

NE MN Synod Discipleship Challenge:

KNOW...BE...TELL the Story!

January 2015 Children's Discussion Guide: STUDY

Supplies you may choose to purchase/bring in for this activity:

- Small inexpensive flashlights – one for each child
- One large flashlight
- A box
- Masking tape
- Black paper – one sheet per child
- White crayons or chalk OR Glow-in-the-dark writing utensils – one per child
- Highlighters
- Large sheets, pillows, blankets, chairs or tables
- Children's Story Bibles or Children's Study Bibles

KNOW the Story: *How is the faith practice "study" part of God's Story?*

**Before children arrive, turn on a flashlight and put it into a closed box. Choose a gathering space that can be made completely dark. Using masking tape, tape down a path around the room with zig zags and turns. Tape down an arrow at the start of the path.

As you are waiting for all the children to arrive teach the chorus of "Thy Word": *Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.*

When all the children have arrived, turn out all the lights. Then give them some instructions.

For example: "I want everyone to get up and line up, shortest to tallest behind the arrow on the floor. Once you are all lined up I want you to follow the leader all the way around the room staying on the tape line."

Wait for the children to comment that they can't see because it is dark.

Reply: "I have a flashlight right here."

Wait for them to comment that they can't see the light.

Reply: "Well, my flashlight is turned on but it is inside this box."

Wait for the children to direct you to open the box. Once they have pointed out that you must open the box to see the flashlight so it can help lead the way, then take out the flashlight and allow them to use it to complete the task.

Discuss:

When I first asked you to line up and follow the tape, why weren't you able to? *(It was too dark)*

Why wasn't the flashlight helpful at first? *(Because you hadn't opened the box so that light could shine into the room.)*

Read:

Psalms 119:105 says "Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path."

God's Word, which we read in the Bible, lights up our lives reminding us that Jesus is with us and helps us to know where we should go and what we should do every day. But sometimes we don't open our Bibles and read God's word. How can it light our paths if we keep it closed in the pages of a book? Just like the box and the flashlight, we need to open our Bibles and study God's word for it to be a "lamp unto our feet and a light unto our paths".

As Jesus' disciples we are supposed to "Study" the word of God.

BE the Story: How has the faith practice "study" been part of my Story, my faith journey?

Gather in small groups and discuss:

What do you think it means to "study" something? *(Devoting time and attention to learning it)*

What are some things you have had to "study"? *(Math, directions for a game, piano, etc.)*

Who do you like to "study" with or do you prefer to "study" alone?

Do you like or dislike "studying"? Why?

How have you "studied" the word of God before?

Who have you "studied" the word of God with?

Why do you think it is important to "study" the word of God?

Take some time to "study" the Word of God together.

Provide chairs, sheets and clothespins, blankets, pillows, etc.

Put kids into small groups and give them a short period of time to build a "study tent" or "study fort" for their group.

Once forts are made, give each child a Children's Story Bible or Study Bible and a flashlight. Have kids crawl into their forts with their Bibles and flashlights. Turn out the lights.

Invite each small group to pick a story to read together with their flashlights. (You may also choose to assign a story.)

After they have read the story once through, give each tent group “highlighters”. As they are reading invite them to “highlight” parts of the story that stand out to them. What part do they like the best? What part bothers them? What part don’t they understand? Encourage kids to “light up” the pages of their Bibles.

Finally, have them read it a third time, listening for who they might be in the story or what God might be saying to them. When they are done reading, give each group black paper and either white crayons or “glow in the dark” drawing tools (You can purchase glow in the dark paint, markers, crayons, etc.).

Have them draw a picture of the story they heard.

Then, have them draw themselves into the picture. How are they part of this Bible story? Were they like one of the characters? What would they have done? What might God be saying to them?

Have them share their pictures with one another. What “lit” up for them while studying God’s Word today?

TELL the Story: How can I share this faith practice “study” so it can be part of my neighbor’s story?

As Jesus’ disciples we are supposed to “study” God’s Word, not just in Sunday School, but every day. We are supposed to “study” not just with Sunday School teachers but with our families and friends.

Send each child home with their small flashlight, highlighter, and Story/Study Bible. Encourage them to invite their parents into a “Study Fort”. Tell them they can pick a story to read together with their flashlights and have each member of their family use the highlighter to highlight what lit up to them in the text they picked.

Blessing Prayer:

Have the children gather in a circle with their flashlights. Have them turn their flashlights off.

Dear God, Sometimes we keep our Bible closed and don’t let your word light up our paths and guide our feet.

Have the children turn on their flashlights.

Help us to take time to open our Bibles and study your word so it can light up our lives. Amen.