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Introduction

Book of Faith Adult Bible Studies

Welcome to the conversation! The Bible study resources you are using are created to support the bold vision of the Book of Faith initiative that calls “the whole church to 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, empowered, and sent by the Word.”

Simply put, this initiative and these resources invite you to “Open Scripture. Join the Conversation.”

We enter into this conversation based on the promise that exploring the Bible deeply with others opens us to God working in and through us. God’s Word is life changing, church changing, and world changing. Lutheran approaches to Scripture provide a fruitful foundation for connecting Bible, life, and faith.

A Session Overview

Each session is divided into the following four key sections. The amount of time spent in each section may vary based on choices you make. The core Learner Session Guide is designed for 50 minutes. A session can be expanded to as much as 90 minutes by using the Bonus Activities that appear in the Leader Session Guide.

• Gather (10-15 minutes)

Time to check in, make introductions, review homework assignments, share an opening prayer, and use the Focus Activity to introduce learners to the Session Focus.

• Open Scripture (10-15 minutes)

The session Scripture text is read using a variety of methods and activities. Learners are asked to respond to a few general questions. As leader, you may want to capture initial thoughts or questions on paper for later review.

• Join the Conversation (25-55 minutes)

Learners explore the session Scripture text through core questions and activities that cover each of the four perspectives (see diagram on p. 6). The core Learner Session Guide material may be expanded through use of the Bonus Activities provided in the Leader Session Guide. Each session ends with a brief Wrap-Up and prayer.

• Extending the Conversation (5 minutes)

Lists homework assignments, including next week’s session Scripture text. The leader may choose one or more items to assign for all. Each session also includes additional Enrichment options and may include For Further Reading suggestions.

A Method to Guide the Conversation

Book of Faith Adult Bible Studies has three primary goals:

- To increase biblical fluency;
- To encourage and facilitate informed small group conversation based on God’s Word; and
- To renew and empower us to carry out God’s mission for the sake of the world.

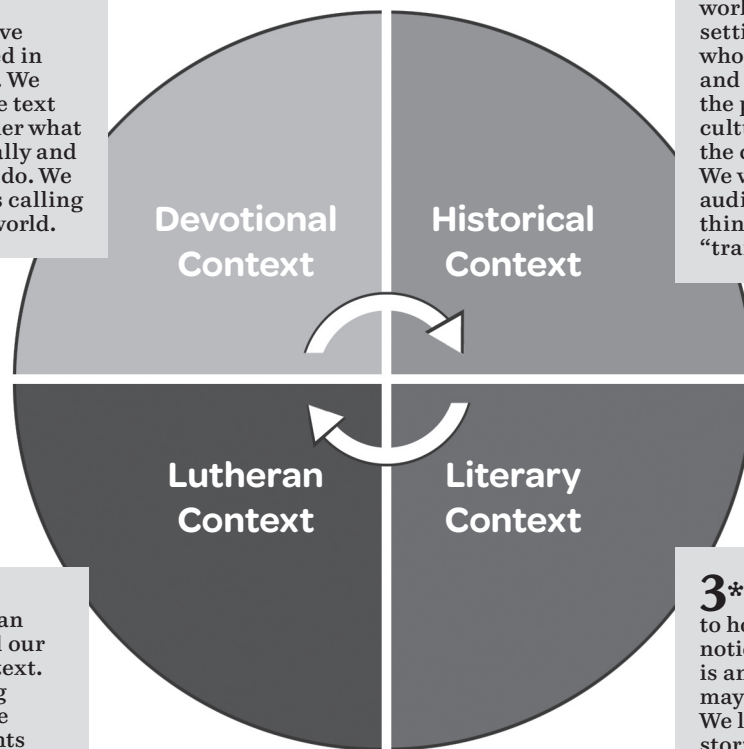
To accomplish these goals, each session will explore one or more primary Bible texts from four different angles and contexts—historical, literary, Lutheran, and devotional. These particular ways of exploring a text are not new, but used in combination they provide a full understanding of and experience with the text.

