

SMALL GROUP LEADER SHEET: MAP OF LUTHER'S GERMANY

Matthew 16:13-20; 2 Corinthians 3:12; Acts 28:30-31



INSTRUCTIONS

Make sure each learner has a Learner Sheet for use during your discussion. At the end of the lesson they can take the Learner Take-Home Sheet to use with their household at dinner or bedtime.

Be sure to start on a positive note. Welcome each learner by name. Let them know you're glad they're here! If anyone is absent, mention you'll be praying for that person together. Small Group Time is for give-and-take discussion. Your main job is to draw learners out and get them talking about the theme. Ask open-ended questions that will provoke responses. Once the conversation begins, intervene only to bring it back on track or to stimulate more talk.

QUICK PREP

- Peter makes an important confession. He says to Jesus "You are the Messiah." To call Jesus *Messiah* means that we can see in him and his work a way of life that will bring salvation for us and creation.
- Peter's great confession says that Jesus is "the Son of the Living God." This means that in Jesus we see as much of God as it is possible to see. The God we see through Jesus is the living God, who brings life and truth, unlike false gods who bring emptiness and death.
- Jesus says that "the gates of Hades (hell)" will not be stronger than the church. The gates of hell symbolize everything that stands against God's will—death, evil, and division among people.
- The church will be given the "keys of the kingdom." These words symbolize the church's authority or ability to invite people into the reign of God.

PRAYER TIME

Go around the group and have each learner share the best and worst thing from his or her week. Remind learners to pay special attention to (for example) the person on their right, as they will be praying for that person in a moment (alternate prayer partners from week to week). When the group has finished, prayer partners can pray for each other.



THE BIG IDEA

Martin Luther was a real person who lived 500 years ago in Germany.



LEARNING GOAL

Learners will discover that Martin Luther is a key figure in the Reformation and world history.

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BIG FUN IDEA

Martin Luther had a great love of food. In honor of Luther, go out for dinner with your group at a German restaurant. Try eating some authentic German food. Offer a table prayer from the Small Catechism. How does the food compare to some of your favorite food?

BIG SERVING IDEA

Martin Luther loved children. Have a "Parent's Night Out" for church members, where your group supervises children at church while parents go out for the evening. Plan to lead some structured activities, in addition to some free time. Perhaps even have a little story time about the life of Martin Luther.

KEY WORDS

MONK is a person who devotes his life to living in solitude with fellow members of a religious community. Martin Luther became a monk after almost being killed by lightning.

THESES are statements made to provoke an argument or discussion. Luther posted 95 Theses on the door of the Wittenberg church in the hopes of engaging church leaders in conversation about his concerns.

JURISPRUDENCE means the system of law. Luther's dad wanted him to study jurisprudence and become a lawyer.

DIET is a legislative assembly held for the purpose of questioning someone. Luther appeared at several diets throughout his ministry (though, as a very large man, he rarely went on any food diets).

RECAT means to withdraw a statement or belief. Luther was asked to recant what he stated at the Diet of Worms. He did not.

DISCUSSION TIME

Use these questions to kick off a conversation about the theme:

- Spend a few moments reviewing the events of Martin Luther's life using pages 39-41 in *The Lutheran Handbook II*. What events seem the most important? Which ones are confusing to you? Which ones seem to be unimportant? Why do you think Luther was such a controversial figure? If Luther were around today, what do you think he would say about "his" church?
- Luther was one of many heroes in the church. Who are some people in your life that have helped you along your faith journey? What have they done or said that has made you closer to God? Do you consider them to be heroes? How can you be that kind of "hero" to others?
- Take a look at Acts 28:30-31. These verses talk about the time that Paul lived in Rome and told others about Jesus. This was a highly dangerous thing to do, much like it was for Luther living in Germany. How does God call you to act boldly? Does God require you to risk your life in order to be a Christian? Spend some time talking about what it means to be a disciple. There are many ways to live out your faith. Encourage young people to use the gifts God has given them to tell others about Jesus.

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PRAYER TIME

Remember your partner's prayer needs—record them here.

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LEARNER TAKE-HOME SHEET: MAP OF LUTHER'S GERMANY

Matthew 16:13-20



KEY WORDS

Keep a family white board someplace near the dinner table, and write these words on it. Try writing a family definition for each one during the week.

MONK

THESES

JURISPRUDENCE

DIET

RECANT

Take this sheet home and keep it someplace near the dinner table, like on the fridge. At least three times next week at dinner, use Prayer Time and one other family activity to make your confirmation learning come alive!

PRAYER TIME

Gather at the family table or other special place in your home. Ask each person to share the name of someone who impacted their faith life. After everyone has named someone, offer this prayer:

God, we thank you for the people who have guided us along our journey of faith. Today we especially thank you for (insert names of people you know). Help us bless others, as they have blessed us. Amen

TALK TIME

- Spend some time talking about what you know (or think you know) about Martin Luther. What did he do? What motivated him? Why do we bear his name in our churches (Lutheran)? What place does he have in the Lutheran church of the 21st century?
- Take a look at "Luther's Germany" on pages 39-41 in *The Lutheran Handbook II*. Read through the timeline of events in Luther's life. What are some of the more significant things that happened to Luther? Spend some time looking at the map of Germany. What do you notice about the distance between the various events? How would 15th century travel impact Luther's ability to let people know about the Reformation?
- Luther was bold and outspoken about his beliefs. We are called to do the same. What are ways that your family can work together to let people know what's important to you?

WEB TIME

Enter "Martin Luther" or "Reformation" into a search engine. See what kinds of things Luther did as part of his ministry. Go to www.elca.org/questions to see what you can find about Martin Luther's influence on Lutherans in the 21st century.

RITUAL TIME

Luther wrote the Small Catechism for use in the home. Spend some time each day reading the Catechism together as a family. Allow time for discussion. (If you need a copy, see the version in *The Lutheran Handbook II*.) When you've gotten through the Catechism, lend your copy to another family and encourage them to read the Catechism together, too!