

BOOK OF FAITH: Open the Scriptures. Join the Conversation

The vision for the Book of Faith initiative is this:

That the whole church become more fluent in the first language of faith, the language of Scripture in order that we might live into our calling as a people renewed, enlivened, and empowered by the Word.

WHERE SHALL WE BEGIN?

A Survey on Use of Scripture for Use by Individuals

This Assessment Resource was prepared by Norma Cook Everist in collaboration with professors of Christian Education at the eight seminaries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the students and faculty of Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa. It was published in Diane Jacobson, Mark Allan Powell and Stan Olson, *Opening the Book of Faith: Lutheran Insights for Bible Study*. (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2008) 111-120. It has also been on the ELCA web site.

WE BEGIN BY REMEMBERING

This Survey could be used in direct or telephone conversation or sent out to people in the faith community by mail or e-mail. Groups of people could take this survey at the same time together. Be sure to include people of all ages, those who attend worship and/or Bible study regularly and those who do not. You may wish to include people outside this faith community. Results of the survey, which are anonymous, can be reviewed by a study group in the faith community, such a council, task force on education, or a “Book of Faith” group in order to “Open Scripture Join the Conversation.”

1. What memories to you have about reading or not reading the Bible? (Check all that apply.)

- I remember a parent reading the Bible for himself or herself.
- I experienced a parent reading the Bible to or with me.
- There was a Bible in our home but I don't recall people reading it.
- I heard the Bible in Sunday School and/or Vacation Bible School.
- I have negative memories about the Bible.
- I encountered scripture study in campus ministry or college religion courses.
- I have had little or no opportunity to study the Bible.
- I received a good background in scripture through hearing sermons.
- I studied the Bible in youth confirmation ministry or adult instruction.

2. How do you remember studying the Bible? (Check all that apply)

- I remember the teacher reading the story as we listened.
- I remember pastors/teachers leading discussions about the Bible
- I remember pastors/teachers giving lectures about the Bible
- I had unhelpful or unhealthy encounters with Scripture.
- I have no memories of studying the Bible in a faith community

- I remember filling in workbooks
- I memorized verses from the Bible
- I remember doing dramatic readings and acting out Bible stories
- I remember _____

3. What memories do you have of someone teaching or preaching the Bible well for you?

4. Name two or three basic truths, if any, that were instilled in you from Scripture?

5. What words describe your past experience in studying the Bible?

WHERE WE ARE NOW?

1. Do you have a Bible of your own?

What version is it? (If you have more than one check more than one)

- New Revised Standard Version
- Revised Standard Version
- The Good News Bible
- King James Version
- New International Version
- Other Version: _____

2. What joys and concerns do you have about the Bible? (Check as many as apply)

- I feel intimidated by study of the Bible
- I enjoy reading the Bible and am strengthened by it.
- The bible has little relevance for my life today.
- I believe the Bible is a reliable guide for my moral living.
- I am troubled by the Bible because of its contents
- I question the truth of the Bible
- I believe every word in the Bible is factual truth
- I interpret the Bible in terms of sin and grace
- Other thoughts you have about the Bible: _____

3. How do you use the Bible now?

- In daily Bible reading
- As a source of help in time of trouble
- To help me realize the human situation and God's unconditional love
- For devotions/conversation among friends and/or in a family.
- To challenge me to engage in social justice issues
- I don't own a Bible.

- I attend a Bible study group outside my congregation.
 - I read a daily devotional book that has some Bible passages.
 - I have a Bible but don't read it very often.
 - I regularly dig into Scripture in order to empower my ministry in daily life
 - I am confused by interpretations of the Bible that people around me use.
 - I study the Bible with others to prepare for teaching and/or preaching.
 - Other responses you wish to give: _____
-

4. What sources from the world around influence the way you think about and interpret the Bible?

- Books that you have purchased or received from a friend or co-worker.
Examples: _____
- Radio broadcasts Examples ? _____
- Friends and people with whom I spend time each week
What have you learned from them? _____
- Internet, worldwide web Examples: _____ -
- Television, movies and DVDs. Examples: _____
- Other? _____

5. What One biblical teaching do you hold as central for your faith today?

WHAT NEEDS DO I HAVE?

1. What would be helpful for my own personal growth? (Check the first column for what you think is needed. Check also the second column if this is something in which you would participate.)

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Basic skills in reading and understanding the Bible |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Further understanding of the various types of biblical literature. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | More help with Lutheran doctrine in interpreting scriptures |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | An advanced course in digging deeper into scripture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | An opportunity to learn more about various ways to teach the Bible |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | An opportunity to help me connect my biblical faith with daily life |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | More help and experience in talking about the Bible with others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | A time to pray the scripture and develop some spiritual disciplines |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | An opportunity to teach the Bible to others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | A safe environment in which to talk honestly about issues in the bible |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other..... |

2. What do you think is needed in this faith community and in this church body?

- I want my church to be more clear about how to interpret the Bible
- I believe we need all kinds of more opportunities to study the Bible
- I think the number of Bible study opportunities we have now is about right
- I think we need small groups to help people faith in caring ways.
- I think Bible study should begin church meetings.
- I think we need more different methods for studying scripture

_____ I think we need more Bible study for these age groups:

_____ children

_____ youth

_____ young adults

_____ middle and older adults

_____ I think we need training for more people to know how to teach the Bible.

WHAT DO I ENVISION?

Based on the current situation and on the needs you indicated above, what do you envision for the future for you and this faith community? What participation and leadership would you be willing to give?

1. I envision:

People loving Scripture and hungry to hear and read more

A consistency and faithfulness in continuing study

People not debilitated but energized for mission and ministry

People enriched and equipped for leadership

Individuals using the Bible more regularly for personal prayer

A safe environment where people not fearful but open to
various meanings in a scriptural text

People able to use their biblical knowledge to question, learn, and teach

A community able to claim and use their Lutheran theology

A community able to fluently speak about its faith in Jesus Christ

Other _____

2. What participation and leadership would you be willing to give?

_____ I would like to join a Bible class

_____ I would like to receive some support/training in teaching the Bible

_____ I will invite some friends to participate in Bible study

_____ I do not want to be involved in Bible study at this time

_____ I would like to participate in a more advanced course in Bible study

_____ I feel like a beginner and would welcome a class for where I am now

_____ I am willing to teach or team teach a Bible course

_____ I would be willing to help to help initiate/organize Bible studies.

_____ I would like to feel more confident reading and interpreting the Bible

Your Faith Community may will provide opportunity to share your own personal reflections with the entire community.

Name (Optional) _____