healer of our Every Ill"

Go in peace, serve the Lord!

For Certificate and Synodically Authorized Ministry Students

People who are using the resources of this course for certificate coursework should do the reading recommended above in the **Leader's Guide** for congregational use and follow the questions proposed for those discussions as simplified introductions to the passage. In addition, these students should be expected to explore the topics more thoroughly that are introduced in the "Exploring God's Story" discussion questions (above).

The following assignments and questions are intended to take the study deeper:

1. In exploring the narrative whole of Luke's Gospel, take time to read this episode in its larger literary context. Following his inaugural declarations in Nazareth (Luke 4:14-30: Session #3), Jesus not only demonstrates his messianic authority with multiple healings (4:38-41; 5:12-26), but he also calls Peter (5:1-11), in a dramatic revelation reminiscent of Isaiah's call in the Temple (Isaiah 6), and chooses twelve apostles from among his disciples (see the significance of the "twelve" in Luke 22:30; Acts 7:8; 26:7). Jesus also delivers his magisterial "Sermon on the Plain" (6:20-49). Notice also how his response to the questions of John's disciples demonstrates that he is fulfilling the Messiah's mission announced in Nazareth (4:18-19; 7:22).
 - ∞ Why is the number "12" significant for understanding what it means to be an apostle?
 - ∞ Compare Luke's account of Jesus' "Sermon" with "the Sermon on the Mount" in Matthew 5-7. How are these addresses alike or different from each other?
 - ∞ Look up Deuteronomy 18:21-22. How does this passage interpret the importance that Jesus is doing what he announced he would do?
2. Look up the word "apostle" in a Bible Dictionary.
 - ∞ How does an "apostle's" calling compare with that of a "disciple"?
 - ∞ How does Jesus show the way for the church's apostolic mission?
3. Notice how Jesus responds favorably to the request of the Jewish elders.
 - ∞ Why was it a problem that he might go "under the roof" of the Centurion? See also Acts 10-11
4. Notice the strong parallels with the stories of Elijah and Elisha (1 Kings 17:17-24; 2 Kings 4:18-37) and with the stories of reviving the dead in Luke 8:40-42, 49-56 and Acts 9:36-43.
 - ∞ How is this story of the widow's son alike and different from those stories?
 - ∞ What importance did Jesus assign to the "outsiders" in his references to Elijah and Elisha in Luke 4:25-27?

For those using *Learning Luke: The Apostolic Gospel* in an online study, write a 300 word essay to be shared with your virtual classmates on the following topic:

How does Luke's way of telling these remarkable stories help readers to understand the ways they fit in God's historic mission and anticipate the mission of the church? How do these stories empower our congregations and communities to live beyond their own interests in the confidence of Jesus' ultimate reign?

For those using the materials from *Learning Luke: The Apostolic Gospel* in an TEEM, Online, or Cohort Seminary level course, these stories provide an opportunity to:

- ∞ ask the healing professionals in your congregation or community to tell you the stories of how people's faith contributed to their healing or gave them hope as they died; and
- ∞ investigate how God moves communities into missions beyond "taking care of our own kind" in a world of many cultures and religions.

This session could be a good occasion for book reviews of some of the important studies of Luke's literary art, with particular attention to how the evangelist's use of Hellenistic narrative contributed to the broader engagement of the early Christians in their cultures.

For example, see:

- Paul Borgman, [The Way according to Luke](#) (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006).
Richard W. Swanson, [Provoking the Gospel of Luke: A Storyteller's Commentary](#) (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2006).
Robert C. Tannehill, [The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A literary Interpretation, Vol. I: The Gospel According to Luke](#) (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986).

Learning Luke: Leader's Guide
Curriculum Plan: Session 5: Searching
Jesus Enacts Scripture: Luke 9:28-40

All sessions of this course are designed to help people learn to read, hear, and “dwell in” the Third Gospel as 1) a narrative that tells God’s story; 2) an interpretation of Israel’s scriptures in light of Jesus; 3) a testimony to the Gospel truth.

This session, along with sessions #2, #8, and #11, pays particular attention to how Luke depicts Jesus as “enacting scripture.” In his Transfiguration (Luke 9:28-36), Jesus was not simply doing and saying remarkable things. His words and actions are understood more deeply and faithfully within God’s drama of scriptural precedents. Israel’s scriptures, the books Christians call the Old Testament, are foundational for the whole New Testament, and Luke takes particular care to encourage followers of Jesus to “search the scriptures” in order to understand what God is doing (see also Acts 17:11).

Learning Goals of Session 5:

- ∞ wonder at the mystery of Jesus’ transfiguration on the mountain
- ∞ see the significance of Moses and Elijah for what Jesus is about to do
- ∞ understand the “departure” or “exodus” Jesus “accomplished”
- ∞ appreciate how even the disciples’ confusion pointed to God’s purposes
- ∞ grasp how God turns learners into agents of Jesus’ reign in the world

Leader Preparations for the Session:

- These sessions are designed so that the leader does not need to be an expert, but investigating some interpretive resources may be helpful and informative.
 - Look up & read the scriptural footnotes to the passage in a study Bible.
 - On Luke 8:1-9:50 (context), read: Michael F. Patella, The Gospel According to Luke, New Collegeville Commentary (2005), pp. 54-59.
 - On Luke 9:28-36 (our passage), read: David L. Tiede, Luke, Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament (1988), pp. 187-191.

- Several days before the session, communicate with the person who is working with you as the host for the group. Ask if everything is in order for the arrangements, such as the room, video equipment, directions, name tags, contact information, and refreshments. Inquire about insights the host has for improving the experience of participants and knowledge of crises in people's lives. Encourage the host to join you in praying for all the participants.
- Consult the reading/listening guide prior to the session to remind participants of the schedule of reading or listening they are requested to do between sessions in order to hear or read the whole Gospel during the course.
- Encourage participants to bring their Bibles to the session and ask the host to have additional Bibles available.
- View the video to refresh your understanding of the learning goals.
- Ensure the monitor and DVD player are working, and cued to the session.
- Walk through the whole session with the host to make sure the room arrangements and supplies are in order, especially for small group work.
- Think about the room as an environment for deep and personal learning. What can you do to make it comfortable? Would some pictures or posters bring the session alive? Lighting a candle may help people sense the illumination of learning scripture. Where in the room might you place a cross or a pitcher and bowl of water with a towel to recall the apostolic/servant vocation of baptism?
- Provide hymnals or secure copyright permission to copy hymns and prayers.
- Make copies of the handout for this session (see Appendix to Leader's Guide)
- Pencils and pens will be necessary for the handout.

Welcoming and Opening Devotion (10 minutes):

- Seat people in conversation groups of 5-8 people, around tables, if possible. To make sure they all know each other by name, supply name tags or tent cards for their names.
- **Start on time** by welcoming all participants. Move directly into the session.
- Remind the group of where we are in the course. You may say something like: "We are about to enter the travel narrative in Luke's Gospel. Soon Jesus will

set his face to go to Jerusalem. But today we will pause with Jesus, Moses, and Elijah on the mountain in the marvelous story of the transfiguration. This story reveals how deeply Jesus' mission was anchored in God's promises and it points forward to our callings in the world."

- Offer a prayer of your own or use one of the prayers for Transfiguration Sunday on p. 26 of ELW or the following:

"Lord Jesus, we are blessed to join Peter, James and John in the awesome vision of your transfiguration. Teach us to listen to you. We yearn to understand your life and work among us, and we hope for your Spirit to open our hearts and minds to your callings for us in the world you love. AMEN."
- Sing verses 1-2 of ELW 315: "How Good, Lord, to Be Here!"

[View Video \(20:19 minutes\):](#)

[Discussion \(15-20 minutes\)](#)

[Searching the Scriptures \(10 minutes: deal with at least one question\):](#)

1. Take a few minutes to read the handout for this session in which verses 30-35 from Luke 9 are printed in parallel columns with verses from Mark 9 and Matthew 17 (see Appendix A) How is the story enriched when we hear that Moses and Elijah were discussing with Jesus his "exodus which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem?"
2. For stories of God appearing on mountains to Moses and Elijah, read Exodus 24:15-18 and 1 Kings 19:8-13. What did Israel's lawgiver and prophet know about what it will take to accomplish God's mission?
3. In Isaiah 42:1, God identifies the servant upon whom God's Spirit has been placed as "My chosen in whom my soul delights." What will Jesus do because he is "My Son, my Chosen?"

