

Christian Educator Resources

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THE
PC(USA)
STORE



A living faith is so much more than simply believing in God. Jesus called all sorts of people to follow him to God, showing concrete ways to love God and one another. When we do these actions together, faith develops, lives change, and communities transform.



- 36 units, over three years, are based on practices Jesus did, embodied, and taught his followers.
- In each session, an aspect of the practice is explored through biblical study, where we see the practice then and now, and how we can practice the practice today.
- Personal, communal, worship, and global practices are presented.
- Each practice or unit is 4 or 6 sessions.

YEAR 1 PRACTICES (2021–2022)	YEAR 2 PRACTICES (2022–2023)	YEAR 3 PRACTICES (2023–2024)
<i>Available July 2021</i> Follow Jesus Welcome All Confess	<i>Available July 2022</i> Honor Sabbath Pray Forgive	<i>Available July 2023</i> Take Up Your Cross Worship God Feed Others
<i>Available October 2021</i> Hope Baptize Live in Community	<i>Available October 2022</i> Announce the Realm of God Lament Do Justice	<i>Available October 2023</i> Sing a New Song Choose Life Comfort Those Who Mourn
<i>Available January 2022</i> Practice Spiritual Disciplines <i>(6 sessions, ideal for Lent)</i> Practice Joy Honor God’s Diversity	<i>Available January 2023</i> Love God, Neighbor, Enemy <i>(6 sessions, ideal for Lent)</i> Celebrate Communion Break Boundaries	<i>Available January 2024</i> Use Spiritual Gifts <i>(6 sessions, ideal for Lent)</i> Share the Good News Serve Others
<i>Available April 2022</i> Renounce Evil Make Peace Practice Generosity	<i>Available April 2023</i> Make Disciples Practice Stewardship Walk Humbly	<i>Available April 2024</i> Heal the Sick Practice Gratitude Speak the Truth



Components:

- **Congregational Guide**
- **Young Children Leader's Guide** (ages 3 – 5)
Multiage children Leader's Guide (ages 6 – 10),
Youth Leaders Guide (ages 11 – 18)
Adult Leader's Guide
- **Adult Reflection Guide**, which can be used alone or in group study
- Colorful infographic poster (18" x 24") for each unit (set of 12 for each year) and a set of 12 Bible Basic posters





Congregational Guide

This guide is chock-full of resources for any church leader to make connections with the practice, congregational worship, and everyday life. Faith communities with a limited educational program may use this resource to plan a congregational focus on each practice.

Each practice contains a **Foundational Essay** written by a biblical or theological scholar. The essay provides a deep dive into the practice—where it is found in the Bible and how the community has practiced it then and now. An aspect or dimension of the practice for each session is highlighted along with biblical texts that illuminate it.

Preachers may wish to develop a sermon series based on these texts. Adults and leaders seeking more depth may wish to read these essays. They are included in each Leader's Guide and the Adult Reflection Guide.

Worship Helps

Two pages of worship suggestions are provided for each session. They include hymns and songs, liturgical activities, and liturgies for worship.

Welcome Others as God Welcomes You

SCRIPTURE

HYMNS AND SONGS

GGG: Glory to God: Hymns, Psalms, and Spiritual Songs (Westminster John Knox Press, 2012)

Note: hymns and songs found in *Glory to God* may be found in other hymnals and songbooks and at www.hymnary.org.

GOD WELCOMES US IN CREATION

- "All Things Bright and Beautiful" (GGG, 20): *The diversity of creation is praised in this hymn.*
- "God of Great and God of Small" (GGG, 19): *God of all, holds all together and is present to all.*
- "Many and Great, O God, Are Your Works" (GGG, 21): *We are welcomed to creation in this Dakota melody.*
- "O Lord, Our God, How Excellent" (GGG, 25): *Using a paraphrase of Psalm 8, God's creation is praised.*

WE WELCOME ALL

- "Come All You People (Uyai mosi)" (GGG, 388): *A calling song from Zimbabwe invites people to worship in English and the Shona language.*
- "For Everyone Born" (GGG, 769): *God's hospitality transcends the barrier created by human society.*
- "God Welcomes All" (GGG, 390): *Creating a setting of welcome, this song can be sung several times.*
- "Help Us Accept Each Other" (GGG, 754): *We seek to see one another as Christ sees us.*
- "Here in This Place (Gather Us In)" (GGG, 401): *All are welcomed and gathered for worship.*
- "In Goma Eat at the Welcome Table" (GGG, 770): *This African American spiritual celebrates God's welcome of all at the great feast.*
- "Let Us Build a House (All Are Welcomed)" (GGG, 301): *All are welcome in our worship.*
- "We Gather Here in Jesus' Name (Come, Share the Lord)" (GGG, 510): *As we share the Lord's Supper, no one is a stranger, all are family.*

CHORAL ANTHEM

- "For the Beauty of the Earth" by Philip Stottford

LITURGICAL ACTIONS

- Create a graphic design for the cover of a worship bulletin or slide for a screen of a word cloud with the word "Welcome" in many different languages, particularly ones spoken in your church and community.
- Incorporate the song "God Welcomes All" (GGG, 390) in worship each week. All age groups in the four seasons for this practice use it as an opening ritual. Try different methods such as using different rhythms, singing in a round, and adding rhythm instruments.
- As an opening for worship, show the YouTube video "Learn to Say Welcome in 15 Languages" (bit.ly/Welcomes15Languages, 0:44) or invite people to lead the congregation in saying "Welcome" in various languages.
- Regularly incorporate languages other than the dominant language of the congregation in the liturgy. Many congregations do this on Pentecost or World Communion Sunday, however, incorporating other languages with regularity makes it feel less novel and more integral. To make decisions about which languages to include consider the following:
 - who is present in your congregation and what languages they speak,
 - languages that are spoken in your community and surroundings, and
 - mission relationships the congregation has in which other languages are spoken.
- Engage an American Sign Language interpreter as a regular part of worship leadership.
- Include a Minute for Mission to celebrate the ministries of the congregation that are specifically geared to welcome people to worship and fellowship, such as greeters, ushers, shepherds, and those who prepare for a time of fellowship.

Foundational Essay

WELCOME OTHERS
LYNNE BAAB

INTRODUCTION

If Christians are known for anything, it is how we welcome others. Greeters welcome visitors and members to worship with a smile and a handshake or hug. Churches enthusiastically proclaim that all are welcome to our worship community. We take extra efforts to make others comfortable, especially those who are new or visiting. Communal meals seem to happen all the time, providing an inviting space for all to share food and fellowship.

A helpful definition of Christian hospitality lays out the gift and challenge of this practice. Adelle Ahlberg Callous writes, "Hospitality creates a safe, open place where a friend or stranger can enter and experience the welcoming spirit of Christ in another."¹

Welcoming others in certainly costs to the Christian life. It is not always so easy to practice, however, even with those we love the most. It can be a joy, but it can also be a challenge to create that open, safe space, especially when people impinge on our own comfort levels or are different or feared. This essay invites you to reflect on various dimensions of welcoming others as we strive to follow Christ and practice welcoming others the way Jesus did.

At the very heart of hospitality is a commitment to welcome one another, those who are like us and those who are not. The God we learn about in the Bible and from our faith ancestors desires a loving relationship with us. This relationship goes both ways; it's not just one sided. There are responsibilities for both parties. In the Old Testament we learn about God's continual establishment of covenants with people. God promises to be with people and protect them if they in turn protect the vulnerable (i.e., provide hospitality) in their midst. People continually fail to live up to their side of the pact and covenant is broken. The prophets continually remind people they are not living up to their part of the bargain and may lose God's favor. After some time and much grief, God approaches them again, offering to be their God if they will in turn protect others.

Jesus had a lot to say about hospitality as he had learned about it in the Hebrew Scriptures, and it was a central practice in his life and teachings.

1. Adelle Ahlberg Callous, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook* (Downer's Grove, IL: IVP Books 2015), 161.

