

# Imitate My Heart:

## Intergenerational Rally Day Program Overview

NOTE:

- The complete rally day format and instructions begin on page 14
- All supplemental materials listed for the Rally Day Activities are found at [www.elca.org/christianeducation/programplanners/2006CEProgramPlanner/](http://www.elca.org/christianeducation/programplanners/2006CEProgramPlanner/)

*Imitate My Heart* calls us to be imitators of God, as God's beloved children. Adults, youth, and children will use interactive events to explore what it means to imitate God, celebrate the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ, and learn ways to practice discipleship in daily life. The module focuses on generations learning from one another.

Key verses: Ephesians 4:25—5:2

### **Opening activity**

Participants will learn about imitation by playing the mirror game. They will form larger groups to play Follow the Leader to transition into the large gathering.

### **Large Gathering**

A skit, *Choose the True Christian* uses the model of a game show to help illustrate what it means to be a disciple and imitate Christ.

Scripture reading: Ephesians 4:25—5:2

Song

### **Rotations**

Three rotations will focus on the cost of discipleship, celebrating salvation, and imitating God.

At each rotation, participants will receive a parchment fragment with part of the Scripture reading on it. At the end of the session, the fragments will be assembled like a puzzle and decorated as illuminated manuscripts.

### **BONHOEFFER: THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP EPHESIANS 4:25—28**

Participants will learn about Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Just as Bonhoeffer spoke the truth in difficult times, Ephesians calls us to speak the truth.

Participants will decorate a wooden coin to remind them of the cost of discipleship.

They will also receive the appropriate manuscript fragment, which will be read together.

### **GIFT OF SALVATION—CHRIST DIED FOR US EPHESIANS 5:2**

Participants will learn that discipleship does not earn salvation, but salvation is a gift from God. Living as disciples is our way to say thanks.

Participants will open gift bags, imagining that they have received the best gift ever. They'll learn about God's gift of salvation. The appropriate manuscript fragment will be handed out and read together.

## IMITATING GOD EPHESIANS 4:29—5:1

Adults and children will use a small deck of discussion-starters to share with one another ways that they practice discipleship.

The discipleship discussion will lead into a group project: a heart quilt.

Participants will draw words or pictures on fabric hearts, illustrating ways in which they will imitate God, or be disciples. The hearts will be assembled onto a quilt or banner.

### *Imitate My Heart* Generational Groups

Adults and children will separate for this activity. Adults will discuss mentoring—their privilege and responsibility to be examples for the young people in the faith. Their activity will be to make a bookmark with the Bible verse:

*Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.* 1 Cor.11:1

Children will talk about the roles they play in congregational life. Singing in church, going to Sunday school, welcoming others, serving as acolytes, and caring about other members are ways they can show discipleship. Their activity will be to make a bookmark with the Bible verse:

*Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.* Mark 10:15

### Closing

The two groups will come together for the final prayer. Adults and children exchange bookmarks, so that each has the message from the other. The closing prayer will be an imitation prayer, with the group echoing the leader.

## Suggestions for Leaders

1. Invite everyone in your congregation, not just parents of school-age children, to attend your rally day event. Cross-generational interaction can be a fun and mutually enriching experience for participants of all ages including youth, young adults, and older adults.
2. Ask someone in the congregation who quilts to help with the heart quilt craft project. It can be done very simply, by ironing the hearts in a pattern onto a colored sheet or onto squares, which can be sewn into a quilt. Here's a great opportunity to involve others who do not usually help with education.
3. Take advantage of the mix of generations. Do older members remember other popular comedians from the Marx Brothers era? Who in the congregation has memories of World War II, or is about the age that Dietrich Bonhoeffer was when he died? Ask the children what other game shows they watch on television.

# Imitate My Heart:

## Intergenerational Rally Day Module

### Opening activity

**...Be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.**

**Ephesians 5:1-2**

#### Advance Preparations:

Look into getting a copy of *Duck Soup*. (Check your local library or video rental store. *Duck Soup* was recently released as part of a Marx Brothers DVD collection.) Don't forget to arrange for TV/DVD or other projection equipment!\*

\*Public performance of a movie or movie clips, including at a church, requires a license. Many movie studios are represented by licensors such as Christian Video Licensing International, which offers annual licenses for churches. [www.cvli.org](http://www.cvli.org) 1-888-771-CVLA (2854)

As participants arrive, divide them into pairs. Try to pair an adult with a child, or a younger child with an older child. Divide families to encourage interaction with different people.

If possible, begin by showing the mirror scene from the Marx Brothers movie *Duck Soup*. The mirror scene shows two brothers, dressed alike in nightgowns, imitating one another, as one pretends that a broken mirror still exists.

