



Discipleship **Ideas for the Iowa District West**

Introduction

The following “Discipleship Ideas” from the readings are not intended for any other purpose than to provide ideas of application from each reading that may be included in the taught and preached Word for this particular Sunday to help teach a life of discipleship. L.C.M.S. pastors are gifted at preaching Law and Gospel, but often lack in the matter of personal applications to the Word. This tool is for no other reason than to offer some seeds of thought to do that.

THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS - SERIES C
December 27, 2015

From C.P.H. About the Cover: Simeon, a longtime faithful servant of God, is overjoyed because he has been allowed to see with his own eyes the salvation God had promised to His people from the beginning of time. He holds in his hands the Babe of Bethlehem, the revealed Savior of the world. We share Simeon’s joy each time we hear God’s Word, remember our Baptism, or receive Holy Communion, for we also then see His salvation.

First Reading; Exodus 13:1–3a, 11–15

¹The LORD said to Moses, ²“Consecrate to me all the firstborn. Whatever is the first to open the womb among the people of Israel, both of man and of beast, is mine.”

³Then Moses said to the people, “Remember this day in which you came out from Egypt, out of the house of slavery, for by a strong hand the LORD brought you out from this place. No leavened bread shall be eaten.

¹¹“When the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as he swore to you and your fathers, and shall give it to you, ¹²you shall set apart to the LORD all that first opens the womb. All the firstborn of your animals that are males shall be the LORD’s. ¹³Every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb, or if you will not redeem it you shall break its neck. Every firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem. ¹⁴And when in time to come your son asks you, ‘What does this mean?’ you shall say to him, ‘By a strong hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery.’

¹⁵For when Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the LORD killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of animals. Therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all the males that first open the womb, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.”

1st Reading Discipleship Notes: Redemption is costly business. To buy back someone or something required significant sacrifice. Thank God such redemptive sacrifice has been made for us in God’s own Son who died for us. Thank God we no longer need to make redemptive sacrifice for ourselves or others, man or beast. But in thanking God, may we also realize the grace God has given us that we can be truly thankful in offering to God our gifts and offerings for His kingdom work. Herein lies an application we can take from this reading. And like the redemptive offering it speaks about, it is because God has redeemed us that we can offer the gifts we of gratitude and love that we do.

Epistle Reading Colossians 3:12–17

¹²Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. ¹⁷And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Epistle Discipleship Notes: This reading is filled with specific applications for our spiritual life. Each of them has the reason of doing so which is that they can be done out of thankfulness to God through Jesus Christ.

Gospel Reading: Luke 2:22–40

²² When the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³(as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”) ²⁴and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.” ²⁵Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. ²⁷And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, ²⁸he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,
²⁹“Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace,
according to your word;

³⁰for my eyes have seen your salvation
³¹that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and for glory to your people Israel.”

³³And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him. ³⁴And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed ³⁵(and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”

³⁶And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, ³⁷and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

³⁹And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him.

Gospel Discipleship Notes: In this reading the two previous readings come together. Mary and Joseph willingly bring the child Jesus for the presentation to the Lord, making an offering of redemptive recall of how God preserved the first born of His people in Egypt not allowing the angel of death to have power over them. But we also see Simeon and Anna offering praise and thanksgiving to God as they came to the recognition of the Christ having been given to all mankind in the gift of this child. As Paul encouraged people to allow the peace of Christ to rule their hearts in our second reading, we see that peace falling over the lives of these two saints who were among the first to recognize the Christ. Because of the grace of God in our lives we also can grow in that peace which surpasses all understanding which is ours in Christ Jesus.

Adult/High School Youth Discipleship Bible Study Outline

Read Exodus 13:1–3a, 11–15

¹The LORD said to Moses, ²“Consecrate to me all the firstborn. Whatever is the first to open the womb among the people of Israel, both of man and of beast, is mine.”

³Then Moses said to the people, “Remember this day in which you came out from Egypt, out of the house of slavery, for by a strong hand the LORD brought you out from this place. No leavened bread shall be eaten.

¹¹“When the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as he swore to you and your fathers, and shall give it to you, ¹²you shall set apart to the LORD all that first opens the womb. All the firstborn of your animals that are males shall be the LORD’s. ¹³Every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb, or if you will not redeem it you shall break its neck. Every firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem. ¹⁴And when in time to come your son asks you, ‘What does this mean?’ you shall say to him, ‘By a strong hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery.

¹⁵For when Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the LORD killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of animals. Therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all the males that first open the womb, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.”

1. What does it mean to “consecrate” something (in this case the firstborn)?
2. In consecrating the firstborn, what were the people to recall and why?
3. Why was this to be an on-going concern after the people inhabited the promised land?
4. How was this process and ritual to be ultimately used for future generations?
5. In what ways might we see the same kind of thing happening in the Church today?
6. What application from this reading might you make for your life?

Read Colossians 3:12–17

¹²Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. ¹⁷And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

7. What were the words God inspired Paul to call God’s people and why?

8. How do all the attributes or qualities of the Christian life the people were encouraged to put on reflect the name the people were called?
9. Why is “love” above all others and how does it bind them all into perfect harmony?
10. In which of these areas of the Christian life do you struggle the most and how might you find help in that area to improve in that aspect of your life as a disciple?
11. How might this reading encourage us to live more serious lives of discipleship with regard to our faith?

READ: Luke 2:22–40

²² When the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³(as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”) ²⁴and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.” ²⁵Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. ²⁷And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, ²⁸he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

²⁹“Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace,
according to your word;
³⁰for my eyes have seen your salvation
³¹that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
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³³And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him. ³⁴And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed ³⁵(and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”

³⁶And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, ³⁷and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

³⁹And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him.