Foundational Essay

Welcome Others as God Welcomes You

GENESIS 1:1-2:4A AND GENESIS 2:4B-25

1 GATHER

As you gather, read the other side of this page about the topic for today. Once gathered, spend a few minutes introducing everyone. Say this prayer or own of your choosing:

Dear God, thank you for Your love, hospitality, and care. As You welcome us with kindness and compassion, may we welcome others. Amen.

2 FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE

Discuss the "Finding the Practice in the Bible" section on back.

Read the two accounts of creation found in Genesis 1:1-2:4a and Genesis 2:4b-25 and discuss:

- How does God extend hospitality to creation, including humanity?
- How is humanity called to care for creation?
- React to the statement that we can only show hospitality to others because God has first extended hospitality to the entire creation.

3

Prepare to respond in three minutes or less to one of the following discussion prompts. The person whose birthday is closest to June 1 goes first. When finished that person invites another. And so on.

- Tell about a time when you extended hospitality to or received hospitality from someone. What made it memorable?
- Tell about a time when you felt unwelcomed or excluded.
- Why do you think we hesitate to welcome people who are different from us?
- Name some challenges and opportunities of welcoming and extending hospitality to people who are different from you.

4

Fill in the diagram with the characteristics of a good host and guest, noting overlap between the two categories. Then go back and circle the aspects of being a host or guest that you do well. Draw rectangles around the aspects you would like to do better. Take turns naming something you wish to improve.

5

WAYS TO EXTEND HOSPITALITY THIS WEEK

List ways to extend hospitality this week.

-
-
-

23

Café Discussion Guides

Single-page activities and discussion prompts are provided for each session. These no-prep, easy-to-lead sessions are perfect for college groups, young adults, women's and men's groups, and church sessions or councils.



Congregational Guide

Intergenerational Session

One intergenerational session is included for use with the whole church family before, during, or at the end of each unit.

Practicing the Practice At Home

A two-sided reproducible page is provided for each unit to facilitate practicing with the whole family. It is also included in the **Young Children** and **Multiage Children** Leader's Guides.

INTERGENERATIONAL SESSION

Welcome All: The Big Table

LUKE 14:15-24

GOAL
Participants will engage the image of the big table by discussing and interacting with the biblical story of the great banquet from Luke 14 and by comparing and contrasting this story with other types of meals and service.

WHAT IS THIS SESSION ABOUT?
How do we welcome all people both within and outside of our families, the church, our community, and our nation? Hospitality often occurs around tables. Family and guests are welcome, bread is broken, and food is shared. God's desire is that our tables are large to include many, to welcome the outcast, the stranger, and those who may be different from us. This intergenerational event is centered around a communal meal, just as the Bible story is.

WHAT IS THE BIBLE STORY?
The parable of the great dinner is told by Jesus around a dinner table. It is a story about expected guests giving excuses why they can't come and the invitation being offered to those with disabilities, those who are poor, and those who do not expect an invitation. This story helps us explore the *all* in "welcome all."

WHAT ARE WE PRACTICING?
We are practicing God's big, wide, expansive invitation and welcome and providing a place for all who show up, with room for more.

WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN BEFORE THE SESSION?
Make announcements well in advance inviting people to the event and asking them to bring their favorite "comfort food" to share potluck-style. Ask attendees to make a sign to display with their contribution with their name, the name of their food, and the ingredients for those with food allergies or sensitivities.
Prepare coded name tags to correspond with tables indicating where people will be seated. Different colors or pictures of elements of creation

CONGREGATIONAL GUIDE

Welcome All

SESSION 1
YOUNG CHILDREN
Welcoming God's Creation: Children are invited to take a nature walk and spot different things that God created. As each one is named, everyone says, "God welcomes you, (item), and I do too."

SESSION 2
YOUNG CHILDREN
MULTIAGE CHILDREN
YOUTH
ADULT
Welcoming in Other Languages: The children learn how to say "welcome" in several different languages that may be heard in your church or community and are encouraged to greet people in these languages.

MULTIAGE CHILDREN
Depicting God's Garden: Children are invited to consider the world God created for us and make a collage depicting its beauty.

How I Am Welcoming: The children consider how they are welcoming, how they struggle with welcoming others, and an action they can take in the coming week to be welcoming to others.

YOUTH
Watch a Video about Immigration: Youth hear a youth describe her experience as an immigrant in the US.
Review the Welcome Timelines: Youth review a timeline of Christian denominations struggling to include welcome to others.

ADULT
Church Welcome Statements: Adults create ideal welcome statements for their worshipping community.
Sanctuary Offers Welcome: Adults see how various denominations insist on welcoming all strangers.
Know Your Implicit Bias: Adults take an internet test to learn about their implicit biases.

at Home

WHAT IS "WELCOME ALL" ABOUT?
Hospitality/Welcome. These words are a part of our culture—but often it means a beautifully set table or a "Martha Stewart" worthy meal. Here, we are not so worried about achieving the perfect "Instagram-worthy" holiday table, or the fanciest recipe (although those can for sure be a treat that will make guests feel special). In naming this unit "Welcome All" we are grounding ourselves in the faith practice of hospitality; the idea of being intentional and authentic as we offer a genuine welcome to all God's people—both stranger and friend. As we open our hearts, our homes, our churches, and our capacity for friendship and community to not only those who are like us, but also to those who are different from us, we are affirming the worth of all of God's people. It is this that is the very heart of the practice of hospitality.

STRANGERS TO FRIENDS
Perhaps as you or your children have been participating in this unit, "Welcome All," you have noticed individuals, families, or children who you may have seen at church, but don't know much beyond a brief chat in coffee hour. As a way to put the theory into practice, extend an invitation. Avoid the temptation to just reach out to people with children the same age, or adults of a similar generation.
Instead, why not:
➤ Gather in a park for a walk or picnic after worship to bring together families of all ages as well as individuals who may not have had an opportunity to spend time together outside of the church walls.
➤ Host a pot-luck dinner for participants in your group (or in your children's groups) for this session.
➤ Arrange to attend a free or low-cost community gathering as a church group (e.g. meet, festival, community theatre, concert, or art show).
➤ Adopt a "grand-friend." Many families are spread apart geographically, leaving grandparents and grandchildren, alike, missing out on regular companionship with another generation. If this is the case for your family, consider inviting an older adult in your congregation who has taken an interest in your children to be your "grand friend."

SERVICE WITH A SMILE
It is often hard for families with younger children to find opportunities to be involved in community service. Things like construction-based projects and

many soup kitchens have minimum ages. Hospitality, however is an area where children can excel, and bring much joy to those being served. Consider seeking the following types of volunteer jobs (if you are not sure where to start, talk with your pastor, the chair of your church's mission committee or do some research online):
➤ Staffing a water stop at a road race is a wonderful one-off opportunity suitable for all ages. Children can not only hand out water to thirsty participants, but they can cheer with homemade signs, cowbells and shouts of encouragement!
➤ Inquire about helping in the dining room at a local soup kitchen. While cooking and kitchen work is often restricted to teens and adults, there are many tasks to do including setting tables, greeting guests, and even making centerpieces or placemats to brighten up the dining room. Often in the busyness of preparing and serving meals, there isn't much time to simply connect. Enter into conversation with guests, share stories or jokes—let the boundaries between guest and host come down for moments of human connection.
➤ Put your coloring and baking skills to good use for community first responders and church helpers. Purchase some simple cardboard "bakery boxes" that can be decorated with messages of thanks, and pack up homemade treats to be delivered to local first responders (fire, ambulance and police stations) and/or church helpers (not just the pastor and musician, but also the secretary, custodian and other "behind the scenes" workers).

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Welcome All

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Curriculum Connection

Take note of what is going on in each age level with these highlights from the curriculum.

Children's Worship Leaflet

For each session of the unit, there is a two-sided reproducible page which has ideas for practicing the practice, a puzzle or game, an adapted Bible story, and a coloring picture.



Leader' Guides for Young Children, Multiage Children, Youth, and Adults:

There is a Unit Overview page for the unit, as well as a Session Overview page for each session.

THE SESSION PLAN

The flow of the session is the same for all ages.