After the viewing the clip, invite pairs to do mirror scenes with one another. The youngest person starts by motioning a favorite activity such as swinging a baseball bat, playing a saxophone, reading a book. The older person mirrors their actions. Then reverse the roles. See whether they can learn about one another's life without using words, but just by imitating.

Gather the pairs into groups of 10 to play Follow the Leader. The leaders can lead the participants out of the room to another space for the group gathering, or back into the same space. Encourage leaders to choose simple actions that can be imitated by both the oldest and youngest participants.

### Gathering

#### Advance Preparations:

Download the *Choose the True Christian* skit. (See link reference on page 12)

Recruit three adults and three young people to do the skit. Five chairs and a cross necklace are the only props needed. Use microphones if performing for a large group. Rehearse the skit several times so that actors are comfortable with their lines.

Provide songbooks for the song you choose.

Prayer: O God, we come together today with great joy. We gather as young and old, parent and child, student and teacher, to learn from one another. Open our hearts to live as your disciples, by imitating you. Amen

Skit: *Choose the True Christian*

Scripture reading: Ephesians 4:25—5:2

Song: choose a song of your choice such as "Be Ye Kind, One to Another" or "Love One Another"

## Rotations

### Advance Preparations:

Each rotation leader will hand out the “fragment” of the Scripture reading that corresponds with their lesson. To make the fragments, download a copy of Scripture Manuscript Fragments from the Web site listed on page 12. Make copies onto parchment-like paper. Cut the three sections apart. Give the sections to the appropriate rotation leaders. Have additional parchment paper ready for participants to glue the pieces onto to form the entire lesson, and decorate as an illuminated manuscript. They will need to add an “S” to the beginning of the lesson!

## ROTATION 1: BONHOEFFER

### Materials Needed:

Newsprint or dry erase board and markers  
Small wooden disks (purchased at craft store)  
Fine tip permanent markers, black and colors  
Copies of manuscript fragment: Ephesians 4:25-28  
(Optional) Locate a copy of Bonhoeffer’s poem, “Who Am I?” (see Web link on page 12)

### Background for leaders:

The focus of this rotation is Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German Lutheran pastor who spoke out against the Nazi party before and during World War II. This year (2006) marks the 100th anniversary of his birth.

His death day, April 9, is commemorated in *Lutheran Book of Worship. The Manual on the Liturgy* (Messerli & Pfatteicher, Augsburg, ©1979) offers this description.

“Bonhoeffer was born in 1906 in Breslau, the son of a psychiatrist at Berling University, where the son began his university studies in 1924. He was a pastor briefly in Barcelona (1928-29) and then studied at Union Theological Seminary in New York. In 1930 he returned to Berlin and taught until his work was forbidden by the National Socialists. He directed a seminary in Pomerania and had great influence on the students there. He was arrested in 1943 for anti-war activities and imprisoned. On Sunday, April 8, 1945, in Flossenbug prison, after conducting a service, he was taken away to be hanged. As he was taken away, he said to Payne Best, an English prisoner, “This is the end, but for me the beginning of life.”(pp. 46-47)

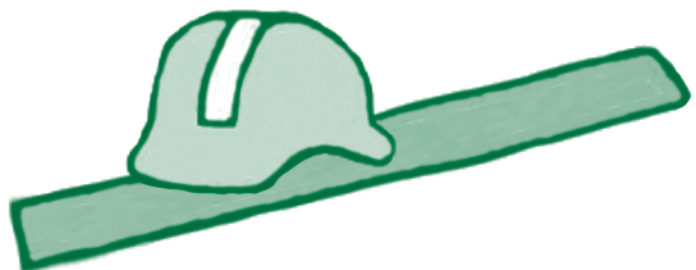
(See more about Bonhoeffer’s teaching on page 10.)

### Rotation details:

Begin the rotation by asking the group for some words that describe who they are: student, mother, teacher, child, soccer player, writer, pastor, dancer, engineer, doctor, uncle, etc.

Record the responses on the dry erase board.

Now say that you will be telling a story about a man who lived about 60 years ago. Think about who he was as you hear the story.





## Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a young Lutheran pastor when the National Socialist (Nazi) party came to power in Germany in 1933. The Nazis had some evil ideas about how to treat different people. They were especially mean to Jewish people.

Most people were afraid to say anything against the Nazis, even if they thought the ideas were wrong. But Bonhoeffer spoke out. As a Christian disciple, he knew he should speak out against evil. He became part of the Confessing Church, which protested the evil things that the Nazis said and did.

