

PRACTICE

- How does this concept impact our understanding of who we are in relation to others?
- May we find joy and blessing in looking out and away from where we are comfortable in order to look into the faces of those who are not like us?
- What are the dangers of being insular in our approach to life?
- Discuss what you can do as a congregation in getting to know others in the Northern Illinois District. Come up with an action item on the next step of this study that will be a tangible way of coming together with others.

Prayer

Pray the Litany found in *Lutheran Service Book*, p. 288-289. (See separate booklet.) The content of the Litany has language that helps us to reflect on division, racism, and segregation, leading to repentance.



Crossing Thresholds:
To Others

Session I The Order of Relationships

The summary of commandments 1-3 is found in Matthew 22:37. The summary of commandments 4-10 is found in Matthew 22:39. *“And he [Jesus] said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself’”* (ESV).

Session I - The Order of Relationships

Scriptural Theme: *“Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes”* (1 John 2:10-11 ESV).

Goal: The goal of this session is to begin to help the participants think about God’s design in relationships. There is an early Christian Trinitarian concept called *perichoresis*. This concept focuses on how the three persons of the Trinity work and relate to one another.

Perichoresis means “interpenetration.” It is how two or more persons engage, relate. Choreography comes from this word. This word has been used to help people think about the three persons of the Trinity “dancing with one another.”

The Catechist/Guide for this study should help the participants see that God is relational. This study is meant to be foundational in order to provide perspective.

The Study — Genesis 2:18; 11:4; 12:1-3

PLACE

- Where does this study take place? Read Genesis 2.
- Concerning the Trinity, can we say that the concept of relating to others occurs outside of time and is how we see the workings of the three persons of the Trinity? If so, what does this say about who God is? What does this say about the Christian’s perspective?
- From the beginning we are “placed” people. How is the concept of “place” seen in terms of the Church’s mission? How does the concept of place play out in the New Testament? Discuss the importance of place in the Scriptures.

LEARNING

- What is the Lord teaching us about relating to others? How does this impact vocation and how we relate to others?
- How do we understand vocation and loving our neighbor? Is the Lord doing something for our neighbor as we help him or her?
- We often think of helping our neighbor, but do we realize that our neighbor in need is a blessing to us? How might this relate to Matthew 22:37-39?
- Read Genesis 1:28. How does this relate to the concept in Genesis 2:18? How do these verses provide the Christian perspective in relationships? What does this say about the Christian’s focus and direction in life?
- Do you primarily focus upon their own needs, desires, wants, etc.?
- Read Genesis 11 and think about what is happening with the tower of Babel. There is a lot going on, but focus upon Genesis 11:4. What are they thinking?
- The people do not want to go to others. They want to stay in their own little corner of the world! In addition, by staying away from others, they want to make a name for themselves. What can we learn from this?
- Read Genesis 12:1-3. What does God say?
- How does this text differ from what the people wanted at the tower of Babel?
- Note in verse 3 the mutual blessing of people. All will be blessed. Are there other examples of this in Holy Scripture? What does it mean for the church? For the world? What can this mean for the Northern Illinois District?
- Read Genesis 9:1 and 9:7. What does God tell Noah?
- What does this tell us about the Lord’s desire for us to reach into the lives of others?