

Faith+Lead Academy Western North Dakota Synod

June 2022

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Our Why

Challenges Facing the Church



Mainline Christian churches are struggling to find and retain professionally trained leaders. Congregations are failing to cultivate Christian discipleship and practices with their own members as well as with their neighbors.

The Core Issue

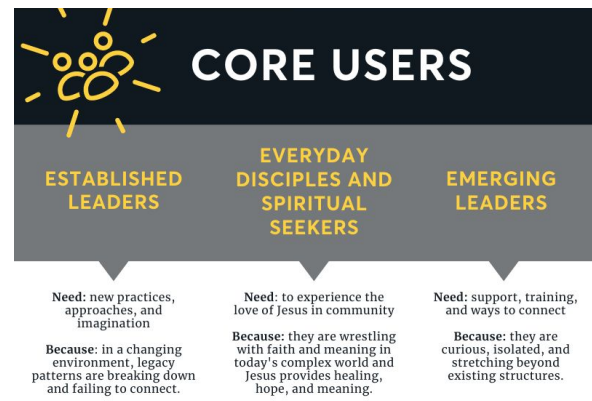


How do we cultivate Christian identity and Christian community in a rapidly changing world?

What Ministry Leaders Tell Us They Need

Leaders must be able to lead adaptive change with a missional imagination, attend to their own spiritual needs, and reimagine core aspects of ministry. They need resources that are affordable, accessible, and relevant to the challenges they face in their contexts.

Our Who



Our What



What? Listening

Luther Seminary is gaining a greater understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the church today through deep listening.



To date, **over twenty** Luther Seminary staff and faculty have facilitated **six listening sessions**, three in July and three in October 2021. Sessions gathered the following group of leaders:

- church leaders with various roles around the country (21)
- leaders of color (10)
- rural ministry leaders (25) and
- lay leaders (10)

In total, **sixty-six** leaders participated, with the majority representing the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

What are we learning?

The church has **a desire for new imagination** about *who* and *what* the church can be in this ailing world.

Many church members and leaders are **stuck** and at the same time have **a desire to lean into new models of ministry** where lay people are empowered and communities grow disciples that share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with our hurting world and serve out of their particular giftedness.

To move forward, *leaders* need support, *relationships* need tending, and *faith* needs to be translated into everyday life for all people.

There is a growing need to return to **discovering why Jesus matters**.

What are we learning?

Future ministry leaders need practices that ground (and tend) them spiritually and mentally as they lead others in discovering the difference faith makes in the world and in their lives.

Cultivating community, especially amidst deep division, is critical, as is **empowering others**.

Because the church of the future does not look like the past, ministry leaders need **competencies** related to *adaptive leadership*, *faithful innovation*, *exploring new ministry models*, and capacities for *practicing justice and reconciliation*.

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is **online theological education** that is:

Practice oriented: Connects learners with God

Theologically sound: Deepens and expands learners' understanding of the Christian tradition

Contextually responsive: Helps learners discover new ways to live and lead in today's world



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addresses the **core challenge** facing ministry leaders today:

How do we cultivate Christian identity and Christian community in a rapidly changing world?



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has content designed around **five focus areas**:



Connect with God



Tell the Story



Cultivate Community



Practice Justice



Shift Ministry Models

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will target **three types of learners**:



Clergy



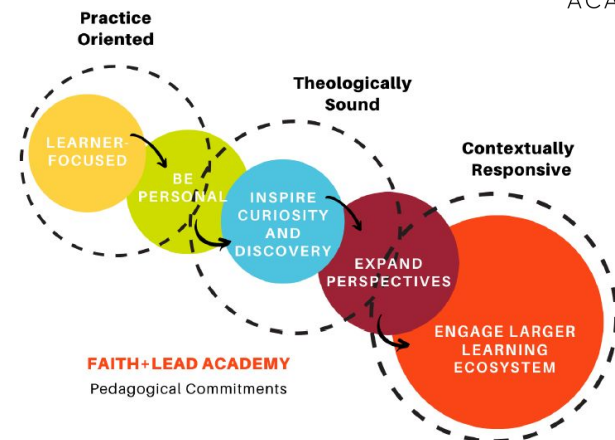
Lay Leaders



Everyday Christians

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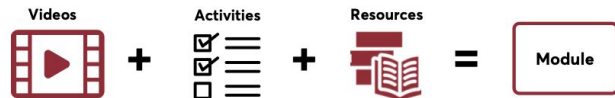
Exploring Faith+Lead Academy

Building the content

The content for Faith+Lead Academy is made up of modules, courses and pathways. Here's how each of these elements fit together to create an online, asynchronous learning ecosystem.