[Called as Disciples ← → Sent as Apostles \(10 minutes: save time for this part!\):](#)

1. In the video, Matt Fischer makes delightful comments about Luke's report that the disciples didn't know what they were saying. When have you heard a young person or someone new to the faith make a comment or ask a question that opened the window of faith?
2. Kelly Chatman observes how important it is to be quiet to listen for God. How did the disciples learn to listen and when did they realize Jesus had called and sent them as apostles into the world? How about us?
3. What should we be praying about as we do this study?

Closing (10 minutes)

Checking in:

When you call for the full group's attention, ask quietly – don't fear silence:

“What one thing did you learn today about Jesus?”

Looking Ahead

Remind people of the following:

- when and where the next session will meet
- which portions of Luke they are encouraged to read or hear in advance
- how suggestions for improving the course can be registered
- invite prayers for the participants, congregation, community, and world

Sing (as time permits) vs 3-5 of ELW Hymn 315: “How Good, Lord, to be Here”

Go in peace, serve the Lord!

For Certificate and Synodically Authorized Ministry Students

People who are using the resources of this course for certificate coursework should do the reading recommended above in the **Leader's Guide** for congregational use. In addition, these students should be expected to explore the topics more thoroughly that are introduced in the "Searching the Scriptures" discussion questions (above).

Thus the following assignments and questions are intended to take the study deeper:

1. Appendix A is an abbreviated version of the way Matthew, Mark, and Luke's gospels are printed in a gospel synopsis. Many pastors have a "Gospel Parallels" volume in their libraries in Greek or in English (e.g. Gospel Parallels: A Synopsis of the First Three Gospels. Ed. Burton H. Throckmorton, Jr. New York: Nelson, 1936). Take time to mark the many agreements between the first three gospels in this story and highlight the words, phrases, and verses that are found only in Luke. Most scholars think that Luke had a copy of Mark on hand when composing the third gospel (see Luke 1:1-4: "Many have undertaken to write an orderly account" etc.).
 - ∞ What do you notice about the agreements with Mark's account?
 - ∞ How does Luke's longer version tell a distinctive story?
2. Look up all of the scriptural references cited in the footnotes of a study Bible such as The Harper Collins Study Bible. Read the stories of God's appearances to Moses and Elijah (Exodus 3 and 1 Kings 19) and read the brief articles on Moses and Elijah a Bible Dictionary such as The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible.
 - ∞ Which of the scriptural precedents do you think is particularly important for understanding Jesus' mission to "fulfill an exodus?"
 - ∞ Why did it mean that Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus in his transfiguration?
3. Look up the word "chosen" in a Bible Concordance and in a Bible Dictionary.
 - ∞ What is the significance of this title in identifying who Jesus is in God's purposes?
 - ∞ What does it mean for followers of Jesus to be "chosen"?

For those using ***Learning Luke: The Apostolic Gospel*** in an online study, write a 300 word essay to be shared with your virtual classmates on the following topic:

Identify the particular scriptural content with which Luke fills this story, and comment on how Luke depicts Jesus as fulfilling God's scriptural will and plan. What difference does the thoroughly scriptural character of the story make to the ways it can best be interpreted and faithfully proclaimed in our times?

For those using the materials from ***Learning Luke: The Apostolic Gospel*** in an TEEM, Online, or Cohort Seminary level course, the story of the transfiguration provides an excellent opportunity to:

- ∞ engage students in “synoptic analysis,” not only in quest of sources, but also in the exploration of the “redaction” or editorial art of the evangelist.; and
- ∞ help students explore the scriptural depths of Luke’s narrative.

Classic redactional studies, such as Hans Conzelmann, The Theology of St. Luke (ET, 1961) are still worthy of book reviews, and time will be well-spent introducing the resources for “Scriptural” studies of Luke that listed at the front of this syllabus. As the narrative moves toward Luke’s “Central Section” or the “Travel Narrative,” two studies are particularly worthy of attention.

David P. Moessner, Lord of the Banquet: The Literary and Theological Significance of the Lukan Travel Narrative (Foreword by Richard B. Hays), (Trinity Press, 1989).

Craig A. Evans, “The Function of the Elijah/Elisha Narratives in Luke’s Ethic of Election.” Luke and the Scripture by Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders. (Fortress, 1993), pp. 70-83.

Appendix to Session 5:

Appendix A:

Luke 9:

³⁰ Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him.

³¹ They appeared in glory and were *speaking of his departure (Gk: exodos), which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.*

³² Now Peter and his companions were *weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake*, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him.

³³ Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah"-- not knowing what he said.

³⁴ While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud.

³⁵ Then from the cloud came a voice that said, *"This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!"*

Mark 9:

⁴ And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus.

⁵ Then Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." ⁶ He did not know what to say, for they were terrified.

⁷ Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!"

Matthew 17:

³ Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him.

⁴ Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

⁵ While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!"

Learning Luke: Leader's Guide
Curriculum Plan: Session 6: *Living the Gospel Truth*
Jesus the Determined Messiah: Luke 9:51-16, 13:31-35

All sessions of this course are designed to help people learn to read, hear, and “dwell in” the Third Gospel as 1) a narrative that tells God’s story; 2) an interpretation of Israel’s scriptures in light of Jesus; 3) a testimony to the Gospel truth.

This session, along with sessions #3, #9, and #12, direct us toward ***Living the Gospel Truth***. In these stories, Jesus refuses to be deterred from his mission although he encounters rejection and threats. Within Luke’s “travel narrative” or “Central section” (Luke 9:51-19:27), the evangelist depicts “the way of the determined Messiah” which soon also became “the Way” that those who followed Jesus moved forward in their apostolic callings. Jesus is revealing what those who serve God’s mission will face.

Learning Goals of Session 6:

- ∞ recognize that when Jesus “set his face,” he was on the Messiah’s mission
- ∞ notice how Jesus altered his path for those in need, but not for threats
- ∞ sense the genuine peril and struggle that surrounded Jesus
- ∞ learn that being Jesus’ disciple or apostle will mean struggle
- ∞ grasp how Jesus’ call gives direction and courage to young people

Leader Preparations for the Session:

- These sessions are designed so that the leader does not need to be an expert, but investigating some interpretive resources may be helpful and informative.
 - Look up & read the scriptural passages cited in a study Bible’s notes.
 - On Luke 9:51-13:35 (context), read: Michael F. Patella, The Gospel According to Luke, New Collegeville Commentary (2005), pp. 69-96.
 - On Luke 9:51-56; 13:31-35, read: David L. Tiede, Luke, Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament (1988), pp. 194-198; 252-260.

- Several days before the session, communicate with the person who is working with you as the host for the group. Ask if everything is in order for the arrangements, such as the room, video equipment, directions, name tags, contact information, and refreshments. Inquire about insights the host has for improving the experience of participants and knowledge of crises in people's lives. Encourage the host to join you in praying for all the participants.
- Consult the reading/listening guide prior to the session to remind participants of the schedule of reading or listening they are requested to do between sessions in order to hear or read the whole Gospel during the course.
- Encourage participants to bring their Bibles to the session and ask the host to have additional Bibles available.
- View the video to refresh your understanding of the learning goals.
- Ensure the monitor and DVD player are working, and cued to the session.
- Walk through the whole session with the host to make sure the room arrangements and supplies are in order, especially for small group work.
- Think about the room as an environment for deep and personal learning. What can you do to make it comfortable? Would some pictures or posters bring the session alive? Lighting a candle may help people sense the illumination of learning scripture. Where in the room might you place a cross or a pitcher and bowl of water with a towel to recall the apostolic/servant vocation of baptism?
- Provide hymnals or secure copyright permission to copy hymns and prayers.