Complementing this approach is a commitment to engaging participants in active, learner-orientated Bible conversations. The resources call for prepared leaders to facilitate learner discovery, discussion, and activity. Active learning and frequent engagement with Scripture will lead to greater biblical fluency and encourage active faith.

1 We begin by reading the Bible text and reflecting on its meaning. We ask questions and identify items that are unclear. We bring our unique background and experience to the Bible, and the Bible meets us where we are.

5 We return to where we started, but now we have explored and experienced the Bible text from four different dimensions. We are ready to move into the “for” dimension. We have opened Scripture and joined in conversation for a purpose. We consider the meaning of the text for faithful living. We wonder what God is calling us (individually and as communities of faith) to do. We consider how God’s Word is calling us to do God’s work in the world.

2* We seek to understand the world of the Bible and locate the setting of the text. We explore who may have written the text and why. We seek to understand the particular social and cultural contexts that influenced the content and the message. We wonder who the original audience may have been. We think about how these things “translate” to our world today.



4 We consider the Lutheran principles that help ground our interpretation of the Bible text. We ask questions that bring those principles and unique Lutheran theological insights into conversation with the text. We discover how our Lutheran insights can ground and focus our understanding and shape our faithful response to the text.

3* We pay close attention to how the text is written. We notice what kind of literature it is and how this type of literature may function or may be used. We look at the characters, the story line, and the themes. We compare and contrast these with our own understanding and experience of life. In this interchange, we discover meaning.

*** Sessions may begin with either Historical Context or Literary Context.**

The diagram on p. 6 summarizes the general way this method is intended to work. A more detailed introduction to the method used in Book of Faith Adult Bible Studies is available in *Opening the Book of Faith* (Augsburg Fortress, 2008).

The Learner Session Guide

The Learner Session Guide content is built on the four sections (see p. 5). The content included in the main “Join the Conversation” section is considered to be the core material needed to explore the session Scripture text. Each session includes a Focus Image that is used as part of an activity or question somewhere within the core session. Other visuals (maps, charts, photographs, and illustrations) may be included to help enhance the learner’s experience with the text and its key concepts.

The Leader Session Guide

For easy reference, the Leader Session Guide contains all the content included in the Learner Session Guide and more. The elements that are unique to the Leader Session Guide are the following:

- **Before You Begin**—Helpful tips to use as you prepare to lead the session.
- **Session Overview**—Contains detailed description of key themes and content covered in each of the four contexts (Historical, Literary, Lutheran, Devotional). Core questions and activities in the Learner Session Guide are intended to emerge directly from this Session Overview. Highlighted parts of the Session Overview provide a kind of “quick prep” for those wanting to do an initial scan of the key session themes and content.
- **Key Definitions**—Key terms or concepts that appear in the Session Overview may be illustrated or defined.
- **Facilitator’s Prayer**—To help the leader center on the session theme and leadership task.
- **Bonus Activities**—Optional activities included in each of the four sections of “Join the Conversation” used by the leader to expand the core session.

- **Tips**—A variety of helpful hints, instructions, or background content to aid leadership facilitation.
- **Looking Ahead**—Reminders to the leader about preparation for the upcoming session.

Session Prep Video

(Available on the DVD that accompanies this unit.) To help you prepare to lead the session, Session Prep Video segments have been created. A guide will walk with you through a session overview and the key parts of the session flow. These segments can provide helpful hints, but they are not meant to replace your own deeper preparation.

Leader and Learner

In Book of Faith Adult Bible Studies, the leader’s primary task is facilitating small group conversation and activity. These conversations are built around structured learning tasks. What is a structured learning task? It is an open question or activity that engages learners with new content and the resources they need to respond. Underlying this structured dialog approach are three primary assumptions about adult learners:

- Adult learners bring with them varied experiences and the capability to do active learning tasks;
- Adult learners learn best when they are invited to be actively involved in learning; and
- Adults are more accountable and engaged when active learning tasks are used.