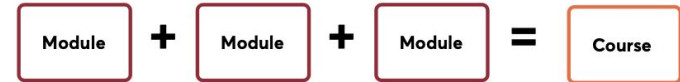
What is a module?

A module is a single unit of learning. Modules can take anywhere from 15 to 45 minutes for the learner to complete. Modules are usually focused on a single topic and include short videos, hands-on activities, and resources for next steps.



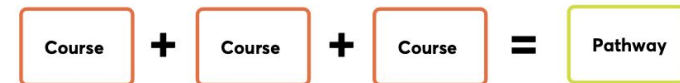
What is a course?

A course is made up of multiple modules. Courses can vary widely in length, ranging from six to twelve modules. Courses explore a particular topic in depth by walking through various modules on different elements of the topic.



What is a pathway?

A pathway is a series of courses that work together to build a greater level of mastery and understanding in the learner. The courses may be sequential, but most often they can be taken in any order.



Connect with God



- God: A Crash Course
- Treasures of the Christian Tradition: Spiritual Practices for Everyday Life
- Genesis to Revelation: The Story of Scripture
- Understanding the Old Testament
- Understanding the New Testament
- The Communion of Saints: Knowing the Story of the Church
- Little Christs: How Christian Faith Forms Our Identity



Connect with God

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Genesis to Revelation: The Story of Scripture

DESCRIPTION

This course provides a broad overview of the story of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation.

The course orients learners to the whole story of the Bible.

A possible prerequisite to the Old Testament and New Testament courses, which go into more detail.

KNOW

The sweep of the biblical narrative from creation to new creation.

BE

Become biblically literate enough to interpret your own story in light of God's story.

DO

Begin or continue regular reading of the Bible and seek to learn more about it.

Tell the Story



- Non-Creeper Evangelism
- The Communion of Saints: Learning and Sharing Our Stories
- Linking Our Stories with God's Story
- Where is God When Things Go Wrong? God's Presence and Activity amidst Suffering, Injustice, and Evil
- Ministry in the Digital Age: Cultivating Community
- Confirmation for Real Life: A Multi-Generational Bridge for Our Everyday Faith

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Tell the Story of Jesus

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Confirmation for Real Life: A Multi-Generational Bridge for Our Everyday Faith

DESCRIPTION

If our faith teaches us that each day we are born anew, shouldn't our curriculum look that way, too?

This is a multi-generational journey for all to engage and learn the tenets of our Christian faith.

KNOW

Learn the basics of the Christian life and faith. See how and why it matters in real life. Learn the basics of large catechism, lectionary, and liturgy.

BE

Get excited about your faith.

DO

Connect your faith to daily life and share it with others.

Cultivate Community



- Our Story: History of Christian Community
- Here I Stand: A Crash Course in Lutheran Theology
- Are You There God? Everyday Spiritual Practices for Modern Life
- Won't You Be My Neighbor? How to Better Engage with Your Neighbors and Community
- All Are Welcome Here: How to Foster an Inviting and Accessible Church Culture
- Hands Together, Hands On: Christian Community Building Workshop

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Cultivate Community

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Won't You Be My Neighbor? How to Better Engage with Your Neighbors and Community

DESCRIPTION

This course explores shifting neighborhoods and how to engage new neighbors.

Practice engaging in your own community.

KNOW

Gain tools that allow you to know more about intercultural communication and understanding, as well as how to listen intentionally. Learn why this is part of our Christian identity and community.

BE

Learn how to become comfortable, welcoming, engaged, and relevant within your community. Be knowledgeable in community demographics, community needs, and networking opportunities.