Welcoming and Opening Devotion (10 minutes):

- Seat people in conversation groups of 5-8 people, around tables, if possible. To make sure they all know each other by name, supply name tags or tent cards for their names.
- **Start on time** by welcoming all participants. Move directly into the session.
- Remind the group of where we are in the course. You may say something like: "Today we will follow Jesus into encounters with people who tried to deter him from his mission. While he often turned aside to help people in need, Jesus was passionately engaged in completing God's pathway for him."

- Offer a prayer of your own, perhaps focused on young people's struggles, or use the following prayer for "The Mission of the Church": "Draw your church together, O God, into one great company of disciples, together following our teacher Jesus Christ into every walk of life, together serving in Christ's mission to the world, and together witnessing to your love wherever you will send us; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN." (ELW. P. 75)
- Sing one of the journey hymns such as "I want Jesus to Walk with Me" (ELW 325) or "Bless Now, O God, the Journey" (ELW 326).

View Video (22:47 minutes, including the concluding segment on young disciples)

Note: Each of the four sessions on "*Living the Gospel Truth*" will conclude with a glimpse of apostolic ministries of those who are sent into the world.

Discussion (15-20 minutes)

Living the Gospel Truth (10 minutes: deal with at least one question):

1. Which of Jesus' words or actions in response to the Samaritans, the Pharisees, or Herod best communicate his determination to you?
2. Why are these harsh encounters ultimately full of hope for Jesus' followers and for the world itself?
3. Where do you as a disciple of Jesus encounter rejection?

Called as Disciples ← → Sent as Apostles (10 minutes: save time for this part!):

1. In the video, Annie Glasgow sensed the profound loss that as a consequence of rejecting God, "your house will be left to you." How do Jesus' visits to homes and the temple itself show God's purpose of abiding with and protecting God's people (see also Luke 19:41-44)?
2. Picking up on Kelly Chapman's insight, when has your "righteous indignation" gotten in the way of God's mercy?
3. Matt Fischer notes that schools may be "rough places to live out your calling." How can young Christians be encouraged in their callings?

Closing (5 minutes)

Checking in:

When you call for the full group's attention, ask quietly – don't fear silence:

“What did you learn today about who God is calling you to be?”

Looking Ahead

Remind people of the following:

- when and where the next session will meet
- which portions of Luke they are encouraged to read or hear in advance
- how suggestions for improving the course can be registered
- invite prayers for the participants, congregation, community, and world

If time permits, sing another hymn.

Go in peace, serve the Lord!

For Certificate and Synodically Authorized Ministry Students

People who are using the resources of this course for certificate coursework should do the reading recommended above in the **Leader's Guide** for congregational use and follow the questions proposed for those discussions as simplified introductions to the passage. In addition, these students could explore the topics more thoroughly that are introduced in the "Exploring God's Story" discussion questions (above).

The following assignments and questions are intended to take the study deeper:

1. Read this episode in its larger literary context of Luke 9:51-13:35, then read Luke 19 where Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem fulfills the promise from Psalm 118:26 of the king who comes in the name of the Lord (Luke 13:35; 19:38).
 - ∞ Consult a commentary to discover what kind of psalm this is and to note that only Luke mentions that it is "the king" who is coming. Consider why it matters to identify Jesus as "king" in this context.
2. Look up Isaiah 50:7 and Ezekiel 21:2 and 20:46.
 - ∞ How do you understand Jesus' fulfillment of the commissions given earlier to Israel's prophets?
3. This session would be a good time to discuss the callings God has given to your family, congregation, community, region, or the nation.
 - ∞ How have you experienced God's sheltering presence in times of loss?

For those using *Learning Luke: The Apostolic Gospel* in an online study, write a brief reflection to be shared with your virtual classmates on the following topic:

In Luke 3:8, John the Baptizer warns his fellow Israelites to turn toward God's purposes and not claim privilege as Abraham's children. "For I tell you," he says, "God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham." As the church is being called to a new era of apostolic mission, what do faithfulness and bearing fruit look like? What will become of us if our "house" is left to us?

For those using the materials from *Learning Luke: The Apostolic Gospel* in an TEEM, Online, or Cohort Seminary level course, these stories provide an opportunity to:

Prepare a sermon on how God has visited us through Jesus.

Learning Luke: Leader's Guide
Curriculum Plan: Session 7: Exploring
Parables and Revelation: Luke 15

All sessions of this course are designed to help people learn to read, hear, and “dwell in” the Third Gospel as 1) a narrative that tells God’s story; 2) an interpretation of Israel’s scriptures in light of Jesus; 3) a testimony to the Gospel truth.

This session, along with sessions #1, #4, and #10, focuses on exploring the power and beauty of Luke’s narrative. In chapter 15, Luke depicts Jesus responding to the criticism of the religious leaders (Pharisees and scribes) who grumbled because Jesus “welcomes sinners and eats with them.” This criticism is the context for three powerful parables about the extravagant love of God. The story of the prodigal is especially famous, and all three parables reveal the fulfillment of God’s holy reign in joyful, extravagant love. These stories are an oasis of God’s mercy in a sea of criticism by religious people.

Learning Goals of Session 7:

- ∞ appreciate how this story reveals the “heart of God” in Jesus’ mission
- ∞ explore what it means that God’s mercy reaches out to the “unworthy”
- ∞ recognize how God’s obsession with the lost reveals God’s amazing grace
- ∞ see God’s reign at work in human care for those in greatest need
- ∞ anticipate how God sets people free to be a blessing to others

Leader Preparations for the Session:

- These sessions are designed so that the leader does not need to be an expert, but investigating some interpretive resources may be helpful and informative.
 - Look up & read the scriptural passages cited in a study Bible’s notes.
 - On Luke 14:1-15:32 (context), read: Michael F. Patella, The Gospel According to Luke, New Collegeville Commentary (2005) pp. 97-107.
 - On Luke 15 (our passage), read: David L. Tiede, Luke, Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament (1988), pp. 172-281.

- Several days before the session, communicate with the person who is working with you as the host for the group. Ask if everything is in order for the arrangements, such as the room, video equipment, directions, name tags, contact information, and refreshments. Inquire about insights the host has for improving the experience of participants and knowledge of crises in people's lives. Encourage the host to join you in praying for all the participants.
- Consult the reading/listening guide prior to the session to remind participants of the schedule of reading or listening they are requested to do between sessions in order to hear or read the whole Gospel during the course.
- Encourage participants to bring their Bibles to the session and ask the host to have additional Bibles available.
- View the video to refresh your understanding of the learning goals.
- Ensure the monitor and DVD player are working, and cued to the session.
- Walk through the whole session with the host to make sure the room arrangements and supplies are in order, especially for small group work.
- Think about the room as an environment for deep and personal learning. What can you do to make it comfortable? Would some pictures or posters bring the session alive? Lighting a candle may help people sense the illumination of learning scripture. Where in the room might you place a cross or a pitcher and bowl of water with a towel to recall the apostolic/servant vocation of baptism?
- Provide hymnals or secure copyright permission to copy hymns and prayers.

Welcoming and Opening Devotion (10 minutes):

- Seat people in conversation groups of 5-8 people, around tables, if possible. To make sure they all know each other by name, supply name tags or tent cards for their names.
- **Start on time** by welcoming all participants. Move directly into the session.
- Remind the group of where we are in the course. You may say something like: "Today Jesus will reveal the depth of God's love for the lost. The parables we will hear move far beyond standard morality into the amazing grace of God's reign, turning our hearts toward God and freeing us to care for our neighbors."

- Offer a prayer of your own or use one of the prayers for the C Lectionary 24 time after Pentecost on Sunday on p. 47 of ELW.

“O God, overflowing with mercy and compassion, you lead back to yourself all those who go astray. Preserve your people in your loving care, that we may reject whatever is contrary to you and may follow all things that sustain our life in your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
AMEN.”

Or the following:

“Heavenly Father, we are not worthy to be called your children, yet you have sought us out along with all the others who are astray, welcomed us home, and set the abundant table of your mercy for all. We come confident only of your love and your compassion for us. We go into the world as ambassadors of that mercy for all through Jesus Christ our Lord.
AMEN.”

