



Leader Guide for *Sanctified Living: More than Grace and Forgiveness*, by Frank G. Honeycutt

About this Guide

This Leader Guide and companion **Participant Handout** offer the tools needed for a one-hour discussion on the general theme of growth and maturity in the Christian life, which is the focus of *Sanctified Living: More than Grace and Forgiveness* by Frank G. Honeycutt.

The guide also provides suggestions for expanding the one-hour discussion to a series of sessions based on each of the book's seven chapters. For a more in-depth study of *Sanctified Living*, see "Digging Deeper" at the end of this guide.

To get the word out about an upcoming study of *Sanctified Living*, download the **Publicity Flyer** and customize it to fit your needs.

Pre-Session Preparation

Prior to the session, read *Sanctified Living* and reflect on the "Key Points" presented in the box at right. Read through the Leader Guide and the Participant Handout and choose options from the materials presented to use with your group. Gather the materials you will need for the study:

- Bibles
- Copies of the Participant Handout
- A white board, large pad of paper, or other writing surface (helpful but not essential)
- Name tags, if desired.
- Copies of *Sanctified Living: More than Grace and Forgiveness*. (Participants will get the most out of the conversation if they have read the book but the one-hour session is designed so that you can welcome and include guests who haven't done the reading.)

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Key Points

- While Lutherans have rightly emphasized *justification*, speaking of God's unconditional grace, we may be neglecting another important way God works: by *sanctification*—growth in the Holy Spirit, progress and maturity in the Christian life.
- In baptism, we were "buried with" Jesus into death, so we "might walk in newness of life" (Rom 6:4); baptism is the start of a new kind of living.
- Jesus is fully divine and fully human. As a human, he was "on a learning curve." If Jesus had much to learn, surely we are at least as much in need of learning.
- God's love and forgiveness are a gift, not earned. But for that gift to transform our lives, we must allow God room to work in us. Maturity doesn't just happen.
- "Being saved" is an ongoing process of God pursuing us with goodness and mercy. It is our free choice whether to allow the Holy Spirit to catch us and guide us.
- Teaching and learning the gospel flushes out the "demons" in our lives and points us to a new way of living.
- Jesus' resurrection was a resurrection of the body, in this world. Our new life in Christ starts now, in this world.

"The Lutheran Voices series is tapping into the rich resources of the church and bringing us together to talk about issues and ideas that shape our present and future."

Mark S. Hanson
Presiding Bishop of the ELCA



Single Session Plan

The following ideas suggest how to use the **Participant Handout** in leading a one-hour discussion of *Sanctified Living: More than Grace and Forgiveness*.

Opening (2 minutes)

Introduce yourself and welcome the participants. Pray the opening prayer together, or invite someone to lead the prayer.

Getting Started (5 minutes)

Invite everyone to briefly introduce themselves and to answer this question: What's one way you're different today from the person you were 20 (or 10) years ago? If the group is large, have participants introduce themselves and respond to the question within smaller groups of 4-5 people rather than to the entire group.

Points to Ponder (45 minutes)

Use questions from the Participant Handout as a framework for discussion.