DO

Show up (at community events)! Start a conversation with someone you don't know (maybe within the larger Faith+Lead community). Become networked within the community, your neighbors, and outreach groups.

Practice Justice



- The Truth About Race
- Understanding Justice for Children
- For the Children to Understand Justice
- Welcoming Community: All Are Welcome
- Leading Communities to Justice
- Environmental Justice
- Proclaiming Justice: Using the Spoken Word to Create Liberation for the Oppressed
- History of Justice Work in the Judeo-Christian Tradition

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Practice Justice

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Welcoming Community: All Are Welcome

DESCRIPTION

This course will assist in deconstructing ideas of hospitality, "othering," and biblical models of inclusion.

Participants will learn to identify and welcome historically marginalized persons and communities in their context.

KNOW

Understand the make-up and needs of the marginalized communities in your neighborhood. Learn cultural competencies around LGBTQIA+ inclusion, native communities, and immigrant communities.

BE

Reflect on biblical stories of hospitality and inclusion. Participate in a "Building and inclusive Church" training through Reconciling Works. Learn how to listen to each other's stories, lifting up individual identities and creating space for their inclusion.

DO

Create a hospitality committee in your congregation. Train and equip members to competently welcome new neighbors. Audit how an outsider would experience your worship, navigate your spaces, and understand your communication.

Shift Ministry Models



- Thank God the Ministers Are Here: Equipping and Multiplying Pastoral Lay Visitors
- Beyond the Offering Plate: Leading a Holistic Congregational Conversation on Stewardship
- Celebrating God's Callings: What Was God Up to in Your Life on Tuesday at 10:30 am?
- Moving Forward One Experiment at a Time
- From Expert to Follower: Leadership Centered on God
- How Do I Love My Neighbor?
- Organizing and Managing Ministry without Going Crazy

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Shift Ministry Models

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Organizing and Managing Ministry without Going Crazy

DESCRIPTION

Congregations are not businesses or nonprofits, yet they are organizations that need strategic leadership and management.

This course introduces 10 basic organizational and managerial competencies that help pastors and lay leaders faithfully lead congregations.

KNOW

Learn the important elements to consider when organizing congregational life. Specific attention given to: HR, finance, stewardship, decision-making, planning, governance, communication, administration, communication, and facilities.

BE

Personal assessment of managerial and organizational competencies with the opportunity for deeper learning in areas of choice.

DO

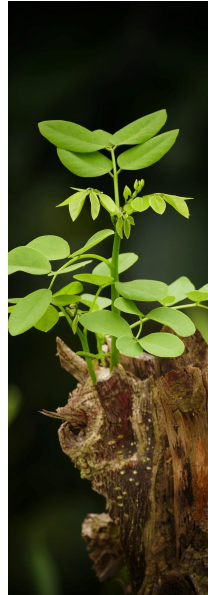
Explore all 10 competencies through activities that put them into practice.

Plans for Growth

Partnerships and scaling will allow Faith+Lead Academy to develop a robust curriculum within a short amount of time.

Within five years:

- 200 courses
- 25 pathways
- 15,000 learners
- 25 partners



Dwelling in the Word



Luke 5:33-39

Luke 5:33-39

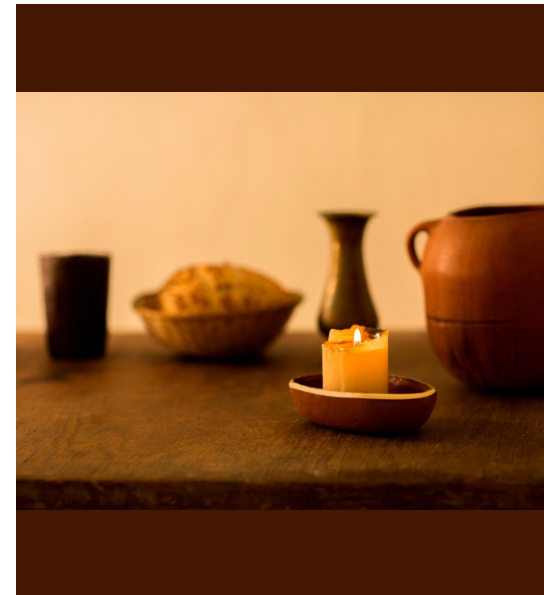
Prayer
Listen to the text
Pause in silence
Respond

As you listen to the text:

What do you notice?