Sing “Amazing Grace” (ELW 779) or Jesus Priceless Treasure (ELW 775)

View Video (22:50 minutes):

Discussion (15-20 minutes)

Exploring God’s Story (10 minutes: deal with at least one question):

1. Consider these parables as a conclusion to Jesus’ words and deeds in Luke 14 revealing the hospitality of God’s kingdom amid criticism. How do the “tender mercies” of these parables give heart and soul to Jesus’ determination to accomplish God’s mission?
2. Read the accounts of God’s loving care in Jeremiah 31:18-20 and Hosea 11:1-9. How is God’s mercy a fulfillment of divine justice?
3. Read Acts 10:1-48 and Romans 5:6-11. How does the story of Jesus’ radical love for the unworthy anticipate the apostolic mission?

Called as Disciples ← → Sent as Apostles (10 minutes: save time for this part!):

1. In the video, Pastor Kelly Chapman and David Tiede exchange comments about what it means to be “worthy,” according to the younger son, the father, and the elder son. How does God’s profound love for the lost change the rules about who is “worthy”?
2. David Tiede proposes that something more powerful than “morality” is at work in God’s reign. How does this touch the church’s calling??
3. Can you think of a time when you put your love for your children or someone in need ahead of your moral sensibilities?

Closing (10 minutes)

Checking in:

When you call for the full group’s attention, ask quietly – don’t fear silence:

“What one thing did you learn today about the depth of God’s love?”

Looking Ahead

Remind people of the following:

- when and where the next session will meet
- which portions of Luke they are encouraged to read or hear in advance
- how suggestions for improving the course can be registered
- invite prayers for the participants, congregation, community, and world

Go in peace, serve the Lord!

For Certificate and Synodically Authorized Ministry Students

People who are using the resources of this course for certificate coursework should do the reading recommended above in the **Leader's Guide** for congregational use and follow the questions proposed for those discussions as simplified introductions to the passage. In addition, these students should be expected to investigate the topics more thoroughly that are introduced in the "Exploring God's Story" discussion questions (above).

The following assignments and questions are intended to take the study deeper:

1. In exploring the narrative whole of Luke's Gospel, take time to read this episode in its larger literary context. Where do these parables fit in Luke's narrative or in all of Luke-Acts? One scholar has argued that no one would seek the death of a simple teacher of morality stories. Why were these parables powerful and controversial in Jesus' own times and in ours?
2. Look up the word "parable" in a Bible Dictionary.
 - ∞ How is a "parable" alike or different from an "allegory"?
 - ∞ How do Jesus' parables challenge the moralities of his time?
3. Compare the force of these parables with Jesus' confrontational words about Herod in Luke 13:31-35. How is Jesus' kingdom alike and different from what Herod was doing or what the Pharisees thought God required?

For those using *Learning Luke: The Apostolic Gospel* in an online study, write a 200 word reflection to be shared with your virtual classmates on the following topic:

How does Luke's telling these remarkable parables help readers to understand the ways they fit in God's historic engagement with Israel and anticipate the mission of the church? How do these stories empower our congregations and communities to live beyond their own interests in the confidence of Jesus' ultimate reign?

For those using the materials from *Learning Luke: The Apostolic Gospel* in an TEEM, Online, or Cohort Seminary level course, these stories provide an opportunity to:

- ∞ Interview members of your congregation who are regularly working with persons on the margin, such as the disabled or the addicted. What to they believe Jesus is calling the whole congregation to understand about God and God's reign?
- ∞ Investigate a neighboring congregation or institution that is called to reach beyond its understandings of who is "worthy" to care for those who have the greatest need, economically and/or personally. How has this sense of their calling changed their priorities?

This session could also be an opportunity for interpreters of the New Testament to compare what Jesus was advocating with other views of responsibility or righteousness. For example, read the "apocryphal" or "inter-testamental" book called "The Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sirach" or "Ecclesiasticus" or "Ben Sira" 12:4-6 and 33:19-23.

How does what Jesus is teaching challenge the wisdom of traditional Jewish inheritance law?

Learning Luke: Leader's Guide
Curriculum Plan: Session 8: Searching
Looking for Signs: Luke 18:1-17

All sessions of this course are designed to help people learn to read, hear, and “dwell in” the Third Gospel as 1) a narrative that tells God’s story; 2) an interpretation of Israel’s scriptures in light of Jesus; 3) a testimony to the Gospel truth.

This session, along with sessions #2, #5, and #11, pays particular attention to how Luke depicts Jesus as “enacting scripture.” These brief stories from Luke 18 display Jesus’ profound enactment of God’s priority for the widow, the sinner, and the children. The “signs” or “revelations of the kingdom” are surprising, even contrary to custom. Neither the judge nor the Pharisee exhibits the righteousness of God’s rule, although they both hold roles of public prominence. Jesus reveals God’s reign through the widow who has suffered injustice and the tax collector who knows he is a sinner. His own disciples are shown up by the trusting faith of children. Jesus’ parables disclose the depth of God’s compassion as the fulfillment of what Israel’s scriptures had said all along.

Learning Goals of Session 8:

- ∞ appreciate Jesus’ ironic use of an unjust judge to reveal God’s compassion
- ∞ avoid confusing self-righteousness with God’s justification
- ∞ recall the witness of Israel’s scriptures to God’s priority for the poor
- ∞ grasp how God’s reign or kingdom reveals God’s heart and will
- ∞ become grateful that our vocations, even as apostles, belong to God

Leader Preparations for the Session:

- These sessions are designed so that the leader does not need to be an expert, but investigating some interpretive resources may be helpful and informative.
 - Look up & read the scriptural footnotes to the passage in a study Bible.
 - On Luke 16:1-18:17, read: Michael F. Patella, The Gospel According to Luke, New Collegeville Commentary (2005), pp. 108-119.

- On Luke 18:1-17 (our passage), read: David L. Tiede, Luke, Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament (1988), pp. 304-310.
- Several days before the session, communicate with the person who is working with you as the host for the group. Ask if everything is in order for the arrangements, such as the room, video equipment, directions, name tags, contact information, and refreshments. Inquire about insights the host has for improving the experience of participants and knowledge of crises in people's lives. Encourage the host to join you in praying for all the participants.
- Consult the reading/listening guide prior to the session to remind participants of the schedule of reading or listening they are requested to do between sessions in order to hear or read the whole Gospel during the course.
- Encourage participants to bring their Bibles to the session and ask the host to have additional Bibles available.
- View the video to refresh your understanding of the learning goals.
- Ensure the monitor and DVD player are working, and cued to the session.
- Walk through the whole session with the host to make sure the room arrangements and supplies are in order, especially for small group work.
- Think about the room as an environment for deep and personal learning. What can you do to make it comfortable? Would some pictures or posters bring the session alive? Lighting a candle may help people sense the illumination of learning scripture. Where in the room might you place a cross or a pitcher and bowl of water with a towel to recall the apostolic/servant vocation of baptism?
- Provide hymnals or secure copyright permission to copy hymns and prayers.

Welcoming and Opening Devotion (10 minutes):

- Seat people in conversation groups of 5-8 people, around tables, if possible. To make sure they all know each other by name, supply name tags or tent cards for their names.
- **Start on time** by welcoming all participants. Move directly into the session.
- Remind the group of where we are in the course. You may say something like: "Today we will hear some of Jesus' wonderful and surprising parables where

he turns the world on its head. God's reign favors the poor, those who know their need of God, and the children whose trust shames even his disciples. The signs of God's ultimate rule are given in humble human examples."

- Offer a prayer of your own, use one of the prayers for one of the Sundays in cycle C for the Time after Pentecost (Lectionary 29 and 30: ELW: pp. 50-51), or the following:

"Lord Jesus, your parables reveal God's astonishing love for those who need it most, and we yearn to know you and live in your reign. Give us grace to trust you in our prayers, to let go of our self-righteousness, and to live in your mercy as your children. AMEN."