Though Bonhoeffer was a man of peace, he became involved in a group that wanted to overthrow Hitler. The group could see that Hitler was a danger not only to the Jewish people, but to all of Europe.

Bonhoeffer left Germany in 1939, and went to New York where he could find safety. He was not safe in Germany since it was dangerous to speak out against Hitler and the Nazi party. After two weeks, Bonhoeffer returned to Germany. He said "I will have no right to participate in the reconstruction of Christian life in Germany after the war if I do not share the trials of this time with my people."

He continued to work with the people who were resisting the evil ways of Hitler. Most of the world was now at war. Bonhoeffer was arrested by the Nazis in 1943, and put in prison in Berlin. He wrote letters, poems, and papers to his family and friends. He continued to follow Christ and encourage others to live as Christian disciples.

On July 20, 1944, some German people tried to kill Hitler, hoping it would stop the evil and bring an end to the war in Europe. But Hitler was not killed. Instead, many people who opposed Hitler were arrested and killed. Bonhoeffer, already in prison, was one of those who were put to death. He said to one of the prisoners as he was taken away "This is the end, but for me the beginning of life."

Bonhoeffer knew Christ had died for his sins, and that he would be saved. All through his short life, he lived as a disciple, even when discipleship cost him his life.

Now ask for some words that describe who Bonhoeffer was and write them on the newsprint or dry erase board. He was: German Lutheran pastor, writer, man of peace, theologian, anti-war activist, poet, prisoner, seminary teacher, and martyr.

(Some of these can be found in the brief story of him, others may be known by adults in the group.)

Explain that, despite all the things he was, one of the most important things that he was can be found in the last two lines of a poem he wrote while in prison.

Who am I? They mock me, these lonely questions of mine.

Whoever I am, thou knowest, O God, I am thine. (*Letters & Papers from Prison*, p. 348)

Sometimes it is not as important to know who we are as whose we are. We are God's.

For the activity, distribute wooden disks to each participant. With pens or fine-line markers write "Who am I?" on one side of the coin, and "I am Yours" on the other. Decorate the coin. Encourage participants to carry this coin in their pocket, purse, or pencil case to remind them that they are to imitate God in their daily life, no matter what the cost. Another translation of the poem reads

Who am I? They mock me these lonely questions of mine.

Whoever I am, you know me, O God. You know I am yours.

(Optional) Locate a copy of Bonhoeffer's poem, "Who Am I?" (see Web link on page 12)

Distribute the Scripture manuscript fragment and read it together. How do these verses remind us of Bonhoeffer?

## ROTATION 2: GIFT OF SALVATION

### Materials Needed:

5-10 Gift bags with tissue paper, as though a gift were inside  
Copies of manuscript fragment: Ephesians 5:2

### Rotation details:

Gather into circles of 8-10 people. Give a gift bag to several people in each circle. Explain that each person is to think about the gift they would most like to receive for their birthday. (Because it's an imagination game, it could be something that wouldn't fit in the bag.) Take turns letting each person pretend to pull their present out of the bag, and react to finding out it is just what they wanted. Encourage them to be enthusiastic recipients.

Part of the fun of the exercise will be for adults to hear the latest toy fads of children and young people, and children can hear what adults are interested in. If desired, adults can imagine a toy that they really, really wanted when they were young. (Oh, the dream of a Suzy Homemaker oven...) Let each person "open" their gift, then pass the bags along for the next person to use.

Ask, "How do we respond when we receive a really special gift?" (Besides being excited, hopefully we thank the giver). Is it still a gift for you, even if you don't say thank you? (Yes)

Now ask what gifts God gives to us. (Answers may vary: health, food, parents, love, sending God's Son, eternal life.) Distribute the manuscript fragment. Which gift does this verse refer to? (Christ dying for our sins) Do we react to God's gift with the same enthusiasm we show for material gifts? (Not very often.) Read another verse from the book of Ephesians: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of **God**—not the result of works, so that no one may boast." Ephesians 2:8-9

Younger children may not be able to relate to the idea of eternal salvation, but may better be able to understand God's love. God's gift is that God is always with us, always loves us, and always cares about us.

How do we thank God for such a gift? (We can thank God in prayer, but more importantly, how we live as disciples becomes our expression of thanks. The gift is given to us, we don't earn it by our behavior, but our behavior becomes a thank-you note to God.)

## ROTATION 3: IMITATING GOD

### Materials needed:

Fabric, light colored solids or simple prints  
Iron-on bonding for fabric  
Sheet or quilt squares  
Iron, ironing board  
Permanent markers or fabric markers  
Sets of cards for every 5-6 people per rotation. Pattern available on Web site.  
Copies of manuscript fragment: Ephesians 4:29—5:1  
Fine line markers, gel pens, or colored pencils  
Heart design. Pattern available on Web site.

