

Teaching the Bible with
Children, Youth and Families

**UNIT 2:
Service and
Learning**

-Session 5-

Mission: More Than a Trip!

Select Learning

FACILITATOR GUIDE

Mission: More than a Trip

Gathering Table

Prepare the meeting space with a collection of symbols for taking a trip:

- A world map, a Peter's World Map would be perfect
- A passport or boarding passes
- A journal
- A small suitcase or backpack
- A Bible

1. Welcome, Introduction, and Opening Prayer

2. Introduce the Video -- guest Peggy Hahn, Assistant to the Bishop, Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Prepare participants by inviting them to share the answers to one of the following questions:

What has been your favorite trip that you have ever taken – and why?

Pay special attention to the answers that name experiences such as meeting new people, entering new space, cultures or activities and taking a break from daily routines.

Introduce the video saying something like: *Trips offer us an escape from our daily lives and a chance to experience new things – maybe even doing meaningful things if we are talking about a mission trip. Our video starts with this same value – the excitement of a trip - and will equip us to think about trips as part of a framework for faith formation and developing cross-cultural relationships that bring the Bible to life for us in new ways, even if the trip is right down the street.*

If you could go on a trip anywhere, where would it be and why?

Notice people's desire for rest, adventure, connecting with people, new experiences.

Introduce the video saying something like: *Trips around the world or across the street create space in our lives for reflection, a chance to learn new things and meet new people. The video today will give us some things to think about when it comes to intentional trips that practice our faith and bring the Bible to life for us in new ways, even if that trip is right across the street.*

Before viewing the video, let the participants know that they will be introduced to three concepts that start with a trip and move into faith-deepening life experiences that offers a new lens for familiar Bible stories. The video focuses on cultural immersion trips, trips across the street and power trips!

3. Watch the Video

4. Discussion

These questions are designed to guide a group conversation following the video. Each series of questions intentionally moves deeper into the concepts so that the group leader can manage the questions depending on the group.

- a. What do you think of the concept of liminal space presented in the video? The idea of stepping out of the busy-ness of our daily lives to be free of our normal responsibilities and to open ourselves to what God is doing? Why do you think entering into another culture would open up our view of God? Have any of you had a liminal experience that you would like to share?
 - Digging into scripture – How is a trip into another culture similar to Philip’s encounter with the Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8?

 - b. How do you react to the idea of listening before rushing in to help people in need? Have you had a similar experience where people who have tried to help you actually made things harder? Would you say your congregation is more like Mary – listening carefully, or like Martha – busy doing without fully understanding the needs of the neighborhood around you? What would it take to be more like Mary.
 - Digging into scripture – read Luke 10:38-42 to hear Jesus’ response to Martha’s “doing” posture.

 - c. What do you think about the view of Jesus confronting injustice directly in the Gospels? Can you think of stories where Jesus challenges authorities or speaks on behalf of those without power? Why do you think Jesus questioned those in power about the weak, ignored and oppressed – even the treatment of children? What does that mean for you as a follower of Jesus or for your congregation as a community of believers?
 - Digging into scripture- read Exodus 1:15-22 and discuss the impact of the decision of the Midwives to take a risk that ultimately resulted in God’s plan of liberation for a whole culture of people.

 - d. How does our Baptismal covenant relate to faith practices that move us from a trip of caring for our neighbors to working for justice and peace? Below is a portion of the baptismal covenant from the Evangelical Lutheran Worship book (bold added).
- If you are from another Christian denomination or faith tradition, are there words in your rites of passage or milestones that move you to work for peace and justice?

*As you bring your children to receive the gift of baptism, **you are entrusted with responsibilities:***

*To live with them among god’s faithful people,
Bring them to the word of God and the holy supper,*

*Teach them the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the ten commandments,
Place in their hands the holy scriptures,
And nurture them in faith and prayer,
So that your children may learn to trust God,
Proclaim Christ through word and deed,
Care for others and the world God made,
And work for justice and peace.*

Evangelical Lutheran Worship, p. 228

5. Making it My Own—Take it Home

God stirs up our hearts in many ways. We may sense this through feelings of excitement, passion or frustration. The following questions are designed to encourage the participants to explore his or her own response to the previous conversations and experience:

- a. **What?** What bothers you most or excites you about the conversation in the video today? Where do you sense God in those feelings?
- b. **So what?** In what ways have your thoughts about trips out of the country or across the street been expanded? What do you want to continue discussing or learn more about?
- c. **Now what?** What does this mean for you in reading scripture or practicing your faith in your congregation or household?