Simply put, the goal is fluency in the first language of faith, the language of Scripture. How does one become fluent in a new language, proficient in building houses, or skilled at hitting a baseball? By practicing and doing in a hands-on way. Book of Faith Adult Bible Studies provides the kind of hands-on Bible exploration that will produce Bible-fluent learners equipped to do God’s work in the world.

Books of Faith Series

Book of Faith Adult Bible Studies includes several series and courses. This Numbers unit is part of the

Books of Faith Series, which is designed to explore key themes and texts in the books of the Bible. Each book of the Bible reveals a unique story or message of faith. Many core themes and story lines and characters are shared by several books, but each book in its own right is a book of faith. Exploring these books of faith in depth opens us to the variety and richness of God's written word for us.

Numbers Unit Overview

The book of Numbers is 36 chapters long, but this course will only address four key texts totaling 92 verses. On the one hand, this study can only touch the surface of this complex book. On the other hand, the texts chosen do explore key themes and provide a feel for what is happening to the Israelites as they wander, complain, and battle their way through the wilderness.

The action in Numbers really picks up where the action of Exodus leaves off. The book of Leviticus, which falls in between, provides a sort of intermission as Moses receives and delivers to the people the laws concerning the sacrifices, the priestly duties, the days of worship, and the purity regulations that will define the way God's people are to live.

Session 1, "Where Is God in Our 'Wilderness' Times?" reviews the key events of the first part of the book of Numbers, which takes its name from the census in chapters 1 and 2. Here also the duties of the Levite priests are spelled out. The Levite clans are given specific duties concerning the tabernacle of God, which must travel with the people. The texts in Session 1 (Numbers 6:22-27; 9:15-23) introduce God's blessing through Aaron, who serves as priest for the people. We still use this Aaronic blessing as a benediction in worship today. The second text paints a picture of how this blessing was carried out as God led the people with cloud and fire through the perilous wilderness. The message is clear: God's face will shine on the people, and God will provide. The people are called to follow faithfully. God is with us in wilderness times, and wilderness times can be growing times.

Session 2 asks the double-edged question, "Is This What God Wants?" In spite of some complaining by the people along the way, God has continued to provide food and water in the desert. Fairly soon after leaving the wilderness of Sinai, the people reach the southern borders of Canaan in the Wilderness of Paran. From there Moses sends spies into Canaan to check out the land of promise and its inhabitants (Numbers 13:17-33). The report of the spies is mixed. The land is beautiful and rich in food, but the inhabitants are dangerous, even giant-like. Though the spy Caleb tries to calm the people's fears and encourages them to enter the land, the people complain and will not enter. They don't believe that this is what God is really asking them to do. The result of their response would be 40 years of wandering. A whole generation would be denied an opportunity to enter the land.

Session 3, "Is There Any Hope for Us?" is based on Numbers 20:22—21:9. A number of short episodes are covered. The texts describe Aaron's death at Mount Hor, fulfilling God's decree that he would not enter the promised land. A detour has the people battling the Canaanites at Hormah before the action returns to the wilderness wanderings and yet another episode of the people complaining. This time God reacts by sending poisonous snakes. Moses intercedes for the people and God commands him to put a bronze serpent on a pole, so that all who look at it might be healed if bitten. Jesus being lifted up on the cross in John's Gospel will be compared to the healing snake in the wilderness.

Session 4, "Who Can Speak for God?" relates the beginning of the story of the non-Israelite prophet Balaam and his donkey. It interrupts the wandering stories, but provides an inside view of how those who faced the nomadic threat of the people of God tried to stop its advance. The king of Moab hires the prophet Balaam to curse the Israelites. Though he treats his donkey poorly when an angel of God blocks his way on the road, Balaam ultimately obeys God and does not curse Israel. It's a reminder that God can use anyone as a servant.

SESSION ONE

Numbers 6:22-27; 9:15-23

Leader Session Guide



Focus Statement

God is the source of blessing and holy presence for our lives.



