



Community of Christ

Sharing in Community of Christ: Exploring Identity, Mission, Message and Beliefs

Lesson 6 - Christian Life

This lesson is based on 'Sharing in Community of Christ' pages 34, 35, 37 and 38.

Guide Times

- Basic Beliefs – 10 minutes
- Sin – 15 minutes
- Salvation – 10 minutes
- Shaped By Our Beliefs- 20 minutes
- Conclusion – 5 minutes

Basic Beliefs (10 minutes)

In previous lessons, we have looked at some of the Basic Beliefs of Community of Christ. In this lesson we will consider basic beliefs on **Sin, Salvation, the Reign of God, Resurrection and Eternal Life, Judgment and End Time** and how they might shape our Christian life. Before we do that, let's look again at some of the introductory comments about Basic Beliefs (page33).

We offer here our basic beliefs, not as the last word, but as an open invitation to all to embark on the adventure of discipleship.

- What does it mean to you for our basic beliefs to be an invitation into the adventure of discipleship?

As we seek God's continuing guidance, we encourage all people to study the scriptures and think about their experiences as they engage in the life of the church.

- How might we use our Basic Beliefs, our study of the scriptures and our personal experiences to help us understand more clearly God's guiding hand?
- Do belief, scripture and experience carry equal weight in your life or is one more important than the others?

Sin (15 minutes)

God created us to be agents of love and goodness. Yet we misuse our agency individually and collectively. We take the gifts of creation and of self and turn them against God's purposes with tragic results. Sin is the universal condition of separation and alienation from God and one another. We are in need of divine grace that alone reconciles us with God and one another. (page34)*

*In this context 'agency' means the [ability](#) to take [action](#) or to [choose](#) what [action](#) to take.

Testimony & Challenge

- As you feel able, share of a time when you felt separated or alienated from God or from someone else. If you are no longer in that situation, what was it that enabled reconciliation to take place?
- *God created us to be agents of love and goodness* - Think of someone that you would consider to be an agent of love and goodness. What is it about them that causes you to think of them in that way?
- Are there things you could do in your life to enable you to more fully live into the challenge to be an agent of love and goodness?

Salvation (10 minutes)

The gospel is the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ: forgiveness of sin, and healing from separation, brokenness, and the power of violence and death. This healing is for individuals, human societies, and all of creation. This new life is the loving gift of God's grace that becomes ours through faith and repentance. Baptism is how we initially express our commitment to lifelong discipleship. As we yield our lives to Christ in baptism we enter Christian community (the body of Christ) and have the promise of salvation. We experience salvation through Jesus Christ, but affirm that God's grace has no bounds, and God's love is greater than we can know.

Dwelling in the Word

Read the Basic Belief statement on Salvation several times and then consider the questions below.

- What word or phrase stands out for you in this text?
- In what ways do these words align with an invitation to embark on an adventure of discipleship?

Shaped by Our Beliefs (20 minutes)

Beliefs play an important role in shaping our identity, sense of community and well-being. Our beliefs as Christians shape our thoughts, emotions, and actions, providing us with a sense of meaning and purpose in life.

The Reign of God, Resurrection and Eternal Life, Judgment and End Time might all appear to be beliefs about future times but a close reading of the basic belief statements on these topics make it clear that they are beliefs that could, and should, shape our Christian lives here and now.

Discussion

Read and reflect on these four extracts from the belief statements:

By faith we share in eternal life even now. (Resurrection and Eternal Life page 38)

We devote ourselves to seek Christ's peace and pursue it. (End Time page 38)

“Zion” expresses our commitment to herald God's peaceable kingdom on earth by forming Christ-centred communities in families, congregations, neighbourhoods, cities, and throughout the world. (Reign of God page 37)

God cares about how we treat our neighbours and enemies and how we make use of creation's gifts. It matters supremely to God how we welcome the poor, the stranger, the sick, the imprisoned, and the rejected. (Judgment page 37)

- In small groups, list some aspects of a Christian life shaped by these statements.
- Share your list with the other groups.
- Discuss which of those things on your list you believe you, or your community, do well and which you find to be more challenging.

If time allows, read through the statements on Reign of God, Resurrection and Eternal Life, Judgment and End Time and consider how your beliefs on these topics are similar or different to what is stated.

Conclusion (5 minutes)

The final sentence of the Basic Belief statements is “With faith in God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, we face the future in hopeful longing and with the prayer that Jesus taught us to pray: “Thy kingdom come! Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

Together, say the Lord's Prayer.