Getting Started provides an opening ritual for each session.

Introducing the Practice invites participants to encounter an aspect of the practice.

Finding the Practice in the Bible explores how the practice was lived by Jesus (Gospels), understood by his faith tradition (Hebrew Scriptures), and carried on by his followers (New Testament).

Finding the Practice All Around Us (for children) or **Finding the Practice Then and Now** (for older groups) names how the practice has been lived out by Christians through the centuries.

Practicing the Practice provides activities to try out the practice.

Following Jesus sends participants out to follow Jesus.

1 Welcome to God's World!
GENESIS 1:1-2:25

WHAT IS THIS SESSION ABOUT?
Although the story of creation may be familiar with hospitality and welcome as our lens, we will come to this story from a different angle. This story affirms the worth and belonging in each part of creation, and that is something to celebrate and hold up for our children.

WHAT IS THE BIBLE STORY?
The creation story is actually told two different times in the first two chapters of Genesis. While Genesis 1 focuses on creation over seven days with God creating everything and naming that each was good, the second account focuses on the human that God created, placed in the garden, and entrusted with the care of everything. God's care was evident in the variety and diversity of each creature—most especially in the garden full of everything God's people should. In everything and welcoming.

HOW WILL CHILDREN UNDERSTAND THIS PRACTICE?
Look at the church within, between, or outside, and note how these things show welcome. Could children's contributions enhance the spirit of welcome? Read on your church for "Welcome People to Our Church" on p. 10. Talk with your pastor or your church's evangelism or outreach minister to see how these could be used.

WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN BEFORE THE SESSION?
Look at the church within, between, or outside, and note how these things show welcome. Could children's contributions enhance the spirit of welcome? Read on your church for "Welcome People to Our Church" on p. 10. Talk with your pastor or your church's evangelism or outreach minister to see how these could be used.

PRAYER
Creator of all, as I prepare to share your word, create in my heart the space to receive the children's perspective, as that together, we understand this familiar text in ways that engage us to share your welcome today, this week and each day. Amen.

GETTING STARTED

CONNECTING WITH CREATION
Get open the picture on homepage page 1 and let children walk to that corner of the room. Invite them to walk around the room and look at each picture and share what they see.

ADAPTATION
Add each person to share what they find about their new group picture.

GOAL
By hearing about God's care in creating a diverse and beautiful world, children will envision ways to embody that welcome in their interactions and participation in the life of the church.

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FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE

DEPICTING GOD'S GARDEN
Read about the garden in Genesis 1:1-2:25 on homepage page 1. Invite children to read. Invite children to use the following questions as a guide to their reading.

ADAPTATION
How do you think God felt about sharing the beautiful garden with Adam and Eve?

GOAL
By hearing about God's care in creating a diverse and beautiful world, children will envision ways to embody that welcome in their interactions and participation in the life of the church.

FINDING THE PRACTICE ALL AROUND US

ROLE PLAYING WELCOME: GETTING IT RIGHT AND MISSING THE MARK
Divide children into groups of 4-6. Invite them to role-play a scene from the Bible that shows someone being welcomed. Invite them to role-play a scene from the Bible that shows someone not being welcomed.

ADAPTATION
Invite children to role-play a scene from the Bible that shows someone being welcomed. Invite them to role-play a scene from the Bible that shows someone not being welcomed.

GOAL
By hearing about God's care in creating a diverse and beautiful world, children will envision ways to embody that welcome in their interactions and participation in the life of the church.

FOLLOWING JESUS

HOW I AM WELCOMING
Give every child three sticky notes and the following instructions:

ADAPTATION
Give every child three sticky notes and the following instructions:

GOAL
By hearing about God's care in creating a diverse and beautiful world, children will envision ways to embody that welcome in their interactions and participation in the life of the church.

1 Welcome All, as God Welcomes Us
GENESIS 1

WHAT IS THIS SESSION ABOUT?
This session is a unit on the faith practice of hospitality. We look at how God welcomes all creation and how we, as humans, are called to follow Jesus' example of welcoming all who are made in God's image.

WHAT IS THE BIBLE STORY?
Hospitality begins at creation as God welcomes all creation to be part of God's world. In Genesis 1, we see how God welcomes all creation to be part of God's world.

HOW WILL YOUTH CHILDREN UNDERSTAND THIS PRACTICE?
Youth children are practicing the faith practice of hospitality by being how to give others love and welcome in the world.

WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN BEFORE THE SESSION?
Read the Bible story of Genesis 1 and Genesis 2. Invite youth to read the Bible story of Genesis 1 and Genesis 2.

PRAYER
God of all, as I prepare to share your word, create in my heart the space to receive the children's perspective, as that together, we understand this familiar text in ways that engage us to share your welcome today, this week and each day. Amen.

1 Welcome Others
GENESIS 18:1-10

WHAT IS THIS SESSION ABOUT?
During this session, we will explore a prime example of hospitality in the scriptures. We will learn that we should welcome others because God has welcomed us, and because we never know when we might find ourselves in a situation where we are outsiders. Finally, we will discover that when we give a warm welcome to others, we often receive unexpected blessings in return.

WHAT IS THE BIBLE STORY?
This lesson recalls the story of Abraham and Sarah entertaining strangers in Genesis 18. In the previous chapter, God told Abraham that he and his elderly wife would have a child. This child's name would be Isaac and would be named after Isaac. This child's name would be Isaac and would be named after Isaac.

HOW WILL YOUTH CONNECT?
Youth may be familiar with welcoming others in the context of church, they may not be familiar with God's mandate to hospitality to other people of the world. This lesson will demonstrate how to do so.

WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN BEFORE THE SESSION?
Read that one of the activities suggest first. If this activity is selected, please consider any necessary dietary restrictions.

PRAYER
Welcoming God, give me the grace to welcome others as you welcome me. Amen.

1 Welcome Others as God Welcomes You
GENESIS 1:2-4a, GENESIS 2:4b-25

WHAT IS THIS SESSION ABOUT?
To discover the foundational truths about hospitality, we read the Bible story of Genesis 1:2-4a and Genesis 2:4b-25. We will see how God welcomes all creation and how we, as humans, are called to follow Jesus' example of welcoming all who are made in God's image.

WHAT IS THE BIBLE STORY?
Hospitality begins at creation as God welcomes all creation to be part of God's world. In Genesis 1, we see how God welcomes all creation to be part of God's world.

HOW WILL YOUTH CHILDREN UNDERSTAND THIS PRACTICE?
Youth children are practicing the faith practice of hospitality by being how to give others love and welcome in the world.

WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN BEFORE THE SESSION?
Read the Bible story of Genesis 1 and Genesis 2. Invite youth to read the Bible story of Genesis 1 and Genesis 2.

PRAYER
God of all, as I prepare to share your word, create in my heart the space to receive the children's perspective, as that together, we understand this familiar text in ways that engage us to share your welcome today, this week and each day. Amen.



Highlights

Young Children and Multiage Children Leader's Guides provides Activity Symbols to designate the type of activity included in the session, such as Art, Active Movement, Conversation, Drama, Food, Game, Music, Nature/Science, Quiet/Contemplative, Service, Technology, and Extra Prep.

Session Overview

- What is this session about?
- What is the Bible story?
- How will young children/children understand this practice?
- What needs to happen before the session?



BASED ON GENESIS 1 AND LUKE 18:15-17

In the beginning God smiled and began to create. God swept over the waters like a wind while deciding what to make first. Let there be light! God said. Light and darkness became two separate things—day and night. God welcomed the light and the darkness and said it was good and that was the end of the first day.

The next day after the light came, God decided to separate the water that drops from the sky in rain and snow from the water that is down below in rivers, lakes, and the ocean. God welcomed both the water in the sky and water below and said they were good and that was the end of the second day.

On the third day God looked at the waters below and gathered them into particular places so dry land could appear. God planted all kinds of flowers, bushes, and trees on the land that produced yummy fruits and vegetables. God welcomed the land and all that grows on it and God saw that these things were good.