Key Verse

The LORD bless you and keep you. Numbers 6:24



Focus Image



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Where Is God in Our “Wilderness” Times?

Session Preparation

Before You Begin . . .

Consider a time when you felt “lost,” spiritually or physically. Remember the desperation, loneliness, and desolation of that time. Then think about what God’s presence and blessing mean to you. Consider what it was like for the people of Israel to wander in the wilderness, not sure where they were going but also following God’s lead. Have you had a time when didn’t exactly feel lost, but you were in a “wilderness time” nonetheless? Did you sense God’s presence in that time? Be prepared to share your experience as a way to start the conversation with the learners.

Session Instructions

1. View the Session Prep Video.
2. Read this Session Guide completely and highlight or underline any portions you wish to emphasize with the group. Note also any Bonus Activities you wish to do.
3. If you plan to do any special activities, check to see what materials you’ll need, if any.

Session Overview

With this session you begin a study of key texts in the book of Numbers. Though the session texts are from chapters 6 and 9, you will do some review of the early chapters of Numbers (1-4) to help set the context for the whole book. Numbers takes its English name from *Arithmoi*, the title of the book in the Greek translation called the Septuagint. In Hebrew the book is called *Bemidbar*, or “In the Wilderness.” The Hebrew title more accurately describes the content of the whole book, because it covers the whole 40-year period of Israel’s wilderness wanderings.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Numbers is the fourth book of the **Pentateuch** and could be described as Exodus, Part 2. The exodus story pauses in Leviticus for an extended sermon and giving of rules and laws and then starts up again in Numbers. As today’s text begins, the people are camped in the wilderness of Sinai. At God’s command, Moses takes a census of the people to determine how many warriors are available from each tribe. The tribes are given designated spots in the encampment around the tabernacle of God (see the illustration

SESSION ONE

? Pentateuch:

The first five books of the Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy), also known as the Torah.

? Covenant:

Usually a formal, solemn, and binding agreement. In the Old Testament, the covenant with God's people is established by God, not by the people. The covenant is worked out by the people, who trust it and live accordingly.

on p. 13). Moses' brother Aaron and his sons are named priests, and the Levite clans are given their special duties assisting the priests and taking responsibility for the tabernacle (see Numbers 1-5). Additional laws are given in chapter 5.

In the book of Genesis, God makes a **covenant** with Abraham. As time goes on, it appears at times that God's promises will not be kept. Abraham and Sarah seem to be too old to have a child. The people are enslaved in Egypt, forced to do manual labor, and endure harsh treatment from the Egyptians. They escape safely through direct divine intervention—only to end up wandering in the wilderness for 40 years.

The Israelites question how to deal faithfully with the situation of being lost in the wilderness without even a glimpse of the promised land. The wilderness wanderings would prove to be challenging in many ways for the Israelites. They had to live with an unknown and unsettled future. It's likely the people sometimes felt lost. Even so, today's texts show how God's blessing and signs of God's presence were with them. The blessing in this Numbers text is communicated by God to Aaron and his sons so that the blessing can be shared with the world. In fact, the blessing literally placed God's name on the people. This blessing and the pillar of cloud and pillar of fire reassured the people that God's face is still shining on them and that God is still with them, even as they face the wilderness and all its perils.

LITERARY CONTEXT

Up to this point in Numbers, most of the narrative has centered on instructions for how the people should organize and function together. The blessing in Numbers 6 is the first direct reminder that God is still with the people. Understandably, in the wilderness the people doubt, worry, and despair. They even wish for the days back in Egypt, where they were slaves. God has brought the people this far on the journey, however. God has not abandoned them and still intends to keep the promises given to them.

Your group will look at the key words and themes in the session texts, as well as the characters in the story and the roles they play. They will also explore the connection between the blessing given by Aaron and presence of God in the form of cloud and fire. Just as God's face shines on the people in the blessing, God's presence in cloud and fire shows the way to the future. The people move according to God's miraculous leading and survive because of God's miraculous blessings.

