

Curriculum: **Witness**

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Denomination: Non-denominational through ELCA (Lutheran)

Foundational doctrine: *To witness is to respond to God's gifts of word, faith and service. A witness is someone who knows the Word, grows in faith and shows service. The Good News is that God promises, provides and is present throughout human history. God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is for us and with us, wherever we are and whatever we do. God is also for others: in our homes, our neighborhoods, in our churches, and all around the world. As God's children – young and old, teachers and learners – we are witnesses to God's action in the world. Our salvation story is a story of God's gifts of Word, faith and service.*

Scriptural/Theological Content: Lessons are based on an undated scope and sequence with a two-year cycle of material (red and blue), of two semesters each. The first semester consists of Old Testament stories (with the exception of Gospel around Christmas) and New Testament in the second semester. It's goal: "Through learning the biblical salvation story (Word), learners will encounter many ways to witness to others through exploring how they can express their Faith in daily life with family, friends, the broader community, and God's creation (Service)."

Articulation: There are 20 lessons per semester, which includes 15 core lessons of stories and 5 bonus sessions that are loosely based on worship themes, such as baptism, feeding, saints, worship and prayer through the use of a biblical story. Lessons also correspond to a "faith trait" – 24 words that stem from God's graces of love, trust, courage and hope. Early elementary (2 years – 2nd grade) follow the same lessons, while grades 3-8 follow a similar theme, with different stories. Each semester has a "Go Global!" theme to learn about kids in other parts of the world.

Interest / Abilities of Teachers: An understanding that teachers play a valuable role in the faith development of young children, whether they are experienced or novice. Teacher guides include suggestions to develop relationships with students and age-level characteristics. The first page of each session is an overview chart of the session at a glance, with materials listed. A prayer for teachers accompanies each session, as well as Bible background to the story and how their particular age level will connect with the theme.

Learning Activities, Format & Media: There are a wide variety of activities for the 60 minute session, most of which are to be done sequentially. There are choices for a creative activity. Other options are noted in sidebars, including 'factoids' and 'tips.' Many activities are dependent on the Learner leaflets and a variety of household objects, including food. Activities appear to be age-appropriate and embrace a variety of learning styles. Each session also relates one Faith Trait to a Bible character and provides one or more activities that develop the trait in

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learners, during the Sunday school session, and at home. Each lesson follows a similar format:

1. Ready for the Story
 - a. Welcome the Witnesses
 - b. Story Warm-Up
 - c. Story Fire-Up
2. Explore the Story
 - a. Story Set-Up
 - b. Storytelling
 - c. Faith Traits
3. Live the Story
 - a. Ways to Witness
 - b. Kids Create
 - c. Wrapping It Up

Setting: A traditional classroom with tables and chairs, with comfortable space for storytelling and open spaces for movement.

Inviolate Principle of Choice: Session plans are structured for the teacher. Questions (and factual answers) are scattered throughout, as well as open-ended discussion type questions. Craft activities are highly structured.

Age group differentiation: Closely grade in two areas: Ages 2-3, Pre-K/K, 1 & 2 and 3 & 4, 5 & 6, 7 & 8.

Home Involvement: A reproducible letter to parents is found in each Teacher's Guide. Take home pamphlets with each session, often related to the faith trait of the day with suggestions to "Know, Grow and Show."

Language: Formal convictional use of scripture with indicative bible facts and definitions given. Could easily become informal convictional with the teacher's opinion shared when questions in regard to the 'faith traits' are shared. Interpretation is given to the biblical story as to characteristics of individuals (for example: pairing the story of Samuel's call with the trait of honesty and speaking the truth). Clergy are called Pastor (Lutheran tradition).

Sociological: A variety of ethnicities are depicted in the materials. "Go Global" ideas are posted in the sidebars of the Teacher's Guide for additional activities.

Attendance Pattern: Each session is independent.

Cost: Teacher Guide: \$7.49, Class Kit (posters, puzzles, patterns) \$14.99, Learner Resource \$6.99 per semester (Early ages have "Learner Resource" papers that are given out each week; older grades have little books of which 2 pages are used each week. These could not be shared. Teacher Starter Pack \$28.49.