- Sing "There's a Wideness in God's Mercy," ELW 588

View Video (20:19 minutes):

Discussion (15-20 minutes)

Searching the Scriptures (10 minutes: deal with at least one question):

1. Ask members of each group to read an Old Testament passage about God's care for widows (e.g. Exodus 22:22-24; Deuteronomy 10:17-18; 24:17; Psalm 68:5; Malachi 3:5). How does Jesus' criticism of the "unjust judge" fit with Israel's faith in God's mercy and justice?
2. Read Psalms 34 and 51. How does the tax collector's prayer express faithful repentance?
3. In Mark 10:13-16, Jesus' rebuke of the disciples is even more sharp and "he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them." In Luke 18:15-17, Jesus is emphatic about how the children show the right way to receive the kingdom of God and to be received. What is the difference between achieving and receiving the kingdom?

Called as Disciples ← → Sent as Apostles (10 minutes: save time for this part!):

1. In the video, Kelly Chapman observes that the kingdom of God is God's righteousness and reign in action. Later he notes that being an Apostle is not a status we possess, but a vocation or calling God gives. How do these parables invite us into God's active justice and mercy?
2. Annie Glasgow and Matt Fischer sense the trust, wonder, and awe with which children receive God. How do these parables set us free to welcome others into the gift and joy of God's reign?
3. When do you sense the presence of God's reign in your church?

Closing (10 minutes)

Checking in:

When you call for the full group's attention, ask quietly – don't fear silence:

“What one thing did you learn today about God's kingdom?”

Looking Ahead

Remind people of the following:

- when and where the next session will meet
- which portions of Luke they are encouraged to read or hear in advance
- how suggestions for improving the course can be registered
- invite prayers for the participants, congregation, community, and world

Go in peace, serve the Lord!

For Certificate and Synodically Authorized Ministry Students

People who are using the resources of this course for certificate coursework should do the reading recommended above in the **Leader's Guide** for congregational use. In addition, these students should be expected to explore the topics more thoroughly that are introduced in the "Searching the Scriptures" discussion questions (above).

Thus the following assignments and questions are intended to take the study deeper:

1. This session would be an excellent time for some additional reading about Jesus' parables. A Bible dictionary (e.g. The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible or Harper's Bible Dictionary) is a good place to begin. To begin to grasp the prophetic force of several of Jesus' parables, read Mark 4:10-12. How do the parables of the unjust judge and the Pharisee and the tax collector surprise you? How can you preach on these stories without making them into morality stories?
2. Look up all of the scriptural references cited above in the section on "Searching the Scriptures." about God's care for widows and read what a good commentary on Luke says about the status of widows in Jesus' time. Read an article about "widows" or "widows and orphans" in Israel in a Bible dictionary. Which people are in similar need in our society and who advocates for them?

For those using *Learning Luke: The Apostolic Gospel* in an online study, write a reflection on the power of Jesus' parables in interpreting God's reign.

This would be a good opportunity to compare and contrast the work of such modern interpreters as Marcus Borg, Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time (San Francisco: Harper, 1994) and N.T. Wright Who Was Jesus? (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992).

Learning Luke: Leader's Guide
Curriculum Plan: Session 9: *Living the Gospel Truth*
Sinners and Saints: Luke 18:18-27; 19:1-9

All sessions of this course are designed to help people learn to read, hear, and “dwell in” the Third Gospel as 1) a narrative that tells God’s story; 2) an interpretation of Israel’s scriptures in light of Jesus; 3) a testimony to the Gospel truth.

This session, along with sessions #3, #6, and #12, direct us toward ***Living the Gospel Truth***. In these encounters with a ruler and a tax collector, Jesus again surprises his disciples and us by his warnings against the dangers of wealth with its securities and his direct assurance of salvation for those who receive him with joy. As Jesus approaches Jerusalem in the larger narrative, he enacts God’s reign with the Messiah’s authority.

Learning Goals of Session 9:

- ∞ recognize how wealth and achievements can be obstacles to trusting God
- ∞ welcome the joy of receiving the promise, not by our status but as gift
- ∞ explore the wisdom of letting go of our control and letting God work in us
- ∞ grasp how “eternal life” and “salvation” are given when Jesus arrives
- ∞ see how the gift of eternal life releases us to be a blessing in the world

Leader Preparations for the Session:

- These sessions are designed so that the leader does not need to be an expert, but investigating some interpretive resources may be helpful and informative.
 - Look up & read the scriptural passages cited in a study Bible’s notes.
 - On Luke 18:18-19:28 (context), read: Michael F. Patella, The Gospel According to Luke, New Collegeville Commentary (2005), 119-128.
 - On Luke 18:18-27; 19:1-9, read: David L. Tiede, Luke, Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament (1988), pp. 310-313; 319-322.

- Several days before the session, communicate with the person who is working with you as the host for the group. Ask if everything is in order for the arrangements, such as the room, video equipment, directions, name tags, contact information, and refreshments. Inquire about insights the host has for improving the experience of participants and knowledge of crises in people's lives. Encourage the host to join you in praying for all the participants.
- Consult the reading/listening guide prior to the session to remind participants of the schedule of reading or listening they are requested to do between sessions in order to hear or read the whole Gospel during the course.
- Encourage participants to bring their Bibles to the session and ask the host to have additional Bibles available.
- View the video to refresh your understanding of the learning goals.
- Ensure the monitor and DVD player are working, and cued to the session.
- Walk through the whole session with the host to make sure the room arrangements and supplies are in order, especially for small group work.
- Think about the room as an environment for deep and personal learning. What can you do to make it comfortable? Would some pictures or posters bring the session alive? Lighting a candle may help people sense the illumination of learning scripture. Where in the room might you place a cross or a pitcher and bowl of water with a towel to recall the apostolic/servant vocation of baptism?
- Provide hymnals or secure copyright permission to copy hymns and prayers.

Welcoming and Opening Devotion (10 minutes):

- Seat people in conversation groups of 5-8 people, around tables, if possible. To make sure they all know each other by name, supply name tags or tent cards for their names.
- **Start on time** by welcoming all participants. Move directly into the session.
- Remind the group of where we are in the course. You may say something like: "Today we will watch and listen as Jesus encounters two wealthy people, a highly regarded ruler and a hated tax collector. Jesus will surprise us again, bringing God's kingdom to those who can't save themselves."

- Offer a prayer of your own, perhaps focused on the proper use of wealth or for thanksgiving for the elders of the community. In ELW, see pp. 81 and 83:
 “God of abundance, you have poured out a large measure of earthly blessings: our table is richly furnished, our cup overflows, and we live in safety and security. Teach us to set our hearts on you and not these material blessings. Keep us from becoming captivated by prosperity, and grant us in wisdom to use your blessings to your glory and to the service of humankind; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.”
 Or
 “Blessed are you, O Lord our God, maker of heaven and earth. From everlasting you are God, our dwelling place in all generations. You are the source of holy wisdom, and the fountain of all truth. We give thanks to you for the elders among us. We are graced by their wisdom and seasoning. We are touched by their knowledge and faith. Bless them, O God, as they are a blessing to us. Pour out your Spirit, that our elders may continue to dream dreams and testify to the Light of their salvation, Jesus Christ. May we find inspiration in their years of faithfulness. May we follow their example by serving you with steadfastness and singleness of heart; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. AMEN.”
- Sing a joyful witness hymn such as “Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ” (ELW 671) or “Shine, Jesus, Shine” (ELW 674).

View Video (30:16 minutes, including the special segment with Annie Glasgow)

Note: Each of the four sessions on “*Living the Gospel Truth*” will conclude with a glimpse of apostolic ministries of those who are sent into the world.

Discussion (10-15 minutes)

Living the Gospel Truth (10 minutes: deal with at least one question):

1. Do Jesus’ words about wealth sound like threats or promises to you?
2. If our abundance comes from God, why is it spiritually dangerous?

3. Zacchaeus was wealthy like Abraham and Sarah. They were “blessed to be a blessing (Genesis 12:2). Who do you know who has experienced the joy of using wealth to bless others and the world?