LUTHERAN CONTEXT

The Lutheran principle of “Scripture interprets Scripture” encourages us to interpret a text in light of what is said in other parts of the Bible. Your group will study Psalm 4:6-8 and 80:1-19 to gain a better understanding of what it means to have the LORD’s face shine on us.

Lutheran worship services often include Numbers 6:24-26 as the benediction or final blessing. You and the learners will consider why we continue to use this ancient blessing in worship today. Like the people of Israel wandering in the wilderness, we seek God’s guidance in the here and now. The way forward is often not clear. But even when we lack clarity, God offers peace and grace.

DEVOTIONAL CONTEXT

The feeling of being lost, of being adrift with no purpose or meaning, is a common feeling today. Something as simple as making a wrong turn can give us a sense of dread that we may not find our way home. A major life change, such as loss of a job or financial troubles, can send us into a virtual tailspin. When faced with times during which we do not feel anchored to God, we may appreciate what the Israelites felt as they wandered in the wilderness.

Your group will learn about an important aspect of the promises God made to Abraham and Sarah. They were blessed so that they would be blessings to others. Like Abraham and Sarah, the Israelites wandering in the wilderness are blessed to be blessings also. The blessing in this Numbers text is communicated by God through Moses to Aaron and his sons so that the blessing can be shared with the world. When we face “wilderness times” it may feel as if the promises and blessings of God are far away. Yet, sometimes our opportunity and ability to be instruments of blessing is strengthened through enduring wilderness moments.

Facilitator’s Prayer

O God, so often I feel lost and alone. Remind me that you have promised to be with me—to never leave me or abandon me. Help me to be open to the participants’ stories today, and to look to you for your presence, support, and guidance whenever I feel lost. In Jesus’ name. Amen.



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Tip:

Consider different prayer positions for your opening prayer (not just head bowed, eyes closed). Try raising your hands, kneeling, holding hands, or cupping your hands together with open palms to symbolize openness to God's movement in you.



Tip:

Have learners work on the Focus Activity in pairs or trios.



Tip:

Jot responses on a whiteboard or chart paper. If your congregation's worship usually includes the Aaronic benediction ("may the LORD bless you and keep you, may the LORD's face shine upon you . . ."), bring a bulletin or hymnal and point out that part of the service.

Gather (10-15 minutes)

Check-in

Welcome each learner to the group. If there are new participants, or if group members aren't acquainted with one another, consider using name tags. If possible, refer to learners by name during the session. (Use a sticky note or convenient page in your leader guide to write down learners' names in the order they are seated.)

Pray

O God, you bless us every day. Your face shines on us continually. Yet, we are so often closed to your blessing and presence in our lives. Help us to trust you, look to you, and turn our faces toward you. Show us how to be a blessing to others. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Focus Activity

Reflect on the Focus Image. Tell about a time when you were lost or didn't know which way to go. How did you feel? Who or what was reassuring or helpful during that time?



Open Scripture (10-15 minutes)

As a volunteer reads the Bible text, invite learners to underline any words or phrases that stand out to them or that they'd like to know more about.

OR

Have one person read the text while learners imagine they are the Israelite people in the story, who have been freed from slavery in Egypt and are now wandering in a wilderness for 40 years with no promised land in sight.

