



We've Got Good News to Tell

(Leaders and participants are encouraged to look up Bible passages for most effective study. Passages are printed below for ease in presentation. "If time permits" sections can be done at home.)

Share with your partner or the small group some good news that has happened in your life or your family's lives during the last year. **Answers will vary, but encourage everyone to share. Make it clear that everything confided within the group stays within the group. The leader should start to begin discussion.**

What feelings did you experience as you shared your good news? Now, share those *specific* feelings with your partner or small group.

Answers will vary, but encourage everyone to share. Feelings could include: joy, happiness, pride, uplifting, urgency, delight, pleasure, wonder, or honor.

A phrase from an old Afro-American spiritual, written during a bleak time of slavery and oppression in American history, includes the encouraging and hopeful words, "I got news to tell you, I got good news." Isaiah, following a bleak time of Judah's slavery and oppression to Assyria, prophesies encouraging and hopeful words in Isaiah 52:7: *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."* During this study we will look at the Good News about Jesus, and how we can proclaim the Light of salvation to a sinful and darkened world.

Opening Prayer: Dear Lord, You are our awesome Creator. Thank You for sending Your Son Jesus into this sin-darkened world to live a perfect life, suffer, and die for our sins and to rise to life again. We look forward to the eternal glories of heaven with You. We praise You for the gift of Your Spirit, Who enables us to speak the Good News about Jesus with our families, our friends, and into all the world. Remind us of Jesus' words that ... *it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit* (Mark 13:11), so we don't fret about what we say and do as we proclaim boldly the Good News about salvation in Jesus that we have to tell. In the name of Jesus we pray, Amen.

What's the Good News?

Read **Luke 2:10**. What is the Good News that the angel shared with the shepherds? Why was this Good News? **Jesus is born. Jesus was born to die – He entered our world to be our Savior.**
Luke 2:10 ¹⁰ *And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.*

+ **What is the Good News?**

What is it that is shared in **John 3:16-17** and **1 John 1:8-9, 4:9-10**? Why did the world need salvation? **The Good News – the Gospel – Jesus was born, lived a perfect life, suffered, died, and rose from the dead. He became the propitiation (atonement) for our sins. He forgives believers in the name and for the sake of Jesus.**
John 3:16-17: ¹⁶ *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.*
1 John 1:8-9: ⁸ *If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
1 John 4:9-10: ⁹ *In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

Discuss the meaning of the term, "made manifest" (**1 John 4:9**) in connection to Jesus. See **John 1:14**. **Jesus became a man and lived and breathed among us. An online dictionary gives the meaning of manifest as "readily perceived by the senses and especially by the sense of sight" and "to make evident or certain by**

showing or displaying" (www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/manifest). "God in man made manifest" ("Songs of Thankfulness and Praise" LSB 394). Jesus – True Man and True God.

John 1:14: ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Read **Isaiah 61:1-3** and **Luke 4:16-21**. In Nazareth's synagogue, Jesus says He is the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy about the Lord's Servant. What will this Servant specifically do? **Brings good news to the poor, binds up the brokenhearted, proclaims liberty to captives, opens up prison to those who are bound, proclaims the Lord's favor and God's judgement, comforts those who mourn, grants to mourners beautiful headdresses rather than ashes, gives oil of gladness to mourners, gives garments of praise rather than a faint spirit, and makes His people righteous to the glory of the Lord.**

Isaiah 61:1-3: ¹The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; ² to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³ to grant to those who mourn in Zion—to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified.

Luke 4:16-20: ¹⁶ And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. ¹⁷ And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, ¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, ¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." ²⁰ And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹ And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

Recite together the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed ("And in Jesus Christ ..." — LSB inside back cover).

Compare with **Philippians 2:5-11**. What do they tell us about Jesus? **Jesus' humiliation and exaltation.**

Humiliation = conceived, born, suffered, crucified, died, buried. Exaltation = descended into hell, rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, sits at the right hand of God, will come to judge. His name is above every name and at the name of Jesus, every knee will bow and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Philippians 2:5-11: ⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Faith Talk: Share with a partner or the small group your answer to the question, "What's the Good News?"

How does this Good News make you feel? **Answers will vary, but encourage everyone to share. Feelings could include: thankful, joyful, peaceful, happy, encouraged, or comforted.**

If time permits: See how many synonyms for the phrase "good news" you can come up with as a group.

Answers will vary, but encourage everyone to share. Answers could include: "glad tidings," "good tidings," "gospel," "terrific news," "music to one's ears," or "heart balm."

If time permits: Read Isaiah's beautiful account of the Suffering Servant, Savior Jesus, in **Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12**.

Tell the Good News – Who Me?

Read or sing this hymn verse together from "Hark the Voice of Jesus Crying" (LSB 826:1).