What words or phrases
stand out to you?

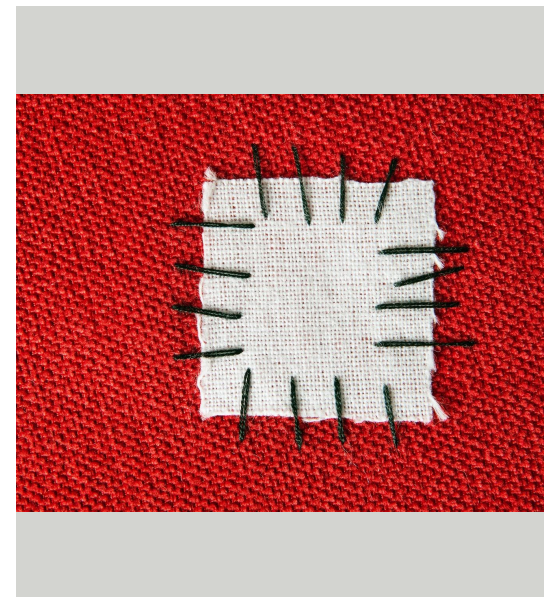
They said to him,
“John’s disciples often
fast and pray, and so
do the disciples of the
Pharisees, but yours
go on eating and
drinking.”





Jesus answered, "Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; in those days they will fast."

He told them this parable: "No one tears a piece out of a new garment to patch an old one. Otherwise, they will have torn the new garment, and the patch from the new will not match the old."



"And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins. And no one after drinking old wine wants the new, for they say, 'The old is better.'"

Luke 5:33-39

Pause
Reflect
Respond

What did you notice?
What words or phrases stood out to you?



Shift Ministry Models

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Organizing and Managing Ministry without Going Crazy

Audience:
Lay leaders
Clergy

DESCRIPTION

Congregations are not businesses or nonprofits, yet they are organizations that need strategic leadership and management.

This course introduces 10 basic organizational and managerial competencies that help pastors and lay leaders faithfully lead congregations.

KNOW

Learn the important elements to consider when organizing congregational life. Specific attention given to: HR, finance, stewardship, decision-making, planning, governance, communication, administration, communication, and facilities.

BE

Personal assessment of managerial and organizational competencies with the opportunity for deeper learning in areas of choice.

DO

Explore all 10 competencies through activities that put them into practice.

Overview of course - 12 lessons

1: **Intro Lesson** - Administry - How is managing the organization ministry? with self-assessment of different areas

2-11: **Competency areas:** HR, finance, stewardship, decision-making, planning, governance, communication, administration, communication, and cultural competency

12: **Closing lesson** including taking the self-assessment again to compare - How's you do? Do you want to repeat any module?

Church Organization and Management

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Church Organization and Management

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Worksheet on Empowering Volunteers

Build **Trust**

- Rate your organization from 1 (low) to 5 (high) on the following:
 - embrace the mission and vision of the organization
 - leaders understand their role
 - people can embrace change in a non anxious way
 - the community engages in practices that foster trust
 - people have strong relational ties
 - leaders feel a sense of belonging
- Reflecting on the above areas, what insights did you gain?
- List possible actions the organization could take.

Name one next **Step** you will take in this area:

Worksheet on Empowering Volunteers

Cooperative **Goals**

- Rate the clarity of our ministry goals 1 (low) to 5 (high)
- How were those goals discerned? In what ways were people from within the organization involved?
- How might the organization invite others into your goals?
- What experiments might you try to involve others in discerning and carrying out your goals?

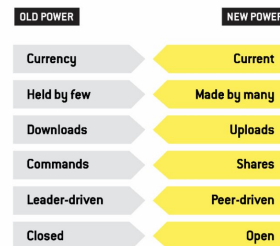
Name one next **Step** you will take in this area:

Worksheet on Empowering Volunteers

Share **Power**

Power can be seen as limited (like currency) or unlimited (like a current). How we view power influences how we share power.