Called as Disciples ← → Sent as Apostles (10 minutes: save time for this part!):

1. In the video, Annie Glasgow saw Zacchaeus’ joy and freedom as a signal of the freedom to be rather than a requirement to achieve or do (“human being” in contrast to “human doing”). To tell the truth, are you more like Zacchaeus or the ruler?
2. Matt Fischer saw that Jesus has “a tender spot for the wealthy,” and Sister Noreen Stevens observed our human tendency to exclude those we regard as unworthy (“Oh, not them!”). When is it easier for you to accept people whom other ridicule?
3. Ms. Annie Glasgow suggested that she would like to speak to both Zacchaeus and the ruler. What would you want to say to each of them?

Closing (5 minutes)

Checking in:

When you call for the full group’s attention, speak softly – don’t fear silence:

“Blessed are those who know they need God. They will bless the world.”

Looking Ahead

Remind people of the following:

- when and where the next session will meet
- which portions of Luke they are encouraged to read or hear in advance
- how suggestions for improving the course can be registered
- invite prayers for the participants, congregation, community, and world

If time permits, sing another hymn.

Go in peace, serve the Lord!

For Certificate and Synodically Authorized Ministry Students

People who are using the resources of this course for certificate coursework should do the reading recommended above in the **Leader's Guide** for congregational use and follow the questions proposed for those discussions as simplified introductions to the passage. In addition, these students could explore the topics more thoroughly that are introduced in the "Exploring God's Story" discussion questions (above).

The following assignments and questions are intended to take the study deeper:

1. Read these stories in the larger context of Luke 16:1-19:27, paying particular attention to how Jesus' teaching is provoking ever more intense reaction from the authorities.
 - ∞ This would be a good occasion to review some of the vast literature on Jesus and the Roman world. For a classic collection of essays, see Jesus and the Politics of His Day, edited by Ernst Bammel and C.F.D. Moule (New York: Cambridge, 1984). For a more technical approach to social description, see The Social Setting of Jesus and the Gospels, edited by Wolfgang Stegemann, Burce J. Malina, and Gerd Theissen (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002).
2. Read Genesis 12:1-18:15.
 - ∞ How do you understand Jesus' word to Zacchaeus that he is "a son of Abraham"?
3. This session would be a good time to discuss the Christian freedom in the stewardship of wealth.
 - ∞ Where have you experienced God's abundance in your health, wealth, or education? What empowerment have you received to be a blessing to others and to the world?

For those using *Learning Luke: The Apostolic Gospel* in an online study, write a brief reflection to be shared with your virtual classmates on the following topic:

"In our community and/or congregation, both scarcity and abundance are pastorally important. This is what I do to help people see the abundance God has given to them and all of us. This is how I show respect for those who have little."

For those using the materials from *Learning Luke: The Apostolic Gospel* in an TEEM, Online, or Cohort Seminary level course, these stories provide an opportunity to:

Prepare a meditation on why it is funny when we take ourselves too seriously.

Learning Luke: Leader's Guide
Curriculum Plan: Session 10: Exploring
An Unholy Alliance: Luke 20:20-26; 22:1-13

All sessions of this course are designed to help people learn to read, hear, and “dwell in” the Third Gospel as 1) a narrative that tells God’s story; 2) an interpretation of Israel’s scriptures in light of Jesus; 3) a testimony to the Gospel truth.

This session, along with sessions #1, #4, and #7, focuses on exploring the power struggle and anguish of Luke’s narrative. In Luke 19:28-21:38, Jesus moves directly into harm’s way. His triumphal arrival in Jerusalem (19:28-47) concludes with his entry into the temple in the midst of growing rejection. Simeon’s warning that Jesus would be “a sign that will be opposed” becomes increasingly real and ominous. Yet Jesus is not deterred. After three failed attempts by the officials to entrap Jesus, the unholy alliance of the officials, Judas, and Satan himself devises a scheme to arrest him with the people absent.

Learning Goals of Session 10:

- ∞ track how Luke’s narrative builds toward the anguish of Jesus’ death
- ∞ identify the political and spiritual forces working to stop Jesus
- ∞ recognize how Jesus acts in obedience to God’s will and purpose
- ∞ face the depth of the powers of darkness
- ∞ anticipate how God’s mission remains focused on accomplishing mercy

Leader Preparations for the Session:

- These sessions are designed so that the leader does not need to be an expert, but investigating some interpretive resources may be helpful and informative.
 - Look up & read the scriptural passages cited in a study Bible’s notes.
 - On Luke 19:28-22:6 (context), read: Michael F. Patella, The Gospel According to Luke, New Collegeville Commentary (2005) 125-140.
 - On Luke 20:20-26; 22:1-13, read: David L. Tiede, Luke, Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament (1988), pp. 343-346; 372-377.

- Several days before the session, communicate with the person who is working with you as the host for the group. Ask if everything is in order for the arrangements, such as the room, video equipment, directions, name tags, contact information, and refreshments. Inquire about insights the host has for improving the experience of participants and knowledge of crises in people's lives. Encourage the host to join you in praying for all the participants.
- Consult the reading/listening guide prior to the session to remind participants of the schedule of reading or listening they are requested to do between sessions in order to hear or read the whole Gospel during the course.
- Encourage participants to bring their Bibles to the session and ask the host to have additional Bibles available.
- View the video to refresh your understanding of the learning goals.
- Ensure the monitor and DVD player are working, and cued to the session.
- Walk through the whole session with the host to make sure the room arrangements and supplies are in order, especially for small group work.
- Think about the room as an environment for deep and personal learning. What can you do to make it comfortable? Would some pictures or posters bring the session alive? Lighting a candle may help people sense the illumination of learning scripture. Where in the room might you place a cross or a pitcher and bowl of water with a towel to recall the apostolic/servant vocation of baptism?
- Provide hymnals or secure copyright permission to copy hymns and prayers.

Welcoming and Opening Devotion (10 minutes):

- Seat people in conversation groups of 5-8 people, around tables, if possible. To make sure they all know each other by name, supply name tags or tent cards for their names.
- **Start on time** by welcoming all participants. Move directly into the session.
- Remind the group of where we are in the course. You may say something like: "Today we will read two small episodes in the story of Jesus' encounters with those who are intent to kill him. You will sense how important it is that you have read or heard the larger story, and you will feel the impending storm."

- Offer a prayer of your own, or use one of the classic Psalms where those who oppose God's anointed (Messiah) find themselves opposing God (Ps. 2:1-6; 89:38-52, or the following:

“O Lord our Lord, your name is to be praised in the heavens and on earth. We thank you for your Messiah Jesus and his obedience to your mission of mercy for us and for the world. We watch with fear as he enters into the perils of those who intend to kill him, trusting with him, through him that your love will prevail, even when your anger is deserved. Let us learn to become apostles of your gracious reign of love. In Jesus name, AMEN.”

- ∞ Sing “Jesus, Still Lead On” (ELW 624) or “Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer” (ELW 618)

View Video (31:57 minutes):

Discussion (15-20 minutes)

Exploring God's Story (10 minutes: deal with at least one question):

1. Read Luke's account of all three of Jesus' encounters with the officials who were seeking to entrap him (Luke 20:1-8; 20-26; 27-40). How do we learn something important even through Jesus' indirect answers?
2. Read the story of Jesus' temptation in Luke 4:1-13. How is the devil's departure “until an opportune time” fulfilled in Luke 22:6?
3. Read Luke's three accounts of Jesus' predictions of his suffering and death (9:22; 9:44-45; 18:31-34). What do you think it means that Jesus is so much in charge of the action in Luke's narrative?

Called as Disciples ← → Sent as Apostles (10 minutes: save time for this part!):

1. In the video, Kelly Chapman describes the “craftiness” and “power confrontation” of Jesus' adversaries. What is their single-minded purpose and what is Jesus' single-minded purpose?

2. Annie Glasgow sees the anger of Jesus' opponents as the frustration of those who are truly powerless. When have you experienced the frustration of anger and how does it differ from the strength to love?
3. When you come to the Lord's table, what lesson is Jesus teaching you about the hospitality of God's kingdom?

