

Parents Guide/Student Connect September 25, 2016

Martin Luther and the Reformation

Bible Text: Matthew 16:13–20; Luke 4:18–19; Romans 3:21–26; Ephesians 2:8–9

Lesson Focus: Christians continually reform the church to spread the good news to every generation and culture.

Big Question: Who is Martin Luther and what does it mean to be a Lutheran?

Key Words: MARTIN LUTHER, REFORMATION, CATHOLIC, THESIS, RECANT

CONNECTION

Parents/Students talk about the object lesson below. Then finish with the Best/Worst activity and prayer.

Option 1: Object Lesson Option: Out with the Old

Find a portable cassette tape player. If you don't have one, google it. Odds are, most of young people have never used, or seen, a cassette tape player. Parents: talk about your experience with cassettes—25 years ago cassettes were the way people listened to music. You couldn't download songs off the Internet, and CDs were not yet available. Together take a sheet of paper and make two columns labeled "Pros" and "Cons." Ask your child to make a list of the positive qualities of a cassette tape ("Pros") and the negative qualities ("Cons"). Positives could be: it plays music; it is small and portable; it doesn't skip. Negatives could be: you can't jump directly to the song you want to hear; you can't change the music unless you record over the whole tape.

Remember that people today listen to music on iPods, MP3 players, or CD players. On the same sheet of paper, continue the list of "Pros" and "Cons" for each of these music devices. What positive aspects of cassettes are still found in the new devices? Are there other advantages to the new technology? Are there any disadvantages to the new technology? How has the change from cassettes to MP3s or CDs made listening to music easier, or harder, for music lovers?

Debrief the activity with these questions: Talk about these together, post thoughts and questions you have to Pastor Marilyn by Wednesday Sept 28th.

- Everything in our world changes over time. How were the reformers working to change the bad things without losing the good things within the church?
- What are some of the good things and not-so-good things in the church today?
- How could you work for change that would not lose the good things and, at the same time, improve on the bad things?

Best/Worst and Prayer

Together (in your whole family or just parents/child) share the best and worst thing from his or her week.

Use the prayer below (or write your own) to pray for one another. Instruct students to stand in a circle, making sure their prayer partner is to their right. Join hands. Open the prayer using the prayer below, then pray for your partner standing to your right. Gently squeeze your partner's hand to signal them to begin their prayer for the next person in the circle, and so on. When the signal returns to you, close the prayer.

Loving and forgiving God, you have given us your word so that we can become closer to you. Your Word incarnate showed us the power of your love. Your word in scripture reminds us to share that word with others so that it will be your proclaimed word through all the earth. (*Insert your prayer for your partner, then signal the next person to pray. When the signal returns to you, close the prayer.*) We know that you have heard our prayers and that you give us answers to those prayers. Help us to see those answers, even when they are not what we expect, even when the answer is no. Help us to hear your word more clearly as we receive your answers to our prayers. Amen.

BIBLE CONNECTION

This goes with the Student Sheets. Look at the front of the Student Sheet together. Talk about the points together. Take note of questions you want to ask Pastor Marilyn, include this in your post on Wednesday/Thursday.

- What does it mean to you that God's love is unconditional? How do you respond to the statement "Nothing you do can earn God's love or forgiveness"?
- There are a lot of Latin phrases in this lesson. How would you put the three *solae* and *simul iustus et peccator* into your own words?
- Martin Luther wanted every Christian to be able to read the Bible on their own. How would you feel if you could not read the Bible yourself (either because you couldn't read or because it was written in a language you didn't know) and had to ask your pastor to read it for you and tell you what it meant?
- How do your actions show your faith? How does your trust in God's love and forgiveness change what you do each day?
- What does it mean to you that the church is constantly reforming itself?

Turn to this week's activity called "Martin Luther and the Reformation Word Search." As you work on this discuss together.

CARTOON CONNECTION

Use the cartoon and questions on the Student Sheet to kick off a conversation.

- Luther was ridiculed for his ideas by people with whom he had studied. How does it feel to be teased or taunted by people you thought were friends?
- Be aware that you might have some kids who are targets of lots of teasing. Also keep in mind that

you might have some kids who dole out the hurts. Try to create a safe atmosphere for sharing any and all stories as you talk through how students can handle the hurt and anger that result from ridicule.

- Is it easier to "give in" and change your views (or at least pretend to go with the crowd) or to keep fighting for what you believe?

The kids in your group probably have a lot of experience with this one. If the conversation needs some help, try bringing up specific situations this might have happened to them. How about when someone at school was being picked on? Have they experienced a time when their friends were doing something they thought was wrong? Talking about these hard questions can be very valuable.

- Is it more important to stand up for what you believe is right or to go along so that people like you?

This question could get some interesting answers. What is right and wrong in this situation might be more clear. But asking which is more important to your kids might elicit some unexpected responses. Kids need to feel a part of a community and because of that they need to be liked. Talk about ways that they can both be liked and stand up for what is right.

STUDENT BOOK CONNECTION

Student Book page 231: Have the students turn to "How to Reform the Church When It Strays from the Gospel." Remind the students that Martin Luther not only was concerned about his own time, but felt that the church should always be reforming itself. Allow a few minutes for the students to read through the six suggestions. Pass out paper and pencils and ask them to make a list of things they think need to be reformed in the church today. After a few minutes, discuss their ideas with these questions:

- Are they realistic changes? If so, how could they be discussed in your congregation?
- How difficult would it be to speak out publicly if you feel the church needs to change?

LIFE CONNECTION

Luther taught that all people have a calling or "vocation" that God calls them to do and that all vocations are equally important. Invite students to talk to one Christian whose job seems "ordinary" and find out how God uses them in their job. You could also share about your vocation. Challenge them to think about how they can serve God as they do "ordinary" tasks this week.