- *Questions 1-3 (5 minutes):* The emphasis in these questions is on the relevance of spiritual maturity to people's lives. Get the group engaged in the topic with a brief discussion of these questions.
- *Questions 4-6 (10 minutes):* Invite participants to share their own understandings of baptism before moving on to the Bible verses in question 4; doing so will help you see whether the emphasis on death and rebirth is new for this group. **Options:** Invite five volunteers to each look up and read one of the verses. Or type the verses ahead of time on note cards, and distribute them to volunteers to read aloud.
- *Questions 7-9 (10 minutes):* At question 8, some possible observations are that Jesus' suffering had a purpose and also that the purpose was fulfilled because he was open to learning obedience (as evidenced in part through his prayerfulness). Participants may want to look at how suffering and other experiences in their own lives have provided opportunities for God to work; were they, too, open to these opportunities?
- *Questions 10-14 (15 minutes):* At question 11, make sure everyone in the group is familiar with the background story of the feeding of the five thousand (John 6:1-14). If some aren't, a volunteer could recap the story for the group, or else take a few minutes to read verses 1-14.
 - Questions 11 and 15 get at some personal matters. If time permits, you might divide into groups of two or three to discuss personal experiences.
 - Question 14 addresses a key point in Lutheran teaching, that we cannot earn our salvation; it is a gift from God, received by faith. But the hope is that participants will also have a desire for "the food that endures for eternal life" (John 6:27), for knowing and serving God, for helping to build up the community, etc. Probe for whether anyone sees a benefit from this type of spiritual growth.
- *Questions 15-16 (5 minutes):* At question 16, some aspects of "being saved" to consider are that it is an ongoing process, not only a one-time event, and that the chief actor is God, through the Holy Spirit, rather than the person being saved.

Closing (3 minutes)

Pray the closing prayer together.

If plans are to continue the discussion of *Sanctified Living* after this session, announce the place and time for the next meeting. Ask participants to prepare for the session by reading however many chapters of *Sanctified Living* that you plan to cover at the next meeting. Suggestions for subsequent discussions are found on the following page, "Digging Deeper."



Digging Deeper

After working your way through the single session plan, use the following suggestions along with the chapter questions in *Sanctified Living* to dig deeper into what growth and maturity in the Christian life means and how it happens. These suggestions provide a framework for a chapter-by-chapter discussion of *Sanctified Living*, though it's your decision as to how many chapters to address each time the group meets.

Chapter 1: Baptized into His Death

- Read Luther's question and answer about the meaning of baptism (*The Small Catechism*, quoted on page 16). Discuss what aspects of our selves die in baptism and what it means to be a "new person." Do you lose your identity? Why or why not?
- Read your congregation's service of baptism. Look for words and actions that point to the meaning that "baptism is a death" (p. 17).
- Read Malachi 3:1-4. What evidence can you find for whether this prophet is telling of "a God who loves us enough not to leave us as we are" (p. 21)? Consider whether corrections and consequences are part of love and whether grown-ups, not just children, need to learn and improve.
- Divide into groups of two or three to talk about our own hopes for learning, growth, and improvement. Pray for each other before or after returning to the main group.

Chapter 2: Change in the Son of God

- Ask: What do we hope babies will know about being part of the kingdom of God? What do we hope kindergarteners will know? High schoolers? Newlyweds? Retirees?
- Think about what Jesus was like at various points in his life: birth (Luke 2:7); childhood (Luke 2:42-52); baptized at age 30 (Mark 1:9-13); nearing his death (Matt 26:37-46); and on the cross (Matt 27:46-50). You might divide into five groups and have each group look up, read, and consider each passage: At this point in his life, what do you think Jesus knew and didn't know about God and his own mission on earth? Have the groups reassemble to share their ideas.
- Compare the ways Jesus related to the Gentiles who approached him in Mark 7:24-30 and Mark 7:31-37. Discuss whether you agree with Pastor Honeycutt's idea that, through these experiences, Jesus learned to include Gentiles in the kingdom of God (p. 25).
- Sketch a map or timeline of your own life as a Christian, marking times when you deepened your faith or grew in understanding of God.

Chapter 3: Effort and Discipline

- Read John 6:22-34. Ask: In your life, do you work more for "the food that perishes" or for "food that endures for eternal life"? What is the point of working for this spiritual food if God *gives* it?
- Read Ephesians 4:11-16. Discuss what, in general, makes a person grow up and become mature. Ask: How do these principles apply to spiritual growth?
- Brainstorm spiritual disciplines—practices like prayer, study, solitude, meditation, fasting, and worship that can help us mature spiritually—listing them where all can see. Ask: Are these disciplines something we have to do in order to get something from God, or are they a way to let God work in us? Invite participants to commit to trying one. What might happen?