- Imagine ministry with an old power view using the left side of this chart.
- Imagine ministry with a new power view using the right side of this chart.
- What insights did you gain about your current organizational structure? What are some steps you can take to empower volunteers by sharing power?



Name one next **Step** you will take in this area:

For more on this topic see: <https://thisisnewpower.com/the-idea/>

Going Deeper



Read: *Administry: The Nuts and Bolts of Church Administration* by Thomas F. Tumblin



Discuss: Go to the Faith+Lead Learning Lab and join the Organizing and Managing Ministry Without going Crazy discussion board.



Reflect: engage the exercises in *The Leadership Challenge Workbook* by James Kouzes and Barry Posner, especially the Enable Others to Act chapter.



Watch: Learn more about New Power watch the intro video and TedTalk at: <https://thisisnewpower.com/the-idea/>



Explore: Here are two great resources that provide volunteer support for non-profit and faith-based organizations: <https://vqstrategies.com/> and <https://www.sterlingvolunteers.com/blog/2022/04/5-key-steps-for-highly-effective-volunteer-program-planning/>

God:

A CRASH COURSE

Format:

Opening - the Core Question with lesson outcomes

Blessing - video

Warm-up - short video and invitation to the Activity Feed

Bible - exploring Scripture

Reflection - opportunity to reflect on and integrate learning

Instructional - 1 or more videos

Extra material - slide

Testimonials - videos

Questions:

Who is God?

How do I “know” if God exists?

What does “following Jesus” mean?

Can I talk with God?

Why is there suffering?

What is the role of the church?

God:

A CRASH COURSE

Lesson 1: Who is God?

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INTRODUCTION



Over the years, many people have asked Who is God? In fact, people have written millions of books, preached thousands of sermons, and had endless conversations trying to answer that question.

Who is God?

In this Lesson, you will explore this question through art, by looking at the Bible, and by hearing from scholars.



LEARNING TARGET

Who is God?

By the end, you will:

- know that the essence of God is love
- know what the Bible says about God
- learn about God as a community of three persons whose mission is to love the world
- discover similarities and difference of God in the Old and New Testaments



OUTCOMES

Beloved is Where We Begin

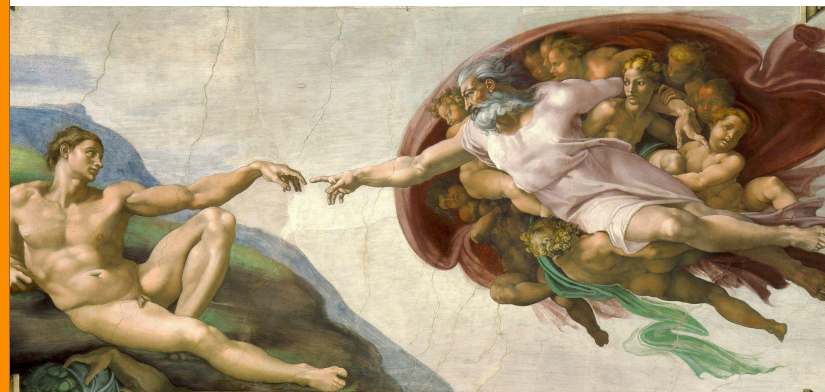
"Beloved is Where we Begin"
Jan Richardson
Circle of Grace



BLESSING

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Who is God?



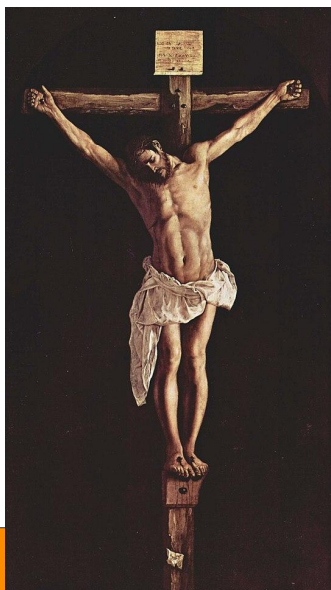
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Michelangelo - Creation of Adam



WARM UP

Who is God?