On the fourth day God gathered some of the light together to create the sun and the stars. God called the moon into being for the night. God welcomed the sun, moon, and stars and saw that they were good.

On the fifth day God began to create the creatures of the sea, everything that swims and the creatures of the air, everything that flies. Can you name some of these creatures? God welcomed all of these we have named and all the others whose names we don't know and God saw that they were good.

On the sixth day God created the creatures of the land, all kinds of creatures. Some were tall and some were short. Some had spots and others had stripes. Some ate meat and some ate plants. Can you name some of these land creatures? God welcomed all of these we have named and all the others whose names we don't know. But God wasn't done yet. God created humans to be in God's image and to continue to welcome all of God's creation.

Does God welcome you? How do you know? Many years after all these things were created, God's Son, Jesus came to earth and one of the things he made sure to do was to welcome children. "These young ones are very good," said God, as Jesus talked to them, hugged them, and blessed them and their families. We continue to welcome each other today through baptizing new people into God's community.

1 Welcome to God's World!
GENESIS 1:1-2:25

WHAT IS THIS SESSION ABOUT?
Although the story of creation may be familiar, with hospitality and welcome as our theme, we will be coming to this story from a different angle. We will be exploring the worth and belonging in each part of creation, and that which is good for our children.

1 Welcome All, as God Welcomes Us
GENESIS 1

WHAT IS THIS SESSION ABOUT?
This session begins a unit on the faith practice of hospitality. Here we look at how God welcomes all of creation and we summed that God welcomes us, too, through Jesus' welcoming of children. These stories cause us to follow Jesus' example by welcoming all we meet as God's children.

GOAL
Children will explore the way that God welcomes creation, including us, by creating ways to welcome others in the group, at home, in the larger church, and community.

WHAT IS THE BIBLE STORY?
Hospitality begins at creation as God welcomes everything from light to animals. This reading of Genesis 1 shows that hospitality includes all of God's creation, not just people. In coupling this with the story of Jesus welcoming the children, we see that even though God's hospitality is vast, God still cares for each of us and welcomes us to the world.

HOW WILL YOUNG CHILDREN UNDERSTAND THIS PRACTICE?
Young children are practicing the art of welcoming here. They are learning how to greet others and to welcome all of God's creation as they encounter it.

WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN BEFORE THE SESSION?
Learn the songs in "Getting Started" and "Following Jesus" and the motions for "God Welcomes All" on Resource Page 1. Set up centers for "Getting Started":

- play kitchen area with cooking and table setting items
- nature encounter table with different non-sharp natural objects that the children could explore through touch and smell
- puzzle center with simple wooden puzzles of different parts of God's creation like fruits or animals

PRAYER
Lord, Help me to show my welcome of these children through my words and actions that through me they might welcome God and their neighbors. Amen.

Then, depending on the choices you make:

- Contact several church members who are involved with greeting people and hospitality and invite them to visit your group for "Greeting at Church" in "Practicing the Practice All Around Us."
- Explore the Omnialet website, "Welcome in Many Languages" (bit.ly/WelcomesManyLanguages) and choose three languages found in your faith community or neighborhood to teach for "Welcoming in Other Languages" in "Practicing the Practice." Write the phrases, and pronunciation if necessary, on cards.

Adapted Bible Story

There is an imaginative retelling of the Bible story for included in each session for young children, and when needed for multiage children.. This story is also included on the Children's Bulletin found in the **Congregational Guide**.

Practicing the Practice At Home, suggestions for families, is included in the Leader's Guide and the **Congregational Guide**.

Follow Me

Practicing the Practice at Home

WHAT IS "WELCOME ALL" ABOUT?
Hospitality. Welcome. These words are a part of our culture—but often it means a beautifully set table or a "Martha Stewart" worthy meal. Here, we are not so worried about achieving the perfect "Instagram-worthy" holiday table, or the fanciest recipe (although those can for sure be a treat that will make guests feel special). In naming this unit "Welcome All" we are grounding ourselves in the faith practice of hospitality: the idea of being intentional and authentic as we offer a genuine welcome to all God's people—both stranger and friend. As we open our hearts, our homes, our churches, and our capacity for friendship and community to not only those who are like us, but also to those who are different from us, we are offering the worth of all of God's people. It is this that is the very heart of the practice of hospitality.

STRANGERS TO FRIENDS
Perhaps as you or your children have been participating in this unit, "Welcome All," you have noticed individuals, families, or children who you may have seen at church, but don't know much beyond a brief chat in coffee hour. As a way to put the theory into practice, extend an invitation. Avoid the temptation to just reach out to people with children the same age, or adults of a similar generation. Instead, why not?

- Gather in a park for a walk, or picnic after worship to bring together families of all ages as well as individuals who may not have had an opportunity to spend time together outside of the church walls.
- Host a pot-luck dinner for participants in your group (or in your children's groups) for this session.
- Arrange to attend a free or low-cost community gathering as a church group (a street festival, community theatre, concert, or art show).
- Adopt a "grand friend." Many families are spread apart geographically, leaving grandparents and grandchildren, alike, missing out on regular companionship with another generation. If this is the case for your family, consider inviting an older adult in your congregation who has taken an interest in your children to be your "grand friend."

SERVICE WITH A SMILE
It is often hard for families with younger children to find opportunities to be involved in community service. Things like construction-based projects and

many soup kitchens have minimum ages. Hospitality, however is an area where children can excel, and bring much joy to those being served. Consider making the following types of volunteer jobs (if you are not sure where to start, talk with your pastor, the chair of your church's mission committee or do some research online):

- Staffing a water stop at a road race is a wonderful one-of opportunity suitable for all ages. Children can not only hand out water to thirsty participants, but they can cheer with homemade signs, cowbells and shouts of encouragement!
- Inquire about helping in the dining room at a local soup kitchen. While cooking and kitchen work is often restricted to teens and adults, there are many tasks to do including setting tables, greeting guests, and even making centerpiece or placecards to brighten up the dining room. Often in the lull between preparing and serving meals, there isn't much time to simply connect. Enter into conversation with guests, share stories or jokes—let the boundaries between guest and host come down for moments of human connection.
- Put your coloring and baking skills to good use for community first responders and church helpers. Purchase some simple cardboard "bakery boxes" that can be decorated with messages of thanks, and pack up homemade treats to be delivered to local first responders (fire, ambulance and police stations) and/or church helpers (not just the pastor and musician, but also the secretary, custodian and other "behind the scenes" workers).

7



Highlights

Youth Leader's Guide provides Activity Symbols to designate the type of activity included in the session, such as Art, Active Movement, Conversation, Drama, Game, Music, Quiet/Contemplative, Service, Technology, and Extra Prep. Abstract Thinking and Concrete Thinking are noted to help leaders plan age-appropriate activities for wider range of cognitive development among youth ages 11 – 18.

Session Overview

- What is this session about?
- What is the Bible story?
- How will youth connect?
- What needs to happen before the session?

Welcome Others

GENESIS 18:1-10

1

GOAL
Youth will discover what the Bible teaches about welcoming others and identify ways to become more hospitable.

WHAT IS THIS SESSION ABOUT?
During this session, we will explore a prime example of hospitality in the scriptures. We will learn that we should welcome others because God has welcomed us, and because we never know when we might find ourselves in a situation where we are outsiders. Finally, we will discover that when we give a warm welcome to others, we often receive unexpected blessings in return.

WHAT IS THE BIBLE STORY?
This lesson recalls the story of Abraham and Sarah entertaining strangers in Genesis 18. In the previous chapter, God told Abraham that he and his elderly wife would have a child. This child's lineage would be plentiful and forever blessed. In Genesis 18, Abraham encounters three strangers and invites them to his home. His household provides a space for the men to rest and offers them a hearty meal. After this, the strangers reaffirm the promise God made in the previous chapter—that Sarah would give birth.
This story teaches the importance of hospitality. Abraham did not hold back in extending the warmest welcome possible. So, too, should we be exuberant in our hospitality for others. Similarly, we learn of the reward that comes with showing hospitality. By giving such a warm welcome to their guests, Abraham and Sarah received an immense blessing in return.