6. Closing

7. Extended or Additional Sessions:

Based on the response to this video, congregations and households are encouraged to use the following resources for extended learning:

- a. *Preparation for a Cross-cultural Immersion Trip*
- b. *A Framework for Developing Cross-cultural Immersion Experiences*
- c. *A Step by Step Listening Process for Your Neighborhood*

Accompanying this Session

- The Participant Guide
- The above handouts
- Bibliography and Resource List

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

Mission: More than a Trip

1. Welcome, Introduction, and Opening Prayer

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3. Watch the video

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a. What do you think of the concept of liminal space presented in the video? The idea of stepping out of the busy-ness of our daily lives to be free of our normal responsibilities and to open ourselves to what God is doing? Why do you think entering into another culture would open up our view of God? Have any of you had a liminal experience that you would like to share?

- Digging into scripture – How is a trip into another culture similar to Philip’s encounter with the Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8?

b. How do you react to the idea of listening before rushing in to help people in need? Have you had a similar experience where people who have tried to help you actually made things harder? Would you say your congregation is more like Mary – listening carefully, or like Martha – busy doing without fully understanding the needs of the neighborhood around you? What would it take to be more like Mary?

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d. How does our Baptismal covenant relate to faith practices that move us from a trip of caring for our neighbors to working for justice and peace? Below is part of the baptismal

covenant from the Evangelical Lutheran Worship book (bold added). If you are from another Christian denomination or faith tradition, are there words in your rites of passage or milestones that move you to work for peace and justice?

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Accompanying this Session

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- Bibliography and Resources

BIBLIOGRAPHY and RESOURCES

Theological Foundation

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PRESENTER'S PROFILE

Peggy Contos Hahn lives in Houston and serves as Assistant to the Bishop of the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod. Peggy is dedicated to mobilizing people to reduce poverty, especially for children and youth. Peggy walks along side Lutherans in Peru, El Salvador and The Central African Republic. Peggy serves on the 2012 ELCA Youth Gathering Management Team as a Coach to Team Leaders. She is also committed to leadership development of young people through Camp Hope Day Camp Ministries and The Disciple Project. peggy@gulfcoastsynod.org

Mission: More than a Trip **Preparing for Cross Cultural Immersion**

1. Deciding whether to participate in a cross-cultural immersion trip.

Review and dialog with congregation leaders and potential travelers the reasons for entering into a cross-cultural immersion. Why do we go? Why spend the time and money to go far from home when there are places in need locally?

- We need to step out of our busyness, be free of our normal responsibilities, to open ourselves to new awareness of God.
- We go to grow our view of God through new relationships and different cultures.
- We go to realign our lives when we return because of new relationships and awareness of God at work in the world.

(You may choose to play the opening of *Session 5: Mission: More than a Trip* from the DVD *Service and Learning* as a conversation starter.)

2. Preparation

a. Pick a text or a biblical story that you will journey with as you prepare for this trip, dwell with as you travel and reflect on as you reflect on your experiences after you return home.

b. Form a travel team and a home team that will participate in the preparation, journey, and reflection with you and the celebration once you return home.

c. Use the handout *A Framework for Developing Cross-cultural Immersion Experiences* with your travel team, travelers, and home team as you prepare for your trip.

d. Make sure you have an organization or trusted leaders in the place you are traveling to be your 'translator,' introducing you to the community and helping you understand the cultural context.

e. Make sure that the logistics for travel, food, and lodging are well planned.

f. Plan for intentional follow up after the travelers return.

- Plan ahead for a reunion date.
- Be intentional with the group and the congregation about reflection, evaluation, and celebration.
- The SALLT model is helpful to use for this entire planning process, including the reflection and celebration. (Refer to *Session 4: Learn to Serve. Serve to Learn* of the *Service and Learning* DVD.)
- Also view Unit 2, Session 1. on Accompaniment plus the Bonus Session: *Conversation with Gene Roehlkepartain*.

3. Reflection, Evaluation, and Celebration: Make sure you do all three!