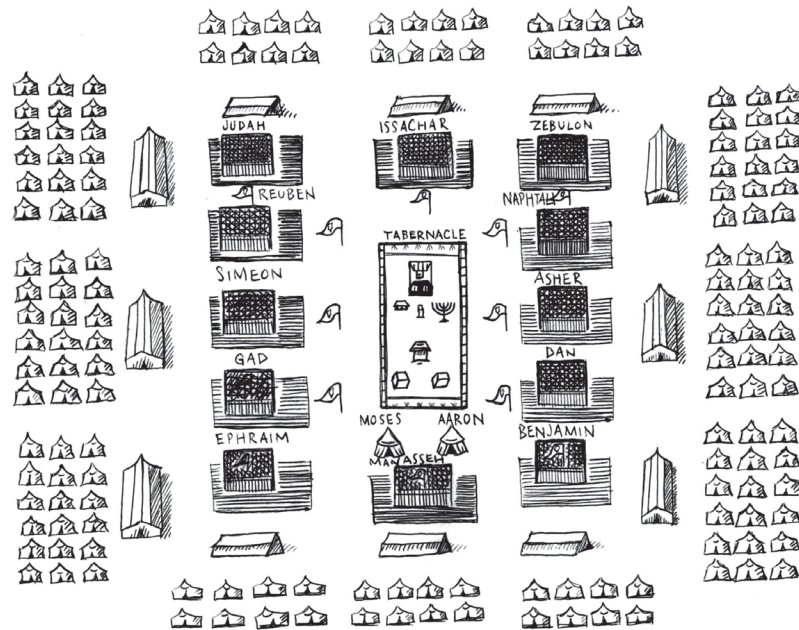
Read Numbers 6:22-27; 9:15-23.

- Have you heard any part of these texts before? If so, when?
- What in these texts is most comforting to you?
- What words or phrases stand out the most to you?



Join the Conversation (25-55 minutes)

Historical Context



Israel's wilderness encampment around the central tabernacle

1. The story of Numbers begins with organizing the people by counting those who can serve as soldiers to defend the people (chapters 1–2). This is how the book got its name in Greek, Latin, and English. In Hebrew the book of Numbers is called “In the Wilderness.” The tribes of Israel camped in specific places around the tabernacle of God (see the illustration above).

- How do these two titles (“Numbers” and “In the Wilderness”) symbolize different aspects of the book or even today’s study texts?
- What does the arrangement of the camp say about the Israelites at this time?

2. Chapters 3 and 4 introduce Aaron and his sons, as well as the Levite tribes. Together, these groups served as the priests, the religious leaders, and the workers who took care of the tabernacle and all the items related to worship and the sacrifices to God. That’s why in 6:22-27 Aaron and his sons are given the task of passing God’s blessing on to the people.

+ Bonus Activity:

Invite learners to recall stories that have stood the test of time in their families or in the congregation. Discuss: Why do some stories endure while others fade away?

Tip:

If time allows, review Numbers, chapters 3 and 4. Write down on chart paper the exact tasks assigned to each Levite clan.

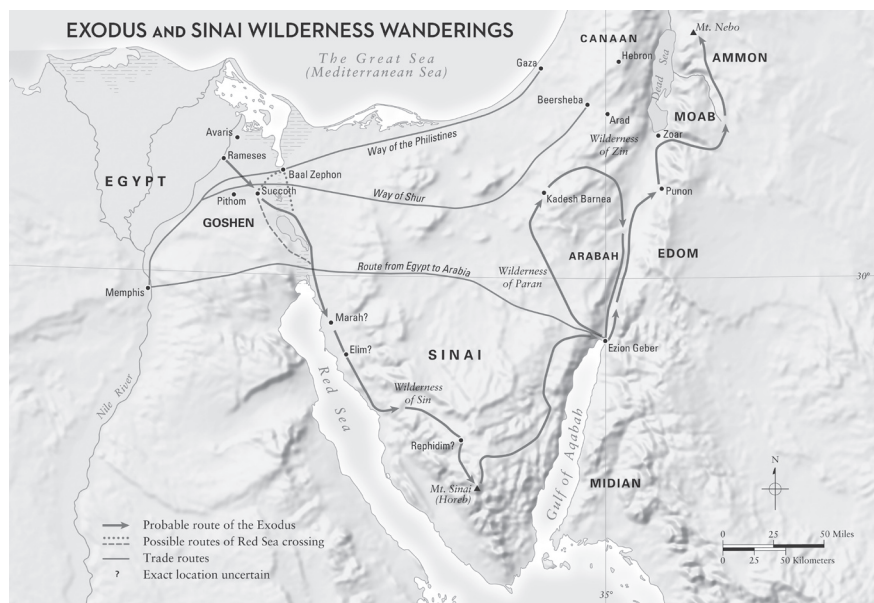
SESSION ONE

“There is a tradition that the priests would hold their hands up with their palms facing the people, their thumbs pointing to themselves, first two fingers touching each other, and the second two fingers touching each other” (from *Lutheran Study Bible*, p. 250). This is similar to the greeting given by the Spock character from the Star Trek series.