HOW WILL YOUTH CONNECT?
While youth may be familiar with welcoming others in the context of church, they may not as readily connect God's mandate for hospitality to other areas of life. This lesson will demonstrate how to do so.

WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN BEFORE THE SESSION?
Note that one of the activities requires food. If this activity is selected, please consider any allergies or dietary restrictions.

PRAYER
Welcoming God, guide me as I guide your children to be more like you. Amen.

Confess—Session 1 5

Activity Symbols Legend:

- Art
- Active Movement
- Abstract Thinking
- Conversation
- Concrete Thinking
- Drama
- Game
- Music
- Quiet/Contemplative
- Service
- Technology
- Extra Prep

Welcome Others as God Welcomes You

GENESIS 1:1-2:4A AND GENESIS 2:4B-25

1

1 GATHER
As you gather, read the other side of this page about the topic for today. Once gathered, spend a few minutes introducing everyone. Say this prayer or own of your choosing:
Dear God, thank you for Your love, hospitality, and care. As You welcome us with kindness and compassion, may we welcome others. Amen.

2
Prepare to respond in three minutes or less to one of the following discussion prompts. The person whose birthday is closest to June 1 goes first. When finished that person invites another. And so on.

- Tell about a time when you extended hospitality to or received hospitality from someone. What made it memorable?
- Tell about a time when you felt unwelcomed or excluded.
- Why do you think we hesitate to welcome people who are different from us?
- Name some challenges and opportunities of welcoming and extending hospitality to people who are different from you.

3 FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE
Discuss the "Finding the Practice in the Bible" section on back.
Read the two accounts of creation found in Genesis 1:1-2:4a and Genesis 2:4b-25 and discuss:
a. How does God extend hospitality to creation, including humanity?
b. How is humanity called to care for creation?
c. React to the statement that we can only show hospitality to others because God has first extended hospitality to the entire creation.

4 Fill in the diagram with the characteristics of a good host and guest, noting overlap between the two categories. Then go back and circle the aspects of being a host or guest that you do well. Draw rectangles around the aspects you would like to do better. Take turns naming something you wish to improve.

5 **WAYS TO EXTEND HOSPITALITY THIS WEEK**
List ways to extend hospitality this week.

-
-
-

Welcome All—Session 1 28

Café Discussion Guide

A two-page reproducible guide is included in the **Congregational Guide** for each session of the unit. This guide may be used with older youth, college-age people, and young adults, as well as small study groups.



Highlights

Think of the **Adult Reflection Guide** as a workbook or journal. It has the same flow of the session as other age groups but is filled with information about the practice, engaging adults through study, reflection questions, space for writing or drawing, and suggestions for practicing the practice.

The Adult Reflection Guide may be used in an adult study group along with the **Adult Leader's Guide**.

The Adult Reflection Guide is also a great resource for individuals who wish to learn about a practice as a self-study or who are unable to attend group meetings.

ONE

WELCOME OTHERS AS GOD WELCOMES YOU
GENESIS 1-2:4A; GENESIS 2:4B-25

In his life and teachings, welcoming all, or hospitality was Jewish faith. As a Jew he was informed by the Hebrew Scriptures and frequently lifted up its imperative to welcome strangers, history of ancient Israel and found throughout the Bible.

The first aspect to consider in this practice of hospitality, we can only welcome others because we have first been welcomed to the place to begin is the beginning. The two biblical accounts 1-2:4a and Genesis 2:4b-25 emphasize different aspects of it describes how God created every living thing and saw that it every thing and every one. In the second account, God places and Eve, in a garden and tells them to take care of everything.

In both creation stories, humans and all other living things welcomed by God. A relationship is established. So, a fundamental hospitality is that we can only welcome others because we have had a place prepared for us by God.

We belong here. We all do. Every Living Thing. This attitude find ourselves in the position of host. We avoid any feelings of guests because, at heart, we believe them to be fellow creature by God and are loved by God as we are. We treat them as we are the vulnerable guests.

GETTING STARTED
INTRODUCING THE PRACTICE

HOSPITALITY DEFINED
Consider the following definitions of hospitality by two theologians:

"Hospitality is the practice of God's welcome by reaching across difference to participate in God's actions bringing justice and healing to our world in crisis."
—Lety M. Russell

"A life of hospitality begins in worship, with a recognition of God's grace and generosity. Hospitality is not first a duty and responsibility; it is first a response of love and gratitude for God's love and welcome to us."
—Christine Pohl

To ponder:

- How have you felt welcomed by God?
- Reflect on a moment in your life where you witnessed hospitality reflected in one of the definitions above. Write any words or phrases that come to mind here.

GOD WELCOMES ALL
Meditate for a few moments on the words to this song. You may want to sing it or say the words out loud.

"God Welcomes All" in Glory to God Hymnal, #399 or bit.ly/GodWelcomesAll

God welcomes all, strangers and friends; God's love is strong and it never ends.

ONE

Welcome Others as God Welcomes You
GENESIS 1-2:4A, GENESIS 2:4B-25

GOAL
Participants will

- Consider hospitality as a response to God's abundant welcome of us
- Explore biblical foundations of hospitality
- Identify concrete acts of welcome and hospitality

WHAT IS THIS SESSION ABOUT?
To discover the foundational truth about hospitality, we start at the beginning: we welcome others because we have first been welcomed and have a place prepared for us by God. We belong in God's good creation. We all do. From this place of belonging, we share welcome and practice hospitality with both stranger and friend.

In this first aspect of practicing hospitality, we revisit the early stories of Creation with an eye toward ways God showed welcome to the first humans. We consider the biblical call to practice hospitality not only with friends, but with strangers. We reflect on our current levels of offering hospitality in unfamiliar situations and imagine different ways to practice hospitality and offer welcome. This first aspect grounds our understanding in who we are and whose we are. It will stretch us to think about how we welcome God's beloved.

WHAT IS THE BIBLE STORY?
Biblical scholars affirm the purpose of the two creation stories (Genesis 1-2:4a, Genesis 2:4b-25) is to teach us about who God is and about God's relationship with humanity and the world. One could argue that creating the world and inviting humans to be part of it was the greatest act of hospitality ever shown. As part of God's good creation, humans are created in the image of God. This generous gift further affirms the abundant welcome God extends to humans as God's beloved.

WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN BEFORE THE SESSION?

- Distribute copies of the Adult Reflection Guide to participants and have them read through the first aspect. This first session does not assume they have read it; however, in case some are using this for the first time when you meet.
- If possible, read the foundational story at the end of this leader's guide. It is also found at the end of the Adult Reflection Guide.
- Read through this session and determine which options you will use. Consider how much time you have and what activities best meet the needs of your group. You may wish to combine some options or adjust them.
- Pray for all who will be part of this study, including yourself! Have fun leading it.
- Gather supplies needed.

Foundational Essay

WELCOME OTHERS
LYNNE BAAB

INTRODUCTION
If Christians are known for anything, it is how we welcome others. Greeters welcome visitors and members to worship with a smile and a handshake or hug. Churches enthusiastically proclaim that all are welcome to our worship community. We take extra efforts to make others comfortable, especially those who are new or visiting. Communal meals seem to happen all the time, providing an inviting space for all to share food and fellowship.

A helpful definition of Christian hospitality lays out the gift and challenge of this practice. Adele Ahlberg Calhoun writes, "Hospitality creates a safe, open place where a friend or stranger can enter and experience the welcoming spirit of Christ in another."¹

Welcoming others is certainly core to the Christian life. It is not always so easy to practice, however, even with those we love the most. It can be a joy, but it can also be a challenge to create that open, safe space, especially when people impose on our own comfort levels or are unsure or leamed. This essay invites you to reflect on various dimensions of welcoming others as we strive to follow Christ and practice welcoming others the way Jesus did.

