

SESSION 2: EVERYDAY EVANGELISTS

Getting Started

- ❖ Suppose you were asked to live at least one day with the words “I AM AN EVANGELIST” printed boldly on a sign you were to wear. How would you feel about that? What do you think would happen?
- ❖ **Will our children have faith?** How would you answer? What hope do you see for the faith of our children? What problems? What can we do to insure that not only our children, but all children have faith?
- ❖ Write a letter to someone you know who needs encouragement. How is the Good News a part of that encouragement? Share your letters if you wish.

Into the Word

1. “My Witnesses”

- ❖ Read Isaiah 43:10-14a.
 - ❖ *Clearly, even from the Old Testament, God’s people were called to be witnesses. How do you think the people who first heard these words responded?*
- ❖ Read Luke 24:44-49. Jesus sent the disciples as his witnesses. *To what were they to witness?*
 - ❖ *Imagine you are a first century disciple hearing these words. What would you understand as your task? How would you expect to carry out the command to be a witness?*
 - ❖ *What does this “sending” mean for us? For you? For your congregation?*
- ❖ From the start, the assembly of the witnesses of Jesus were lay people. Jesus intentionally called his disciples from the common folk of the day. Read Romans 10:8. The first followers of Jesus shared their faith urgently and daily with those around them in their everyday lives.
 - ❖ *What did the urgent sharing of faith by the first believers have to do with the rapid spread of the faith?*
 - ❖ *It was easier for the early disciples to share their faith. Agree? Disagree? Why?*
 - ❖ *How can we find that sense of urgency in our daily witnessing? How can we encourage each other in our everyday witness?*

2. Living Faith, Jesus-Style

- ❖ As Jesus went about preaching the kingdom of God, he constantly reached out to “the lost.” Jesus tells Zacchaeus: “For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10). How is that mission reflected in the following events? Luke 19:1-10; Matthew 9:1-10; Matthew 9:9-13; John 4:39-42; Luke 23:39-43; Acts 9:1-9.
 - ❖ *In each case, how is the person lost? How did Jesus “find” or “save” that person?*

ELCA Mission Snapshot

During the last decade, the ELCA walked in mission and formation in the birth of seven new Lutheran churches worldwide: Kenya, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Peru. In addition to this good news, the Division for Global Mission reports that many Lutheran churches across the globe are experiencing phenomenal growth in participation.

	1990	2000	% increase
Central African Republic (ELCCAR)	24,062	55,000	129%
Ethiopia (EECMY)	870,388	2,593,163	198%
Nigeria (LCCN)	350,671	720,000	105%
Malaysia/Singapore (LCMS, LCS)	5,163	9,764	89%
Zimbabwe (ELCZ)	54,000	100,000	85%
Jordan (ELCJ/Palestine)	1,650	3,000	82%
Tanzania (ELCT)	1,500,000	2,500,000	67%
Colombia	2,000	3,000	50%

- ❖ *If we are to be imitators of Jesus (“little Christs” Luther calls us), what does Jesus’ way of reaching out mean for us in our daily witness?*
- ❖ Read Luke 15. The chapter tells three parables of Jesus. What do the parables say about Jesus’ concern for “the lost”?
 - ❖ *What do these stories say about what Jesus was about in his ministry?*
 - ❖ *What do they say about God’s attitude toward the sinner or the outcast?*
 - ❖ *What do the stories say to us about whom we are to be reaching with our witnessing?*
- ❖ Read Jesus’ description of his ministry in Luke 4:18-19. “Jesus’ concern for “the lost” extends into the deeper wounds of society. His mission is not only for the redemption of sinners, but also for the healing of the sick in body, mind or spirit. His mission is for restoration of justice to those who have been marginalized, abused, forgotten and oppressed in the world.” *Agree? Disagree? Why?*
 - ❖ *If Jesus meant to reach sinners with healing of the mind, body and spirit, what does that mean for the way we live our life? Our congregation’s life?*
 - ❖ *What does it mean to do evangelism “Jesus-Style”?*

Sharing and Discussion

1. If you were an “everyday witness” to Jesus, how would your life change? Where can the power for those changes come from?
2. How can you and your congregation recapture a sense of urgency in witnessing?
3. If your congregation had as its mission to do ministry Jesus-Style, what would you be doing together?
4. Where are “the lost” in your community? How can you reach them?

Taking It Home

1. Get together with several others from your congregation or community. Talk about how you can discover and reach out to those who are ordinarily left out in mission and outreach activities. What can you do to put your ideas into practice? Share with the class at your next session.
2. Set out a regular time for prayer. Pray for the church and for your congregation, in addition to your prayers for loved ones, lost ones, and others needing God’s care.
3. Join with several others to meet for a time of support and prayer as you set out to be Jesus’ witnesses. You might set a regular time to meet each.
4. Reach out to at least one person this week whom you would not contact regularly. Share your experience with the class at your next session.

ELCA Mission Snapshot

“The whole building experience was uplifting for our congregation and *Mission Builders* elevated it to a level we never thought possible at Trinity. They showed us how to live according to the way Jesus wants us to live. Not only do they give their time and talents to help with the construction (of a new church building), but by their example they have truly shown us that we are one in God’s family, even when we do not know others by name. Who else could give so unselfishly to another unless they were family? The *Mission Builders* wove God’s Word into every moment and every effort of their day, whether a large project or a small task. Anyone who has not known the *Mission Builders* might think that our gratitude would mainly be for having helped us build a new church building. We thank them for building a new congregation, not just a building, for they have made us all better Christians for having known them!” -Bev and Gary Larson, Trinity Lutheran Church, Cass Lake, Minnesota.

Mission Builders are members of the ELCA who volunteer their time to assist developing congregations in the construction of new church buildings. The ELCA *Mission Builders* ministry is funded through the Division for Outreach. By using the skills of retired members of the ELCA, the *Mission Builders* reduce the amount of construction debt incurred by young congregations.