12. How was this Gospel reading associated with the reading in Exodus 13?

13. How was it that Simeon knew who this child was and what does that say about all people to whom Christ is made known?
14. How are Simeon's words of praise used in our liturgies and how do they make you feel about your relationship to God?
15. What was meant by Simeon's words in verses 34-35?
16. How was Simeon and Anna's response to the gift of the Christ child a response of faith like Paul encouraged in the Epistle reading for today?
17. What application of this Gospel reading will you apply to your life as a result of hearing it today?

Adult/High School Youth Discipleship Bible Study Outline (Leader's Guide)

Read Exodus 13:1–3a, 11–15

¹The LORD said to Moses, ²“Consecrate to me all the firstborn. Whatever is the first to open the womb among the people of Israel, both of man and of beast, is mine.”

³Then Moses said to the people, “Remember this day in which you came out from Egypt, out of the house of slavery, for by a strong hand the LORD brought you out from this place. No leavened bread shall be eaten.

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¹⁵For when Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the LORD killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of animals. Therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all the males that first open the womb, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.”

1. What does it mean to “consecrate” something (in this case the firstborn)?

To consecrate something is to “set it apart” for a holy purpose. The holy purpose in this case was to remember the salvation of the firstborn that were spared in the great Passover of the Israelite people in Egypt.

2. In consecrating the firstborn, what were the people to recall and why?

They were to recall the salvation of the firstborn that were spared in the great Passover of the Israelite people in Egypt.

3. Why was this to be an on-going concern after the people inhabited the promised land?

It was a process of recall that would lead to the concern of God’s redemption for all people. They would not only look back but also forward to the redemptive work God would perform through the Messiah who was yet to come.

4. How was this process and ritual to be ultimately used for future generations?

It was to be used both for recall and for instruction for each successive generation.

5. In what ways might we see the same kind of thing happening in the Church today?

Through the teaching and catechetical instruction we offer the children particularly with regard to the sacramental life of the church.

6. What application from this reading might you make for your life?

Read: Colossians 3:12–17

¹²Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. ¹⁷And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

7. What were the words God inspired Paul to call God's people and why?

God's "Chosen Ones" were the words God inspired Paul to call the people. This is because all are chosen to whom Christ is revealed and in whom there is faith in Christ given by the power of the Holy Spirit for salvation.

8. How do all the attributes or qualities of the Christian life the people were encouraged to put on reflect the name the people were called?

These are the attributes of the chosen people of God. They put on such things which are also the attributes of our loving and merciful God. As God's chosen ones, God's people reflect His love in such ways.

9. How is "love" above all others and how does it bind them all into perfect harmony?

Love is above all others since love is of God because God is love (1 John 4:7-8)

10. In which of these areas of the Christian life do you struggle the most and how might you find help in that area to improve in that aspect of your life as a disciple?

Answers will vary with regard to the area of Christian life struggle, but the goal would be to lead the student to the help in that aspect of life to verse 16 where the encouragement is to allow that word of God to dwell richly in life. Herein lies to sole help and place of strength and growth for our lives of discipleship

11. How might this reading encourage us to live more serious lives of discipleship with regard to our faith?

READ: Luke 2:22–40

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male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord")²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons."²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.²⁶ And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.²⁷ And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law,²⁸ he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

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³⁹And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth.⁴⁰ And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him.

12. How was this Gospel reading associated with the reading in Exodus 13?

Mary and Joseph were fulfilling the expectation of the Law first presented to the Israelite people in Exodus 13. In this presentation they were consecrating the firstborn by recalling the Passover of the firstborn and they were redeeming the child as commanded.

13. How was it that Simeon knew who this child was and what does that say about all people to whom Christ is made known?

As the Holy Spirit had revealed to him that he would not see death until he had seen the Lord's Christ, the Holy Spirit also revealed to him that this was the one who would redeem the world.

14. How are Simeon's words of praise used in our liturgies and how do they make you feel about your relationship to God?

These words are sung after we have received the Lord's Supper in some of our liturgies. How we feel will be a subjective answer.

15. What was meant by Simeon's words in verses 34-35?

These words of Simeon were pointing to our Savior's death in particular but also to the opposition to His Gospel message that would swell to the point of His arrest and crucifixion. Yet that same opposition has not ended. It continues to this day.

16. How was Simeon and Anna's response to the gift of the Christ child a response of faith like Paul encouraged in the Epistle reading for today?

They were filled with peace and love and their hearts caused them to sing out in spiritual songs of love for God and in the message of those songs they were making known the love of God to people around them. In addition they were expressing thankfulness to God in their lives.

17. What application of this Gospel reading will you apply to your life as a result of hearing it today?

Discipleship Bulletin Blub

As the child was brought for the presentation at the temple, He was greeted by Simeon and Anna who made known the salvation of our God to people around them. As the Christ is brought to us in His Word and in the sacraments, we have no better response as His disciples in this modern world than to do the same. Because of God's grace and mercy, our lives are also filled with praise and our hopes remain securely resting on the Word of God which dwells in us.

Discipleship Prayer Thought

Heavenly Father, the gift of Your Son has brought us peace. Fill us with the Holy Spirit as You did to Simeon and Anna to make the peace that surpasses all understanding known to the people around us. Help us praise the name of Jesus and rejoice in the salvation He has brought to us. Help us always to see the salvation which You have prepared for us and rejoice in Your mercy in every aspect of our lives as we live in faith and forgiveness. Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**