At the very heart of hospitality is a commitment to welcome one another, those who are like us and those who are not. The God we learn about in the Bible and from our faith ancestors desires a loving relationship with us. This relationship goes both ways; it's not just one-sided. There are responsibilities for both parties. In the Old Testament we learn about God's continual establishment of covenants with people. God promises to be with people and protect them if they in turn protect the vulnerable (i.e., provide hospitality) in their midst. People continually fail to live up to their side of the pact and covenant is broken. The prophets continually remind people they are not living up to their part of the bargain and may lose God's favor. After some time and much grief, God approaches them again, offering to be their God if they will in turn protect others.

Jesus had a lot to say about hospitality as he had learned about it in the Hebrew Scriptures, and it was a central practice in his life and teachings.

1. Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook* (Downer's Grove, IL: IVP Books 2015), 161.

Foundational Essay

The **Foundational Essay**, written by a biblical scholar, provides a deep dive into the practice. It is included in the Adult Reflection Guide and Adult Leader's Guide as well as the **Congregational Guide**.



YouTube Channel

- We have a YouTube channel called [Growing Faith Resources](#)
- We will be offering free videos for Follow Me this includes a video about each practice and for each session. Great for adults.
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The sojourner who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the sojourner as yourself, for you were sojourner in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God. —Leviticus 19:34, au. trans.

Many points to the story of Abraham offering hospitality to the angels in Genesis 18 as a model of hospitality.

Jewish Rules
It would be unusual to invite a Gentile into your home

Host provides:
Achila (feeding)
Shitiya (drinking)
Linah (lodging)

Guest, in turn:
offers specific blessings
follows family rules
eats only the food offered

The guest was protected as a member of your family.

מִיְחֻוּת תִּסְבָּחָה (hakhnasat orchim)
Ξενία (Xenia)

Hospitium

... since the spirit brought you here to me, do not try to please me nor spoil me with lying words. It is not for that I will entertain and befriend you, but for fear of Zeus, the god of guests, and for my own pity." —Odyssey, 14.386-389

In Greek (Roman) tradition, all guests were under the protection of Zeus (Jupiter). In myths, the gods often visited homes in disguise.

Greek and Roman Rules

Hosts provides:
food, a bath, shelter, protection

Hosts should not question one's identity or purpose until after needs have been met.

Guest, in turn:
offers not be a burden or threat
shares news or stories
reciprocates with a place to stay

Greece: Guest token was sometimes given to a host as a sign of the relationship between the two families.

Rome: Legally binding contract stated the relationship between guest and host. It was a significant social relationship.

upper room for eating and/or sleeping
living and sleeping quarters
workshop and kitchen
courtyard

typical Jewish house

1st-Century Hospitality

Households were multigenerational and often multifamily.

Only the most wealthy would have separate quarters for guests. When visiting, you would be part of the family.

workshops
extra rooms
office
water
shops

typical Roman house

courtyard
kitchen
dining area
atrium, where guests gather
bedrooms
shops

In cities, many lived in apartments with other families crowded together.

Animals were kept in the courtyard and house.

Women would leave their home once married and join their husband's household.

servants and enslaved people: Considered part of the household but held few, if any, rights.

Peace
Shalom (shah-LAWM)
Peace be with you.
Shalom aleichem (SHUH-ah-ah-LAY-kum)

Upon entering a house:
Host: God bless the one who arrives.
Guest: God bless the one who is seated.

Men and women would not touch in public.

Greetings

Rejoice!
Chaire! (KHEY-rah-Lay)
Chaire! (KHEY-rah)

Hi or Goodbye
Ave (AH-way)
Salve (SAL-way)

Romans greeted one another with a kiss (or kisses!).

Greeks preferred a handshake.

Servants or members of the household would place all the food out before a meal.

Bread (ἄρτος ἄρτος) was made from wheat, barley, or other grains and was prepared daily. In cities, dough would be prepared at home and baked in communal ovens. The word for "bread" was interchangeable with the word for "food."

Bring your knife! Fingers were your primary utensil, but guests would bring their own knife to the table.

No chairs! People reclined when eating. Your place around a table reflected your social ranking and your relationship to the host.

Simple courses were served by slaves, servants, or lower members of the household.

Nine was considered the perfect number of guests for a dinner party.

Men and women ate separately.

Men and women dined together in Rome; children would also be included in special feasts.

Jewish Menu

lentils, beans
cucumbers and onions
herbs
goat cheese
lamb

fish
grapes, figs
pomegranates, dates
almonds
pigeon

Roman Menu

puls, a porridge with vegetables
lentils and peas
herbs
cheeses
garum, a fish sauce
fish or mussels

pork or lamb
dried or fresh fruit
Specialty Dishes:
stuffed dorm mice
flamingo tongue

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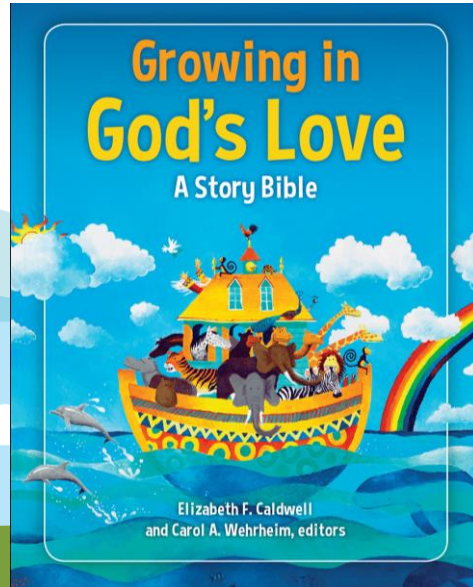
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- Follow Jesus
- Welcome All
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Components: ages 3-10

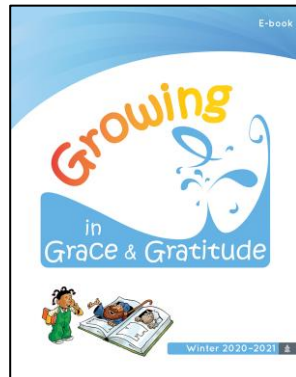
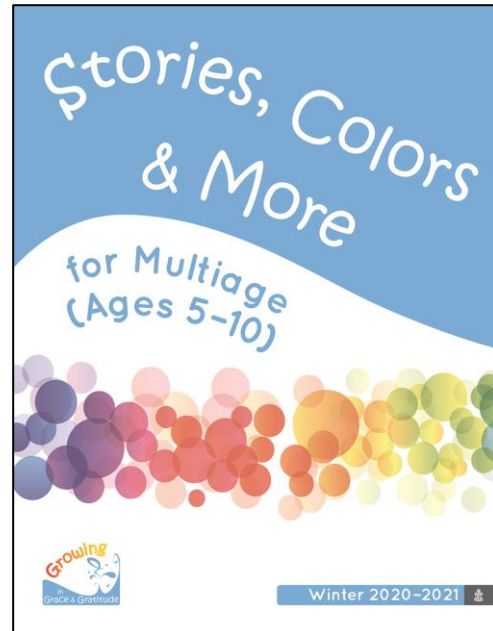
- Leader's Materials
- Stories, Colors, & More color pack
- Music CD