- Why do you think it was important that God’s people have appointed priests and a whole tribe dedicated to serving the religious aspect of the community?
- How do you think the blessing in Numbers 6:22-27 may have affected the people wandering in the wilderness?

3. The story of the people in the wilderness actually begins in the book of Exodus, with God freeing the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. (The Israelites of the Old Testament are not the same as citizens of the nation of Israel today. Much has changed since biblical times surrounding national governance, religious identity, and interactions with surrounding nations and ethnicities.) In Numbers, the people wander in the wilderness between Egypt and Canaan (see map below) for 40 years in search of the promised land.

- Imagine what it would have been like to live among the Israelites as they moved from place to place in the wilderness. Describe some of the challenges you might face. Describe some of the joys you might experience.



4. Names, especially the names of gods, were believed to have great power in the ancient world.

- Read Deuteronomy 12:5; 28:10; Jeremiah 7:10-11; and 14:9. Discuss what it would have meant for the Israelites to have God’s name placed on them (Numbers 6:27).

Literary Context

1. Describe the role each of these characters plays in the session Scripture texts: Moses, Aaron and his sons, the Israelites, and the LORD.

- Who is the main character in these texts, and why?

2. With the words *promise* and *presence* in mind, try to draw some comparisons between blessing in 6:22-27 and the description of how the Lord’s cloud and fire led the people from one camp to another in the wilderness in 9:15-23.

- What common themes do you see at work?
- What would it be like to move when God says “move,” and stay when God says “stay”?
- Do you think the pillar of cloud and pillar of fire would have been reassuring or frightening to the people in the wilderness? Explain your answer.

Lutheran Context

1. Use the Lutheran principle of “Scripture interprets Scripture” to learn more about Numbers 6:24-26.

- Read Psalm 4:6-8 and 80:1-19. What does it mean for the people to have God’s face shine on them?
- How do these texts shed light on the blessing in Numbers 6:24-26?

2. The blessing in the session Scripture texts means that God’s favor is on this group of people and that God’s heart is deeply intertwined with them. Lutheran worship today often includes the same blessing as a benediction or final blessing.

- List reasons why we might use the same blessing given to the Israelites wandering in the wilderness. What does this say about God? What does it say about us?



Bonus Activity:

Make a list of names that hold great power today. Where do they get their power?



Tip:

Invite learners to stage a mock debate to argue which character is most important and why. Each “side” should present its case, then allow a few moments for rebuttal.



Bonus Activity:

Have learners form smaller groups of four or five. Ask each group to create a skit showing a person who is lost (either geographically or spiritually) and the challenges faced by this person. Give groups five minutes to work together to construct a story and assign characters.



Tip:

Have learners form two groups, one to identify key words and themes in Numbers 6:22-27, the other to do the same in 9:15-23. Reconvene in the large group and share lists.



Bonus Activity:

The blessing in Numbers 6:24-26 can be translated “the Lord *will* bless you . . . the Lord *will* make his face . . . , and so on. Discuss how this affects your understanding of the blessing.



Bonus Activity:

Have learners work in pairs to write down the message of Numbers 6:24-26 in today’s language. Reconvene in the larger group and share these contemporary messages.



Tip:

Think about current slang words and phrases. If a really “hip” celebrity spoke on behalf of God, what might this person say in the way of blessing?

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Bonus Activity:

Have learners form small groups. Ask each group to make a list of blessings God has given to your congregation. Reconvene in the large group and share these lists.