Closing (10 minutes)

Checking in:

When you call for the full group's attention, ask quietly – don't fear silence:

“How strong will God's love need to be to deal with the powers of evil?”

Looking Ahead

Remind people of the following:

- when and where the next session will meet
- which portions of Luke they are encouraged to read or hear in advance
- how suggestions for improving the course can be registered
- invite prayers for the participants, congregation, community, and world

Go in peace, serve the Lord!

For Certificate and Synodically Authorized Ministry Students

People who are using the resources of this course for certificate coursework should do the reading recommended above in the **Leader's Guide** for congregational use and follow the questions proposed for those discussions as simplified introductions to the passage. In addition, these students should be expected to investigate the topics more thoroughly that are introduced in the "Exploring God's Story" discussion questions (above).

The following assignments and questions are intended to take the study deeper:

1. In exploring the narrative whole of Luke's Gospel, take time to read these episodes in their larger narrative context.
 - ∞ How do the three passion predictions in Luke (9:22; 9:44-45; 18:31-34) prepare the reader for these confrontations and how does Mark's version of the story magnify the cosmic character of the encounters (see Mark 8:27-33; 9:30-32; 10:32-34)?
 - ∞ Break into three smaller groups to explore each of Jesus' three conflicts with the authorities (Luke 20:1-8; 20-26; 27-40). Let each group try to imagine why their question fit the particular adversaries. Why did Jesus' answer stop them in their tracks?
2. Which details in the narrative give you insight about what God or Jesus will do next?
3. Why is it incorrect to see Jesus as either a tragic victim or a hero in this story?

For those using *Learning Luke: The Apostolic Gospel* in an online study, write a 200 word reflection to be shared with your virtual classmates on the following topic:

Varied groups of Christians occasionally advocate the non-payment of taxes as a protest against the injustice, immorality, or idolatry of the state. Under what circumstances would you think such political action would be faithful, and does Jesus' response to the question of taxation contribute to your judgment?

For those using the materials from *Learning Luke: The Apostolic Gospel* in a TEEM, Online, or Cohort Seminary level course, these stories provide an opportunity to read more deeply in the prophetic scriptures of Israel. For example, a study of the theological and political vision of Isaiah 40-55 will illumine your understanding of what it meant to say that Jesus is Lord and Savior, and not Caesar.

For further reflection, read Walter Wink's very popular book on "The Invisible Forces That Determine Human Existence" entitled Unmasking the Powers (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1986).

Learning Luke: Leader's Guide
Curriculum Plan: Session 11: Searching
The King of the Jews: Luke 23:26-49

All sessions of this course are designed to help people learn to read, hear, and “dwell in” the Third Gospel as 1) a narrative that tells God’s story; 2) an interpretation of Israel’s scriptures in light of Jesus; 3) a testimony to the Gospel truth.

This session, along with sessions #2, #5, and #8, pays particular attention to how Luke depicts Jesus as “enacting scripture.” This passage (23:26-49) is an excerpt from Luke’s magnificent Passion narrative (23:1-56) moving from Jesus’ trial before Pilate, through his crucifixion, to his death and burial. The story is filled with drama and alive to the agony and ecstasy of Christian living. The depth of the story of Jesus’ death, however, is best understood as a fulfillment of Israel’s scriptures. In the midst of this brutal Roman crucifixion where injustice appears to have triumphed, Jesus’ executioners sarcastically bear witness to his regal authority. He truly is God’s Chosen, Messiah of God, the King of the Jews, and the Righteous One. God’s reign and mission are being accomplished.

Learning Goals of Session 11:

- ∞ appreciate Jesus’ obedience in God’s mission in human history
- ∞ recognize how the scriptures testify to all of the titles for Jesus
- ∞ hear the Roman Centurion’s verdict is an unlikely apostolic testimony
- ∞ see God’s purpose being accomplished even by those who oppose Jesus
- ∞ learn to watch and ponder what God is doing even in our troubled lives

Leader Preparations for the Session:

- These sessions are designed so that the leader does not need to be an expert, but investigating some interpretive resources may be helpful and informative.
 - Look up & read the scriptural footnotes to the passage in a study Bible.
 - On Luke 22-23, read: Michael F. Patella, The Gospel According to Luke, New Collegeville Commentary (2005), pp. 140-152.

- On Luke 23:26-49 (our passage), read: David L. Tiede, Luke, Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament (1988), pp. 411-426.
- Several days before the session, communicate with the person who is working with you as the host for the group. Ask if everything is in order for the arrangements, such as the room, video equipment, directions, name tags, contact information, and refreshments. Inquire about insights the host has for improving the experience of participants and knowledge of crises in people's lives. Encourage the host to join you in praying for all the participants.
- Consult the reading/listening guide prior to the session to remind participants of the schedule of reading or listening they are requested to do between sessions in order to hear or read the whole Gospel during the course.
- Encourage participants to bring their Bibles to the session and ask the host to have additional Bibles available.
- View the video to refresh your understanding of the learning goals.
- Ensure the monitor and DVD player are working, and cued to the session.
- Walk through the whole session with the host to make sure the room arrangements and supplies are in order, especially for small group work.
- Think about the room as an environment for deep and personal learning. What can you do to make it comfortable? Would some pictures or posters bring the session alive? Lighting a candle may help people sense the illumination of learning scripture. Where in the room might you place a cross or a pitcher and bowl of water with a towel to recall the apostolic/servant vocation of baptism?
- Provide hymnals or secure copyright permission to copy hymns and prayers.

Welcoming and Opening Devotion (10 minutes):

- Seat people in conversation groups of 5-8 people, around tables, if possible. To make sure they all know each other by name, supply name tags or tent cards for their names.
- **Start on time** by welcoming all participants. Move directly into the session.
- Remind the group of where we are in the course. You may say something like: "Today we will enter into Luke's story of Jesus' trial and crucifixion. Our

reading is part of what is called the ‘Passion Narrative’ because it is about Jesus’ suffering and death. It is also a story filled with grim sarcasm and tragic human pathos. We join the grieving women and the silent crowds watching and listening to Jesus’ executioners condemn him for being who he truly is.”

- Offer a prayer of your own, use one of the prayers for Good Friday (ELW, p. 31), or the following:

“Lord Jesus, we stand with your disciples at the foot of your cross, watching, grieving, hoping. We hear your executioners denounce you, but their charges ring true in our hearts. In the agony of your obedient death, we join your prayer to our Heavenly Father that your kingdom will come and your will be done on earth as in heaven. AMEN.”

- Sing “Jesus Shall Reign” (ELW 434)

View Video (25:21 minutes):

Discussion (15-20 minutes)

Searching the Scriptures (10 minutes: deal with at least one question):

1. On the unjust death of “the righteous one,” read Wisdom of Solomon 2:13, 17-24; 4:18-19; 5:3, 6. How are Jesus’ opponents enacting the scriptures and testing God?
2. On Jesus’ ominous words about “the coming days” (Luke 23:28) read the prophetic precedents in Jeremiah 7:32-34; 16:14-15; and with new hope in Jeremiah 38:31-34. How can “the coming days” be times of both threat and promise?
3. Read Philippians 2:5-11. Where does the story of Jesus’ death fit within the divine drama of God’s reign?

Called as Disciples ← → Sent as Apostles (10 minutes: save time for this part!):

1. In the video, Noreen Stevens observes the power of the silence of the faithful who are observing Jesus’ death and recalls Mary “pondering these things in her heart.” When is it important to be silent and listening before speaking?

2. Matt Fischer comments on how he sees God “moving the story” along. In “God’s big story,” how is this gruesome death the ultimate revelation of God’s reign?
3. Think about the Centurion. When has an unlikely person been an apostolic witness of God’s reign to you?

Closing (10 minutes)

Checking in:

When you call for the full group’s attention, invite them to be quiet:

“Good Friday services often conclude with the people leaving worship in silence.

Let me encourage you to re-read all of Luke 23 in the quiet of your home”

Looking Ahead

Remind people of the following:

- when and where the next session will meet
- which portions of Luke they are encouraged to read or hear in advance
- how suggestions for improving the course can be registered
- invite prayers for the participants, congregation, community, and world

Go in peace, serve the Lord!