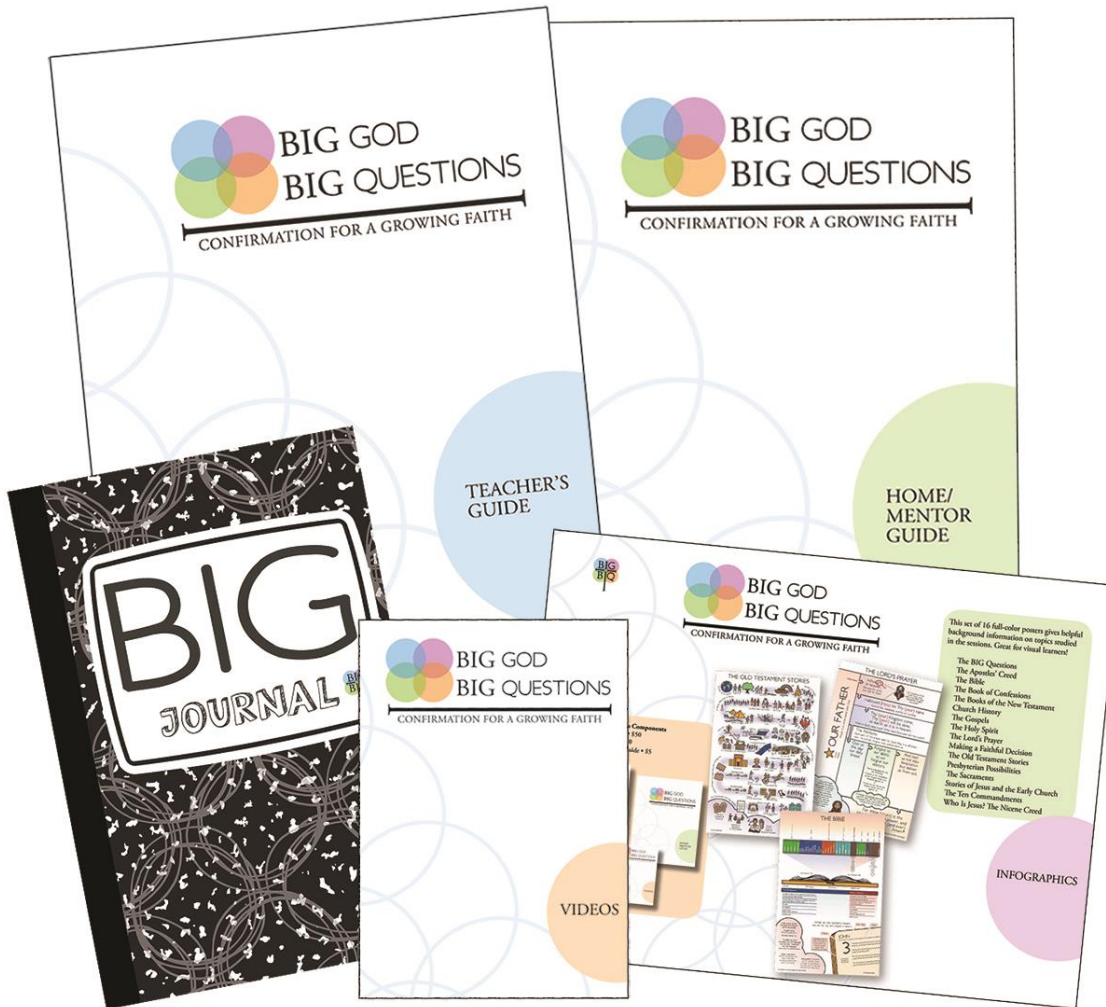
Components Toddler

- Guide for Caregivers
- Stories, Colors, & More
- Enrichment Activities
- Resource CD for Toddlers



[Free Resources page](#)
online session
adaptations, coloring
sheet, Grace sightings,
ebook, and story audio.





Youth study the questions they are asked when they join the church.
[Learn more about Big God Big Questions.](#)

Features:

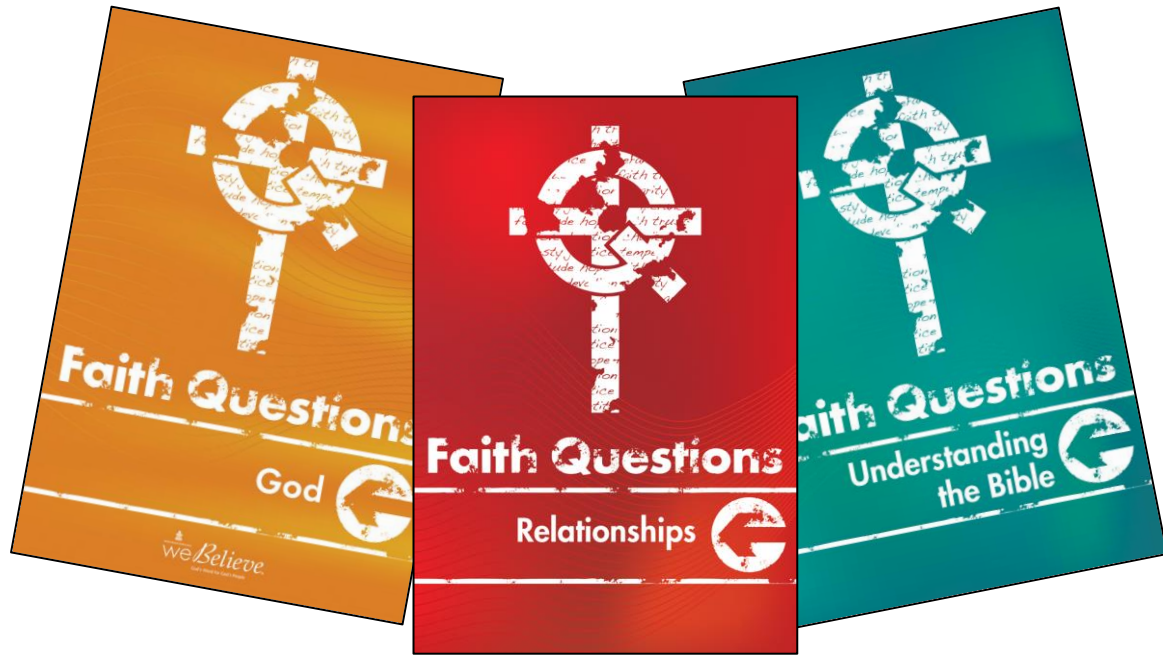
- 12 sessions (90 minutes) that can be broken into 24 sessions (45 minutes)
- Each session explores an aspect of the questions through Bible study and local church context

Components: (available for print or download)

- Teachers' Guide
- Student Journal (print only)
- Home/Mentor Guide (print only)
- Infographic posters
- DVD
- Class kit which includes everything and enough for a class of 5



[Big God Big Questions 12 Tips Guide](#)



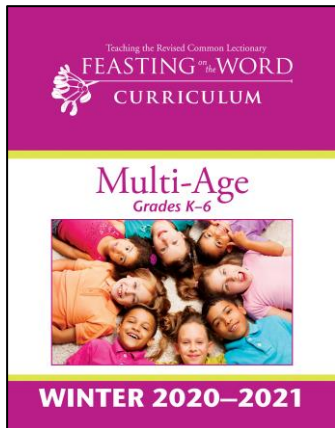
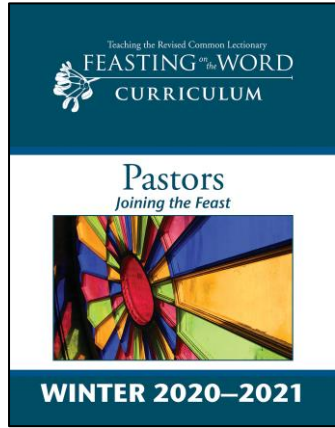
Explore real questions from real youth.

Features:

- Leader's Guide (print) and Coffeehouse version (download)
- 4-6 sessions per study
- Movie, media, and other technology connections to supplement the curriculum
- 32 Studies that explore the following categories
 - Bible Studies
 - The Basics of Faith
 - Real-Life Topics
 - Understanding Theology



[Free Coffeehouse versions \(download\)](#)
[List of all Faith Questions studies](#)



Study the lectionary together as a whole church.

