

RE•FORMATION

THEN • NOW • ALWAYS

Rocky Mountain Synod Assembly — May 5-7, 2017

Re•Formation: Always Session 2 Participant Guide Topic: NAME

Welcome to Re•Formation: Always Session 2! Below is a guide to today's session.

Session 2 Theme: “Living the Catechism in the World”

Session 2 Goals: 1) *meaningful small group conversation* (even in disagreement!) that 2) builds trust and 3) invites us to continue reflecting on faith lived in the world through 4) ELCA social statements and the Small Catechism.

Session 2 Overview: Today's session will focus on exploring Luther's Small Catechism and the ELCA's Social Statements, and putting it all together to ask: what does it mean to live out the Catechism in the world? You'll meet in a small group for this session (each small group will focus on only ONE of the following topics: Church in Society; Peace; Economic Life; Race, Ethnicity and Culture; or Caring for Creation.)

Session 2 Outline

1. **Gather/Welcome:** Your Facilitator will welcome you and help the large group break into your smaller topic groups.
2. **Introductions in small groups:** Take a moment to (briefly!) share your name, congregation, and location with one another.
3. **Introduction to goals for Re•Formation: Always Session 2:** On behalf of the *Re•Formation: Always* planning team, welcome! As we continue to reflect on the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, we're asking what it means to be a Lutheran Christian today, and how we live out that Christian identity in our daily lives in the world. Today's session will focus on connecting our Christian identity to specific areas of life together in the world. Like yesterday, the goal of this session is *meaningful conversation*.

What is the Small Catechism? Martin Luther wrote the Small Catechism almost 500 years ago in the hope that households would read it together as a guide to faith in daily life. Luther intended the Catechism to be simple and clear, easy to read and understand. Overall, the Catechism was grounded in two assumptions: 1) God is present with us in the world everywhere and always, in everything we do and 2) Every person—no matter how we spend our day—has a *vocation*, a holy calling, to serve God in our daily work and relationships, as citizens, neighbors, and friends.

What are the ELCA Social Statements? “ELCA social statements are teaching and policy documents that provide broad frameworks to assist us in thinking about and discussing social issues in the context of faith and life. They are meant to help communities and individuals with moral formation, discernment and thoughtful engagement with current social issues as we participate in God’s work in the world. Social statements also set policy for the ELCA and guide its advocacy and work as a publicly engaged church. They result from an extensive process of participation and deliberation and are adopted by a two-thirds vote of an ELCA churchwide assembly.” (www.elca.org/faith/faith-and-society/social-statements)

Guidelines for healthy conversations: A few reminders: please strive to make sure every person in your group has a chance to be heard. Please strive to listen and respond to one another with kindness and respect. When (not if!) you disagree with someone, please first seek to understand their position and perspective better. And please, before you share publicly what someone else has shared in your small group (either online or face to face), ask them if it’s ok.

4. Small Group discussion: Small Catechism and Social Statements

Part 1: Social Statements

- 1) Ask volunteer to read the social statement summary aloud (or take turns) while the other group members follow along.
- 2) After the statement summary is read, each group member shares: What did you notice? What did you wonder?

Part 2: Small Catechism

- 1) Ask a volunteer to read the excerpts from the Small Catechism aloud (or take turns) while the other group members follow along.
- 2) After the texts from the Catechism are read, each group member shares: What did you notice? What did you wonder?

Part 3: Large Group Check-In: Your Facilitator will lead this part.

- 🎬 Five-minute check-in: anyone can share with the whole group one thing you noticed, or wondered, in your small group time.
- 🎬 Introduction to final part of discussion: Martin Luther’s most famous question, taken from the Catechism, is “what does this mean?” As Luther continually asked this question, now we’ll ask this together: reflecting on the sessions yesterday and today, and our theme of living out Christian identity in the world, what does this mean?
- 🎬 Return to your small groups for Part 4.

Part 4: What Does This Mean? (10 min.)

- 1) What does this mean for me (as a Lutheran Christian)?
- 2) What does this mean for my congregation?
- 3) What does this mean for the church?

Wrap Up (5-7 min.): Your facilitator will lead this part.

3-minute Wrap-Up: Anyone in the room is invited to share *one thing* you will take away from your small group conversations. What is one insight you have gained about living out Christian identity in the world?

THANK YOU for your willingness to participate, share, trust each other and share respectful and faithful conversation!

DON'T FORGET to look for Pastor Zach Parris at the "Re•Formation: Always" table and share what you're learning in a short video interview!

Closing Prayer (all pray together aloud):

Gracious God, in Jesus Christ you lived among your people in the world, teaching compassion, justice and peace. In Christ you were crucified, died, and rose again. Through the Holy Spirit, you make us into Christ's body through baptism, and you send us into the world with a holy calling every day. Help us and guide us in your grace, so together we may continue to do your work with our hands. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Go in peace, serve the Lord! Thanks be to God!