



Praying to the Lord of the Harvest, LCMS World Mission, in collaboration with its North American and worldwide partners, will share the Good News of Jesus with 100 million unreached or uncommitted people by the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017.

Lesson 7—Celebrate

Memory Verse: Luke 15:10 (NIV)

“In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

Connect What was the best party you’ve ever been to? What made it so great?

Study

View Video

God loves to _____!

- a) God celebrates in creation, resurrection, revelation
- b) God celebrates as we celebrate in _____ and _____

Even as He celebrates, there are things that break God’s _____.

- c) The experience of a parent losing a _____, even for just a moment
- d) God’s compassion for the _____ (Matthew 9:36)

God _____ when the lost are found.

- e) Luke 15 – There is a celebration after each _____
- f) God celebrates _____!
- g) That’s the point of these past 50 days. There are fewer things that bring greater celebration than knowing that God uses _____ to bring _____ into His kingdom.

Celebrate the Joy

- 1) Martin Luther once said, *“God is not a God of sadness, but the devil is. Christ is a God of joy. It is pleasing to the dear God whenever you rejoice or laugh from the bottom of your heart.”* How does joy express itself in the life of a believer?
- 2) What are some circumstances in which joy can be found in the midst of pain?
- 3) What about God makes you smile and laugh?

Celebrate the Homecoming

- 1) In Luke 15, Jesus tells parables about the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost sons. Jesus said, *“In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”* (Luke 15:10). What are some ways people get “lost” today?
- 2) Who close to you seems to be lost?
- 3) How does that make you feel?
- 4) When have you been lost?
- 5) How do you respond to the questions that Pastor Keurulainen asks, *“How many times has it been that this party [in heaven] was thrown in my honor? How many times have I been the one that strayed off, only to be rescued and carried home in the arms of love and grace? Shall I now sit here and watch as some neutral spectator? Why is it that I show more joy watching my favorite team celebrate a championship on the field than I do in knowing God’s joy in just one person who is safe at home with him”* (p.172)?

Celebrating the Community

- 1) Acts 2 describes the early church: *“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”* (Acts 2:42-47). Where did the early church find its joy?
- 2) How do we compare today?
- 3) Pastor Keurulainen states, *“Within the Church that Jesus commissioned to carry His message to the world, there is the gathering of people who are so filled with joy that they cannot help but constantly talk about it”* (p. 175). Talk about a time that you have shared your joy in Christ with someone. What are some ways that you share the joy of the Lord with fellow Christians?

Celebrating the Day

Martin Luther wrote, “*What could be more precious and nobler than an enlightened heart, a heart that knows God and all things, a heart that can judge rightly and speak truly in all things before God? Where could there be higher or greater joy than in a happy, secure and fearless conscience, a conscience that trusts in God and fears neither the world nor the devil?*” (Luther’s Works, Vo. 14, p. 100). What role does forgiveness play in our experience of joy?

Celebrating the Carefree Life

1) St. Paul writes, “*Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*” (Philip. 4:6-7). Pastor Keurulainen states, “*The best way I know how to deal with worry is to stop focusing on me and to begin focusing on God. And the best way I know how to do that is in prayer and in worship*” (p. 186). What are some things that you worry about?

2) Changed thinking leads to changed feelings. What are some practical ways that enable us to think about higher things?

Living with Hearts Ablaze

1) After the risen Jesus revealed Himself to the disciples on the road to Emmaus, “*They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?”*” (Luke 24:32). They could not contain the news that Jesus was alive. What gets in your way of proclaiming that Jesus is alive?

2) Pastor Keurulainen observes, “*The reality of Christian joy is compelling. The joy of the believer, be it in persecution or in times of suffering or in great celebration, is one of the most winsome qualities of the Christian witness and life*” (p. 195). Share three specific things you personally are going to do to connect people to Jesus. What can you do as a group to share Christ within your community?

Reach/Serve

As a group, plan an outreach event within your community.

Offer Sing Beautiful Savior

Pray that each person in the group would a powerful mission responder.



1 Beau - ti - ful Sav - ior, King of Cre - a - tion,
2 Fair are the mead - ows, Fair are the wood - lands,
3 Fair is the sun - shine, Fair is the moon - light,
4 Beau - ti - ful Sav - ior, Lord of the na - tions,



Son of God and Son of Man!
Robed in flow'rs of bloom - ing spring;
Bright the spar - kling stars on high;
Son of God and Son of Man!



Tru - ly I'd love Thee, Tru - ly I'd serve Thee,
Je - sus is fair - er, Je - sus is pur - er;
Je - sus shines bright - er, Je - sus shines pur - er,
Glo - ry and hon - or, Praise, ad - o - ra - tion,



Light of my soul, my Joy, my Crown.
He makes our sor - r'wing spir - it sing.
Than all the an - gels in the sky.
Now and for - ev - er - more be Thine!

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For Further Study

Celebrating His Greatness

- 1) Pastor Keurulainen quotes Heschel noting, "The awe of God is 'to sense in small things the beginning of infinite significance, to sense the ultimate in common and the simple, to feel in the rush of the passing, the stillness of the eternal'" (p. 181). When have you experienced a sense of awe by observing creation?
- 2) What is revealed as we read the Bible that can't be revealed by looking at the wonders of nature? Psalm 69:30 states, "I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify him with thanksgiving." How do we magnify the Lord?
- 3) Name three things you have seen that demonstrate the wonder and majesty of God. Give God thanks for each of these and, above all others, express to Him what the Cross means to you.

Celebrating God's Saints

The Book of Concord states, "*Our confession approves giving honor to the saints. This honor is threefold. The first is thanksgiving....The second kind of veneration is the strengthening of our faith....The third honor is imitation....*" (P. 192). Who are some Christians whose lives would be good to study?