



Educated in Christ Bible Study

[Please provide: Bibles and copies of the Bible study for attendees.]

If you are a parent, you probably remember sending your oldest to school for the first time. My daughter could not wait. She had her clothes chosen days in advance and could not wait for the big, yellow bus to whisk her away. Unfortunately, her younger sister exposed her to chicken pox two weeks before school started, so her big day was postponed a week. Even as an adult she still occasionally recalls this.

Maybe you remember being that excited about starting a new venture, but you encountered an obstacle that “knocked the wind out of your sails.” Although a little fearful, most children look forward to school, even if it is just to enjoy friends and recess. Share an early school memory with others in your group.

By the time students reach high school, many of them no longer experience the joy of school. A total of 21.8 percent of them stop attending high school before graduation (2011 U.S. Department of Education statistic).

Do we have a Christian education dropout rate, too? The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS) peaked in church membership in 1970 with almost 2.8 million members. In 2011, the LCMS membership was around 2.2 million, even after considering a population increase of nearly 30 percent. Someone must be dropping out.

In public education, the pendulum of education reform swings back and forth, trying new curricula and new approaches, hoping to improve student retention. In the church, we have our source – the Bible – and our approach – constant study, assimilation, and application of His Word as we gather with other believers in the Divine Service and as we feast on the very body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, given and shed for each of us for the forgiveness of our sins, the assurance of our salvation and the strengthening of our faith. Used diligently and unceasingly, they are designed to prevent us from being dropouts. So how do we proceed?

How did Mary and Joseph facilitate Jesus’ education in the Word? Read Luke 2:39-40.

A good place to examine education in the Bible is in the book of Ecclesiastes. The book is called *Ooheleth*, in Hebrew, meaning “One who speaks publicly in a congregation.” (*The Lutheran Study Bible*. Concordia Publishing House, 2009, p. 1048) Solomon’s last book addresses the emptiness of vanity and concludes with advice for the people. Read Ecclesiastes 12:9-13. What is being taught with great care? (v. 9) How can words of truth also be words of delight? (v. 10) Compare this to Psalm 51:6.

What are the purposes of the *collected sayings* Solomon wants the wise to fix firmly in their minds like nails? (v. 11) Who is the *one Shepherd* giving this wisdom? (v.11) Also read Psalm 80:1; Ezekiel 34:20-24; John 10:11, 16.

So how do you prepare yourself as you start or continue the study of His Word or begin any new task? Whether it is a volunteer opportunity or a newly acquired position at your job, it is a good idea to **educate yourself** about the situation and put your **best efforts** into the endeavor. The

same applies to the study of His Word as the Holy Spirit uses this time of study to strengthen our faith and keep us faithful to our Triune God throughout our life. What did Ezra do before he began teaching the people about God’s Word? Read Ezra 7:10.

By tradition, Proverbs was written earlier than the book of Ecclesiastes. Read Solomon’s instruction at the beginning of Proverbs 1:1-7. Write each verb (often after the “to”) in verses 2-6 (example, “know”) and the object(s) (example, “wisdom” and “instruction”) for each verse.

Verb	Object(s)	Object(s)
2. a. know	wisdom	instruction
b. understand	words of insight	
3. receive	instruction in wise dealing	righteousness, justice, and equity
4. give	prudence to the simple	knowledge and discretion to the youth
5. a. hear and increase	in learning	
b. obtain	guidance	
6. understand	a proverb and a saying	words of the wise and their riddles

That is a considerable learning list. Highlight the area or areas on which you would like to focus your learning in the next month.

No matter how far you extended your education, you have probably studied for tests and felt *much study is a weariness of the flesh* (Ecclesiastes 12:12). Some helpful studying hints are:

1. Take good notes – record key points you want to remember.
2. Stay organized – block out time to study.
3. Unplug – set boundaries for Internet, iPhone, or computer game time.
4. Don’t cram – pace yourself and study a little each day.
5. Don’t over study – don’t try to memorize everything or useless information.
6. Find your zone – where do you study best?
7. Take a break – you deserve a ten minute break every hour or so.

In the end, *Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.* (v. 13)

Even if we become weary in our godly quest to keep from being foolish, we are to stay in God’s Word. Then “dropping out,” straying away from God’s grace, is not an option. As Paul tells us in Philippians 4:9: *What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.*

Prayer: Thank You, Lord, for giving me a mind that I can use to dwell on Your Word. Help me to use my heart and mind wisely, to keep from foolish pursuits, and to continually grow in “the fear and knowledge of God.” In Jesus’ eternal name. Amen.

Educated in Christ
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