Chapter 4: God's Power

- Read Jesus' sad words in Luke 13:34. Ask: What do these words say about Jesus' love? About his power? Consider whether love limits his power in order to give people free will.
- Read Acts 16:6-15, about Paul's first trip to Europe. Discuss reactions to the guidance in verses 6-10. Ask: Does this kind of guidance by the Spirit seem strange or familiar? When, if ever, have you felt guided this way? When, if ever, have you felt unclear at the time but looked back and thought God had been at work (or that there were certainly a lot of coincidences), taking you where you needed to be?
- Consider whether all in the group might have been led to where they are this day, for God's purpose. Discuss ways you might discern what that purpose is, perhaps recalling disciplines identified in the discussion of Chapter 3.

Chapter 5: The Sanctifying Power of Teaching

- Read Mark 1:21-28. Notice where Jesus is and what he is doing. Discuss possible reasons why the demon was roused by Jesus' teaching. Consider what this might say about the power of teaching. (See also Heb 4:12.) Notice that the congregation also called his response "a new teaching" (v. 27). Ask: What was new? What made it a "teaching"?
- Invite the group to imagine asking Jesus, "What have you to do with me?" Ask: How might he answer? Do you want to hear it? Why or why not?
- Read Mark 16:1-8, noting that this is the original ending of Mark's Gospel. Where was the resurrected Jesus? Where can we find him today (see pp. 55-56)?

Chapter 6: Sanctification, Resurrection of the Body, God's Call

- Read Luke 24:36-43. What evidence does Jesus provide that he is not a ghost but has a body? Discuss how Jesus' example shows that resurrection is "of the body."
- Read Isaiah 6:1-3. Ask: According to verse 3, where is God's glory? Consider the implications of God's presence being everywhere—for example, how that affects our desires and behavior.
- Discuss Honeycutt's assertion, "His promise begins now, not just on some shadowy day in the future. There is no facet of this life—on earth or in heaven—that God will not transform and redeem through the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit" (p. 67).
- Give everyone 5 or 6 index cards or slips of paper. On each, participants write one area of their life (activities, relationships, concerns, etc.; many examples are mentioned on pp. 66-67). Sort the slips into piles where participants have seen God changing them in the past and where they hope to see God change them in the future. Do some slips belong in both piles? Are some being held back? Being respectful of privacy, ask if anyone wants to share insights or concerns from this exercise.

Chapter 7: Holiness in a Broken World

- Read Daniel 10:1-14. Consider whether Daniel got the help he needed and how long he waited for an answer. Discuss how well you can understand the reasons for the apparent delay in God's response to Daniel. Ask: In your own life, when has God been that mysterious? That faithful? Encourage stories of faith from the group.
- Read Revelation 12:10-11. Note the risks of following Jesus, but also the claim of victory. If we know God wins, how can that faith affect our lives today?
- List areas of brokenness in the world. Prepare to pray for these concerns. Encourage the group to be patient about God's timing and to be willing to be used as part of God's answer.



Deeper Still: Further Resources to Explore

We hope you enjoyed your study of *Sanctified Living: More than Grace and Forgiveness* by Frank G. Honeycutt. If you are interested in studying other recently released titles in the Lutheran Voices series that focus on faithful living in daily life and on being church today, here are some suggestions.

Blessed to Follow: The Beatitudes as a Compass for Discipleship (978-0-8066-8007-1) by Martha E. Stortz

On Earth as in Heaven: Praying at the Crossroads (978-0-8066-8009-5) by Kay Bender Braun

Faith's Wisdom for Daily Living (978-0-8006-5366-2) by Herbert Anderson and Bonnie Miller-McLemore

The Word of the Cross in a World of Glory (978-0-8066-8005-7) by Philip Ruge-Jones

Lutheran Identity: A Classical Understanding (978-0-8066-8010-1) by Frank C. Senn

Reclaiming the "E" Word: Waking Up to Our Evangelical Identity (978-0-8066-8006-4) by Kelly A. Fryer

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