Tip:

Provide time for learners to reflect on the Devotional Context questions; then invite them to share responses as they feel comfortable. Some learners may be hesitant at first, but will become more comfortable with sharing as the unit goes on.

Tip:

For the spiritual “signposts,” make available an assortment of paper, colored pencils, and markers. If learners have trouble thinking of things to draw, ask open-ended questions like these: Did you have a favorite Sunday school song? Was there a certain prayer you used before meals? What worship services have been meaningful for you? Is there someone who helped point you toward Jesus?

Bonus Activity:

Distribute copies of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW)*. Invite the group to sing hymn 547, “Sent Forth by God’s Blessing,” or read the words aloud together.

Devotional Context

1. **Wilderness times can be frightening and lonely. Think about a “wilderness” time in your life—perhaps when you felt lost and out of touch with God, or burned out, or . . . ?**

- What words would you use to describe that wilderness time?
- Who or what reminded you that God is with you?
- How can “wilderness” times also be times of blessing?

2. **Make a painting, draw a picture, or create a sculpture that depicts a sign of God’s presence with you.**

3. **Aaron passes God’s blessing to the people, so that the people can give it to others.**

- What blessings has God given you?
- List some ways you can remind others of God’s presence and be a blessing to them this week.

Wrap-up

1. **Ask: How has your understanding of “blessing” changed during this session?**

2. **Ask: What did you learn about the book of Numbers that you didn’t know or didn’t remember?**

3. **Recap the session’s key moments, starting with the most energetic portions of the conversation. Ask learners what they learned from each other during this session.**

4. **If there are unanswered questions about the session Scripture texts or the book of Numbers, ask for a volunteer to look into those questions and report back at the next session.**

5. **If you wish, explain and assign any portion of the Homework from this session.**

Pray

Precious Lord, take our hands. Lead us through those wilderness places in our lives, especially when we feel lost and alone. Help us to look to you for guidance and direction and purpose. Help us to see your face, to experience your love, and to feel your grace. Remind us that you will never leave us or forsake us. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

Extending the Conversation

Homework

1. Read the Scripture text for the next session: Numbers 13:1-3, 17-33.
2. Use a concordance or online Bible search engine to look up other passages about “blessing.” Consider writing a summary of the results to share at the next session.
3. Reflect on God’s blessing and presence in your life as you write or draw in a journal.

Looking Ahead

1. Read next session’s Bible passage: 13:1-3, 17-33.
2. Read through the next session’s Leader Session Guide and mark the portions you wish to highlight for the group.
3. Make a checklist of any materials you’ll need to do the Bonus Activities.

Enrichment

1. If you want to read through the book of Numbers during this unit, use the following daily reading plan:
 - Day 1: Numbers 1:1—3:39
 - Day 2: Numbers 3:40-51
 - Day 3: Numbers 4:1—6:21
 - Day 4: Numbers 6:22—7:89
 - Day 5: Numbers 8:1—10:36
 - Day 6: Numbers 11:1—12:16
 - Day 7: Numbers 13:1-33
2. Watch the movie *Cast Away* (DreamWorks, 2000, PG-13) starring Tom Hanks. This movie illustrates one man’s journey through the wilderness and back to normal society. He still feels lost in many ways even after he is “rescued,” but the reorientation process is illuminating.
3. Search on art.com (or another art site) for pictures of “wilderness.” Compare the images presented and notice what the pictures have in common.



Tip:

Search the internet for art sites, including sites that have biblical art/scenes. Use visuals to highlight the study, and encourage learners to do their own art searches.

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For Further Reading

Blessings and Rituals for the Journey of Life by Susan Langhauser (Abingdon, 2000). Provides ready-made, easily adaptable blessings and rituals for a variety of occasions.

A Forgiving Heart: Prayers for Blessing and Reconciliation by Lyn Klug (Augsburg, 2003). Includes prayers from spiritual writers such as C. S. Lewis, Mother Teresa, Henri Nouwen, and Desmond Tutu.