For Certificate and Synodically Authorized Ministry Students

People who are using the resources of this course for certificate coursework should do the reading recommended above in the **Leader's Guide** for congregational use. In addition, these students should be expected to explore the topics more thoroughly that are introduced in the "Searching the Scriptures" discussion questions (above).

1. Thus the following assignments and questions are intended to take the study deeper: Look up all of the scriptural references in the footnotes of your study Bible. Note how thoroughly the whole narrative is filled with scriptural terms and allusions.
2. Pay particular attention to the passages from the Wisdom of Solomon cited above (2:13, 17-24; 4:18-19; 5:3, 6). Consulting a good commentary, consider how Luke adopts this scriptural understanding of the death of the righteous.
3. This session would be an excellent time for additional use of a Bible dictionary and concordance to explore the meanings of Jesus' titles: Son of God, Chosen One, Righteous One, King of the Jews. How will the scriptural force of these titles shape the Gospel message you will preach?

For those using *Learning Luke: The Apostolic Gospel* in an online study, write a reflection on Jesus' crucifixion as the fulfillment of God's purposes.

This would also be a good opportunity to investigate the studies of Jesus crucifixion and death by Gerard S. Sloyan, *Jesus on Trial* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006) and Warren Carter, *Pontius Pilate: Roman Governor* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003).

Learning Luke: Leader's Guide
Curriculum Plan: Session 12: *Living the Gospel Truth*
Crucified and Raised: Luke 24: 36-53

All sessions of this course are designed to help people learn to read, hear, and “dwell in” the Third Gospel as 1) a narrative that tells God’s story; 2) an interpretation of Israel’s scriptures in light of Jesus; 3) a testimony to the Gospel truth.

This session, along with sessions #3, #6, and #9, direct us toward ***Living the Gospel Truth***. The conclusion of Luke’s Gospel (24: 36-53) is filled with the wonder, “disbelief for joy,” and hope of Jesus’ resurrection. Jesus grounds the story in the scriptures and announces the apostolic mission “to all nations.” The Spirit will commission the apostles in Pentecost (Acts 2) when they are “clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:49).

Learning Goals of Session 12:

- ∞ understand Jesus’ resurrection as the vindication of God’s will and reign
- ∞ begin to grasp how Jesus’ fulfills God’s scriptural promises
- ∞ be thankful for God’s great “yes!” in raising Jesus from the dead
- ∞ explore the relationship of blessing God established with us for the world
- ∞ learn how Jesus’ resurrection and the Holy Spirit empower our callings

Leader Preparations for the Session:

- These sessions are designed so that the leader does not need to be an expert, but investigating some interpretive resources may be helpful and informative.
 - Look up & read the scriptural passages cited in a study Bible’s notes.
 - On Luke 24, read: Michael F. Patella, The Gospel According to Luke, New Collegeville Commentary (2005), 153-158.
 - On Luke 24:36-53 read: David L. Tiede, Luke, Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament (1988), pp. 438-444.

- Several days before the session, communicate with the person who is working with you as the host for the group. Ask if everything is in order for the arrangements, such as the room, video equipment, directions, name tags, contact information, and refreshments. Inquire about insights the host has for improving the experience of participants and knowledge of crises in people's lives. Encourage the host to join you in praying for all the participants.
- Consult the reading/listening guide prior to the session to remind participants of the schedule of reading or listening they are requested to do between sessions in order to hear or read the whole Gospel during the course.
- Encourage participants to bring their Bibles to the session and ask the host to have additional Bibles available.
- View the video to refresh your understanding of the learning goals.
- Ensure the monitor and DVD player are working, and cued to the session.
- Walk through the whole session with the host to make sure the room arrangements and supplies are in order, especially for small group work.
- Think about the room as an environment for deep and personal learning. What can you do to make it comfortable? Would some pictures or posters bring the session alive? Lighting a candle may help people sense the illumination of learning scripture. Where in the room might you place a cross or a pitcher and bowl of water with a towel to recall the apostolic/servant vocation of baptism?
- Provide hymnals or secure copyright permission to copy hymns and prayers.

Welcoming and Opening Devotion (10 minutes):

- Seat people in conversation groups of 5-8 people, around tables, if possible. To make sure they all know each other by name, supply name tags or tent cards for their names.
- **Start on time** by welcoming all participants. Move directly into the session.
- Remind the group of where we are in the course. You may say something like: "Today we will conclude our series with Luke's story of Jesus' resurrection. It all comes together again in the wonder of a magnificent narrative, a scriptural foundation, and the renewal of our apostolic callings. "

- Offer a prayer of your own, perhaps focused on the callings God is giving your community to witness and serve. Or use one of the great Easter or Pentecost prayers (see ELW pp. 32-36). This might be the time for the traditional thanksgiving for Luke the Evangelist (ELW, p. 58).
 “Almighty God, you inspired your servant Luke to reveal in his gospel the love and healing power of your Son. Give your church the same love and power to heal, and to proclaim your salvation among the nations to the glory of your name, through Jesus Christ, your Son, our healer, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. AMEN.”
- Sing a joyful witness hymn such as “Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ” (ELW 671) or “Shine, Jesus, Shine” (ELW 674).

View Video (31:18 minutes, including the special segment with Pr. Kelly Chatman)

Note: Each of the four sessions on “*Living the Gospel Truth*” will conclude with a glimpse of apostolic ministries of those who are sent into the world.

Discussion (15-20 minutes)

Living the Gospel Truth (10 minutes: deal with at least one question):

1. When have you been “startled and terrified” by something wonderful.
 like the disciples in the story?
2. How has your mind been opened to understand the scriptures in these sessions?
3. Why does Jesus’ resurrection point us back into the world?

Called as Disciples ← → Sent as Apostles (10 minutes: save time for this part!):

1. In the video, Kelly Chatman explored “blessing” as a “generative relationship with God, filled with the love of Jesus. ... It doesn’t start with us. It doesn’t end with us. It does come through us.” How would you say this in your words?
2. How do you envision God’s mission in the 21st century world where the urban populations are the vast majorities in almost all nations?
3. When Jesus said he was “sending upon you what my Father promised,” what do you think he meant?

Closing (5 minutes)

Checking in:

When you call for the full group's attention, speak softly – don't fear silence:

“When our Lord said, ‘You are witnesses of these things!’ he included us.”

Go in peace, serve the Lord!

For Certificate and Synodically Authorized Ministry Students

People who are using the resources of this course for certificate coursework should do the reading recommended above in the **Leader's Guide** for congregational use and follow the questions proposed for those discussions as simplified introductions to the passage. In addition, these students could explore the topics more thoroughly that are introduced in the "Exploring God's Story" discussion questions (above).

The following assignments and questions are intended to take the study deeper:

1. Read the whole of Luke 24, outlining the contents and flow of the chapter.
 - ∞ How many times does Jesus point to the scriptures? In which moments is his identity is hidden and when is it revealed?
 - ∞ Identify all the places where Jesus either commissions his disciples to witness or points to the apostolic commission they will soon receive?
2. Compare the meal in Emmaus (24:28-35) with the last supper in 22:14-23.
 - ∞ How is Jesus' table fellowship different after his death and resurrection?
 - ∞ How does the Emmaus meal remind you of the Lord's Supper?
3. Read Acts 1-2 in close connection with Luke 24. How does The Acts of the Apostles both complete the Gospel of Luke and move beyond it?

For those using *Learning Luke: The Apostolic Gospel* in an online study, write a brief reflection to be shared with your virtual classmates on the following topic:

"If salvation is more than being rescued from earth for heaven, how will Jesus' apostles now welcome the nations of the world into the realm of God's blessing?"

For those using the materials from *Learning Luke: The Apostolic Gospel* in an TEEM, Online, or Cohort Seminary level course, Luke's account of the resurrection would be a good occasion to investigate the two contrasting interpretations of John Dominic Crossan and N.T. Wright in *The Resurrection of Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006).