Hark, the voice of Jesus crying,
"Who will go and work today?
Fields are white and harvests waiting--
Who will bear the sheaves away?"
Loud and long the Master calleth;
Rich reward He offers thee.
Who will answer, gladly saying,
"Here am I, send me, send me"?

+ *Why tell the Good News about Jesus?* What guidance in answering this question is found in the following Bible passages?

Isaiah 6:8 God asks us to go out and proclaim the Good News.

Isaiah 6:8: ⁸ And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here I am! Send me."

Matthew 9:37-38 Jesus counsels us to pray for workers in the harvest fields.

Matthew 9:37-38: ³⁷ Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; ³⁸ therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

Mark 1:14-15 Jesus proclaimed the Gospel – we follow His example.

Mark 1:14-15: ¹⁴ Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, ¹⁵ and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

Luke 4:43 Jesus' purpose becomes ours.

Luke 4:43: But he said to them, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose."

Luke 7:21-22 Jesus commands us to proclaim the Good News

Luke 7:21-22: ²¹ In that hour he healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind he bestowed sight. ²² And he answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them."

Acts 1:8 The Spirit gives us the power and boldness to be witnesses to the Good News about Jesus.

Acts 1:8: ⁸ "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Acts 4:18-20 As saved believers, we "cannot but speak" of what we have witnessed – seen and heard.

¹⁸ So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹ But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, ²⁰ for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard."

Read Ephesians 1:13-14.

Ephesians 1:13-14: ¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

We cannot tell the Good News about Jesus without the help, power, and boldness of the Holy Spirit. How does the Spirit work in our lives to instill and sustain faith in our Savior Jesus? **The Means of Grace** See **Mark 14:22-24; Romans 10:14-15,17; and Titus 3:4-7.**

Mark 14:22-24: ²² And as they were eating, he took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." ²³ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. ²⁴ And he said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. **The Lord's Supper**

Romans 10:14-15, 17: ¹⁴ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? ¹⁵ And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" ¹⁷ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. **The preaching and teaching of the Word of God**

Titus 3:4-7: ⁴ But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵ he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. **Holy Baptism**

Faith Talk: Take a moment to jot down some key components of your Good News message about Jesus. If you are comfortable, share with a partner or the small group. **Answers will vary, but encourage everyone to share.**

+ *Where? Where can I tell the Good News about Jesus?* To answer this question, look at the following Bible passages.

In **Isaiah 49:6**, where will the Servant of the Lord's light of salvation shine? **To the nations, the end of the earth**

⁶ [The LORD] says: "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

In **Mark 13:10-11**, where does Jesus tell us the Gospel will be proclaimed before the end times? **To all nations**
Mark 13:10-11: ¹⁰ **And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations.** ¹¹ **And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.**

We are to share the Good News of salvation in Jesus with everyone, everywhere! According to **2 Timothy 1:5**, where is perhaps the most important, but often overlooked place to share the Good News about Jesus? **To our family, our closest friends**
2 Timothy 1:5: ⁵ **I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.**

Faith Talk: Why is it so difficult the share the Good News of salvation in Jesus with a family member? Share with a partner or the small group. **Answers will vary, but encourage everyone to share.**

Read again **Romans 10:17**. How important is the spoken Word of salvation? **Answers will vary, but encourage everyone to share. The Word of God is to be proclaimed and taught.**
Romans 10:17 ¹⁷ **So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.**

A story is told of a young boy who had a nightmare and ran to his mother for comfort. She reminded her child that Jesus was with him, guarding and protecting him. He replied as he hugged her even tighter, "I know, Mama, but sometimes I just need 'Jesus with skin on.'" How can we be "Jesus with skin on" in our world, while proclaiming the Good News of salvation? **Answers will vary, but encourage everyone to share. Answers could include a list of service activities that are accompanied by the Word – either spoken or written.**

Faith Talk: As a group, come up with five specific, active ways to share the Good News in words *and* deeds. **Answers will vary, but encourage everyone to share.**

Faith Walk:

1. Praise the Lord for the gift of Jesus, your Savior and King, and the Good News about Jesus that you have to share.
2. Identify someone in your life who needs to hear about Jesus and ask the Holy Spirit to give you the boldness and words of witness to proclaim the Gospel message.
3. Read the book of Isaiah in the next weeks, several chapters at a time. Memorize **Isaiah 52:7**.
4. Thank God for His Word and Sacraments, and the hope of eternal life in heaven.

Closing: Read or sing this hymn verse together from "Hark the Voice of Jesus Crying" (*LSB* 826:4).

Let none hear you idly saying,
"There is nothing I can do,"
While the multitudes are dying
And the Master calls for you.
Take the task He gives you gladly,
Let His work your pleasure be;
Answer quickly when He calleth,
"Here am I, send me, send me!"