[Learn more about Feasting on the Word Curriculum.](#)

Features:

- Background information from *Feasting on the Word Commentary* series
- Lectionary-based with each age group exploring the same lectionary passage

Components: (available for print or download)

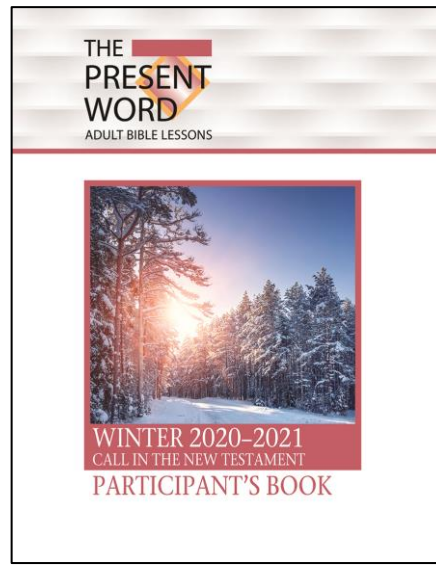
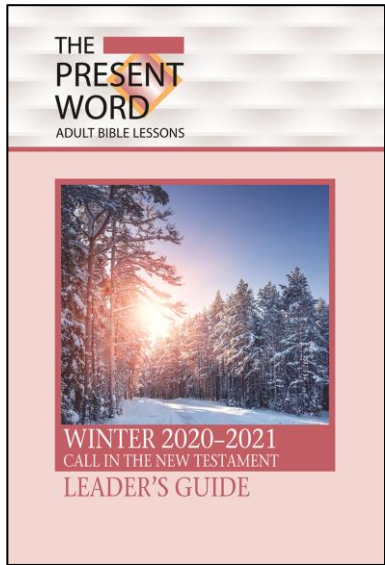
- Joining the Feast connect education with worship
- Leader's Guide
- Color Pack (for children's age levels)
- Music CD (for children's age levels)

Age Levels:

- Adults
- Young Adults
- Youth
- Tweens
- Grades 3-4
- Grades K-2
- Multiage K-6



[Virtual Guide](#)



Read and study the whole Bible in 6 years

[Learn more about The Present Word Curriculum.](#)

Features:

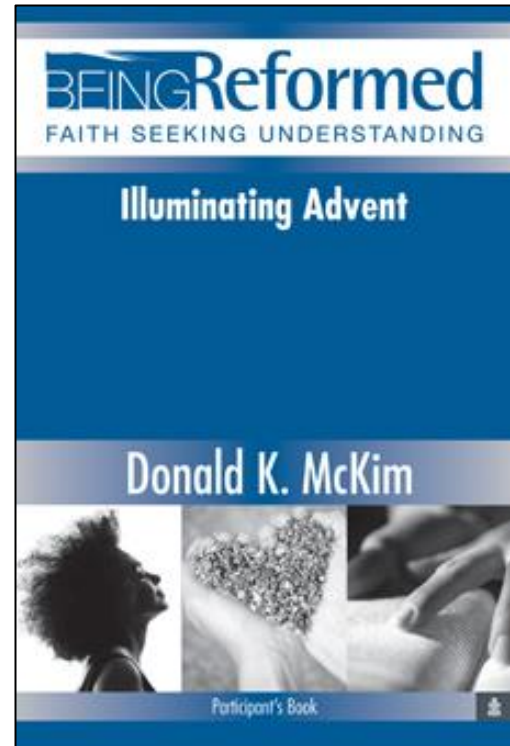
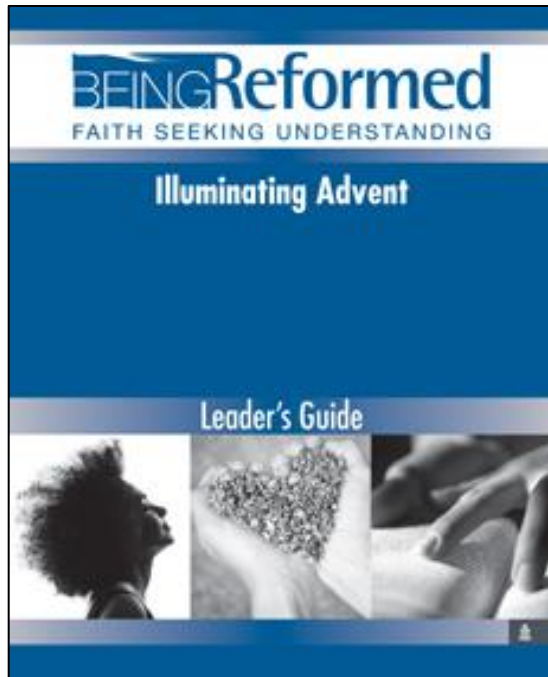
- Based on the *Uniform Series: International Series of Sunday School Lessons*
- Easy to use quarterly resources
- Adult Bible Study used by Christians all over the world

Components:

- Leader's Guide
- Participant's Book
- Worship Leaflets
- Large Print editions available
- Braille editions available



[Ideas for using The Present Word](#)




Short-term topical studies for Adults

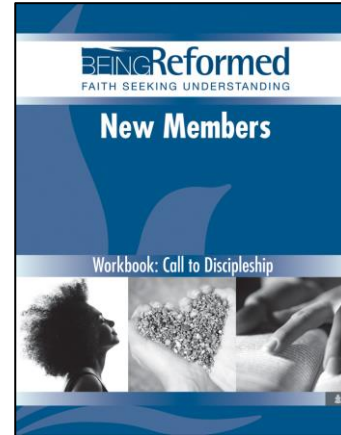
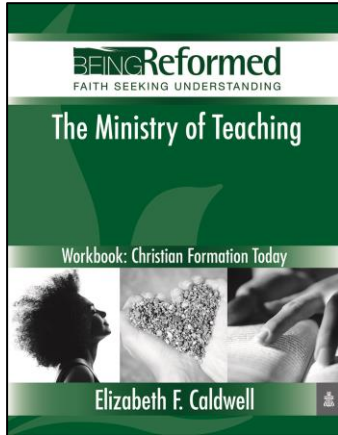
Features:

- Biblically based courses that provide a foundational understanding of the Reformed Faith
- Written by well known and respected scholars and educators
- 46 studies that explore the following categories
 - Bible Studies
 - Being Presbyterian
 - Church History
 - Christian Living
 - Advent and Lent
 - Confessions
 - Mission and Social Justice

Components:

- Leader's Guide
- Participant Books

 [See the full list of studies](#)



Enrich your leaders with these studies

Features:

- Workbook-style learning
- Experts in ministry sharing their knowledge
- Questions for reflection
- Additional workbook studies include:
 - Baptism
 - The Lord's Supper
 - Exploring Confirmation
 - Race and Reconciliation

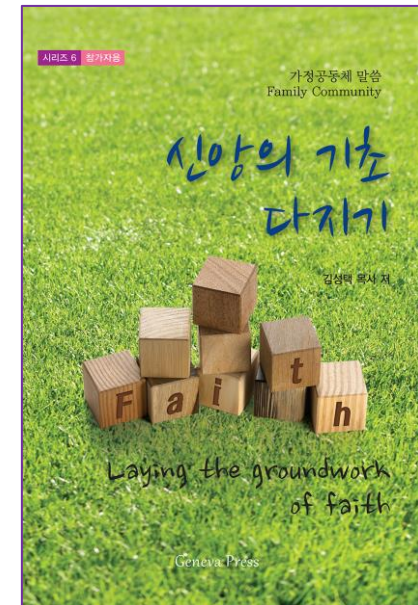
Components:

- Single workbook with everything inside for both the leader and participant



Kingdom Life

- Adult Curriculum
- Family Community
- Adult Curriculum



Crecemos en Gracia y Gratitud (Growing in Grace and Gratitude)

- Children's curriculum for ages 3-5 and Multiage

Celebremos Su Palabra (Feasting on the Word)

- Adult curriculum

Check out our Curriculum Catalog

2021-2022

Christian Education and Ministry Resources

BEING Reformed
FAITH SEEKING UNDERSTANDING
Baptism

GOOD WHITE RACIST?

THE BEAUTIFUL BLACK BOYS WHO BELIEVE IN A BETTER WORLD

Growing in God's Love
Parables Jesus Told

Follow Jesus
MULTIAGE CHILDREN AGES 6-10
LEADER'S GUIDE

CELEBREMOS SU PALABRA CURRÍCULO
Grupos adultos

Follow Me
LEADER'S GUIDE

THE PC(USA) STORE

EN ESPAÑOL EN LAS PÁGINAS 36-38
한국어 자료는 페이지 39-40 를 참조하십시오

www.pcusastore.com

This is a great place to learn more about all the resources shared today.

Check out our [Digital Catalog](#) with clickable links.

Still have questions? Contact me ksnyder@presbypub.com