Christ on the Cross is a 1627
painting by [Francisco de Zurbarán](#),



WARM UP

Who is God?

God loves through creating: you, others, and all the world.

God's love is what sent Jesus, God's son, to the world, to live among with us on earth.

And God's love is always with us through the power of the Holy Spirit, unseen yet active.



BIBLE

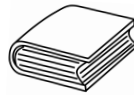
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Who is God?

Read through the following Bible passages and wonder about how they describe God's love.

- 1 John 4:7-12
- John 1:1-13
- Matthew 12:18-21
- Acts 2:1-4, 14-24, 37-39
- Psalm 46

BIBLE



1 John 4:7-12

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.

God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us, and his love is perfected in us.

(New Revised Standard Version Updated)

Matthew 12:18-21

"Here is my servant, whom I have chosen,
my beloved, with whom my soul is well pleased.

I will put my Spirit upon him,
and he will proclaim justice to the gentiles.

He will not wrangle or cry aloud,
nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets.

He will not break a bruised reed
or quench a smoldering wick

until he brings justice to victory.

And in his name the gentiles will hope."

(New Revised Standard Version Updated)

Psalm 46

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.

Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea,

though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.

God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved;
God will help it when the morning dawns.

The nations are in an uproar; the kingdoms totter;
he utters his voice; the earth melts.

The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Come, behold the works of the Lord;
see what desolations he has brought on the earth.

He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.

"Be still, and know that I am God!
I am exalted among the nations;
I am exalted in the earth."

The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.

(New Revised Standard Version Updated)



BIBLE

How did these Bible passages describe God and God's love?

- 1 John 4:7-12
- John 1:1-13
- Matthew 12:18-21
- Acts 2:1-4, 14-24, 37-39
- Psalm 46

Who is God?

Thinking about the artwork you looked at and the Bible verses you read, is there an image of God that is emerging in your mind? Take a moment and think about it.

REFLECTION



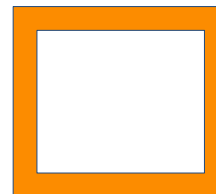
Who is God?

Then gather up some art supplies or grab a camera and create your own piece of art that embodies your image of God.

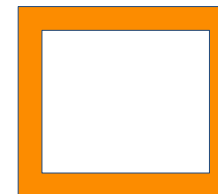
REFLECTION



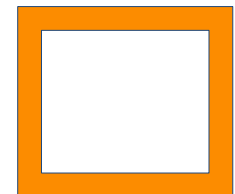
Who is God?



God as Love



Trinity - 3 in 1



God in the Old and New Testament



INSTRUCTION

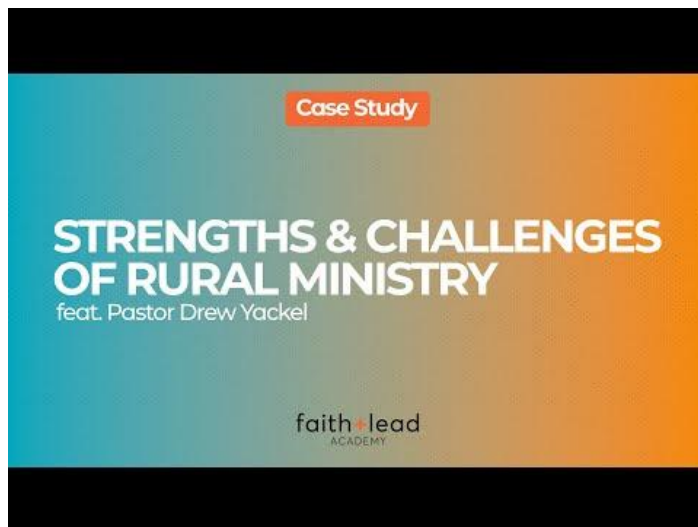
Then put it in the FLA art gallery

EXTRAS



Who is God?

- 1) Read the Gospel of John
- 2) *Children's books:*
 - a) *Old Turtle* by Douglas Wood
 - b) *3-1* by Joanne Marxhausen
- 3) *Sealed* a novel by Katie Langston



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Learn More
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