### Advance Preparations:

Iron bonding according to package directions onto back of fabrics.

Download heart design from Web page. Using this template or your own design, draw hearts on bonding and cut out fabric hearts.

Copy Imitating God cards onto card stock and cut apart. A template for the cards is found on the Web site. You will also find a straight text file of the cards so you can tailor-make your own version of the cards. You may want to print them on to business card paper and punch apart.

### **Rotation details:**

Divide the group at this rotation into groups of five or six. Give each group a stack of cards. The group should sit in a circle and take turns choosing a card and answering the question. Adults or older children should read the questions for younger children.

When all have had a chance to answer a question or two, distribute their manuscript fragments. Read the manuscript together. Discuss how these verses fit with some of the things they talked about in the card game.

Let each participant choose a fabric heart. Using permanent markers or fabric markers, write or draw on the heart ways they imitate God in daily life. (Be kind, speak the truth, show love, help others, work for peace, etc.) The hearts can be arranged in groups of four to form a flower pattern. Iron them in place onto a sheet or other backing. Use it as a banner or a tablecloth at coffee hour.

For further quilt-making tips visit [www.elca.org/christianeducation/programplanners/2003ceprogramplanner/mod1/makingclothquilt.pdf](http://www.elca.org/christianeducation/programplanners/2003ceprogramplanner/mod1/makingclothquilt.pdf)

## **Generational Groups**

### **Materials needed:**

- Gather two sets of the following materials, for each of the small groups:
  - ◆ Glue
  - ◆ Fine line markers, gel pens, or colored pencils
  - ◆ Sheets of white or parchment-like paper
  - ◆ Books or printouts showing pages from illuminated manuscripts
  - ◆ Cardstock
  - ◆ Hole punch
  - ◆ Scissors
  - ◆ Ribbon
- Copies of bookmark pattern for each appropriate group (see Advance Preparations, below)

### **Advance Preparations:**

Download bookmark templates from Web page.

Print copies of adult bookmark onto cardstock and cut apart.

Print copies of child bookmark onto cardstock and cut apart.

### **Adult Group Details:**

Invite participants to glue their manuscript fragments onto a paper backing. They can use markers, gel pens, or colored pencils to illuminate their page. Show examples of illuminated manuscripts for ideas.

As they work on their manuscript, thank the adults for coming today. Children learn by imitation. The baby learns to talk by imitating his mother's words. A child picks up a hammer and imitates her grandfather's pounding motion. Each generation learns from the previous generation.

In the life of the church, our faith is passed on from one generation to the next. Long before they fully understand their words or actions, the child has learned to imitate the practice of worship, and the practice of our faith. The adults here mentor not only their own children, but also every child in the congregation.

Distribute bookmark pattern for adults to color. The verse, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ."

1 Corinthians 11:1, reminds them that they are mentors for the next generation. Punch a hole near the top and add ribbon.

## Children's Small Group Details:

Invite participants to glue their manuscript fragments onto a paper backing. They can use markers, gel pens, or colored pencils to illuminate their page. Show examples of illuminated manuscripts for ideas. As they color, remind the children that they play an important role in the life of the church. How are they leaders? (*They attend Sunday school, sing in worship, acolyte, usher, read lessons, play instruments, help with coffee hour, etc.*) Everyone can be a disciple and imitate God.

Distribute bookmarks for students to color. The verse, "Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child [does] will never enter it," Mark 10:15 will remind them of how important Jesus considers children in the life of the church. For younger participants, tell them that they will be giving the bookmark away as a gift.

## Closing

Invite the adults to read together the verse on their bookmark to the children. Then invite the children to recite together the verse on their bookmark. Have each child exchange their bookmark with one from an adult. (Have extra adult or children's bookmarks ready, as necessary, so that everyone can make the exchange.)

Join hands in a circle, and have participants echo the leader in this prayer.

Leader: O Lord, Heavenly Father (echo)

Thank you for the gift of salvation, (echo)

Thank you for the example of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. (echo)

Help us to speak the truth, (echo)

Help us to control our anger. (echo)

Let our words bring joy and comfort, (echo)

Let our actions show kindness and love. (echo)

In all that we do, (echo)

Let us imitate you (echo)

As your beloved children. Amen (echo)



### Bonus Material:

For a reproducible coloring page of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, visit [www.elca.org/christioneducation/programplanners/2006CEprogramplanner](http://www.elca.org/christioneducation/programplanners/2006CEprogramplanner)