

# The Protestant Reformation

Youth and Young Adults

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# THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION

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## Contents

Session 1:	Here I Stand . . . . .	1
Session 2:	The Lawyer Pastor . . . . .	5
Session 3:	Three Styles of Worship . . . . .	11
Session 4:	The Sacrament of Communion . . . . .	15
Session 5:	From Reformation to Reformations . . . . .	21

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# HERE I STAND

## Session 1

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### **Purpose**

To meet the person most identified with the Protestant Reformation, Martin Luther.

### **Preparation and Materials**

- Make photocopies of pages 3–4 for each participant.
- Assemble some props and costumes for the dramatization of the story of Luther.

### **Gathering**

#### **Opening Prayer**

Allow a few moments for the participants to gather their joys and concerns and to become quiet. Invite their sentence prayers. If they are reluctant to pray aloud, have a time of silent prayer. Conclude the prayer with:

God be in my head, and in my understanding;  
God be in my eyes, and in my looking;  
God be in my mouth, and in my speaking;  
God be in my heart, and in my thinking;  
God be at my end, and at my departing. Amen.<sup>1</sup>

### **The Lightning Bolt That Ignites a Reformer**

Ask the participants to tell you what they know about Martin Luther. Then have them read “Martin Luther” (pp. 3–4). Point out that the story of this great reformer is told in scenes. Read or have volunteers read the synopsis of each scene. Then form acting troupes to present the scenes. Depending on the number present, you may have to combine some scenes. In many scenes, the cast can be expanded easily. Appoint directors for each troupe; you may want to do so before you form the troupes. Direct them to “Producing a Scene from Luther’s Life” (p. 4), which gives assistance in preparing the presentation.

When the troupes are ready, bring everyone together to see the dramatization of the life of Martin Luther. If possible, videotape the story.

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1. *Book of Common Worship* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), p. 25.

**Additional Activity**

For Luther, who was bedeviled by his sense of sin, the prayer of confession and assurance of pardon in the service of worship was necessary for clearing the way to hear God's word preached. Here is a prayer of confession written by Luther:

Almighty God, grant us the forgiveness of all our sins that we, being full of grace, virtue and good works, may become thy kingdom. May we with heart, soul, mind and strength, inwardly and outwardly, submit to thy commands and do thy will. Amen.<sup>4</sup>

Invite the participants to write a similar prayer of confession.

The assurance of pardon or forgiveness of sins would have been equally important to Luther. Is there one that is used regularly by your congregation? If so, present it to the participants. If not, suggest one, such as:

<i>Worship leader:</i>	I declare to you, in the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.
<i>People:</i>	Thanks be to God.

Have the participants pray their prayer of confession and receive the assurance of pardon. Give the prayer to your worship leaders, suggesting that it be used in congregational worship.

**Closing****Close the Session**

Pray the Jesus prayer for a few moments. Invite the participants to close their eyes and say the prayer softly and slowly to themselves, over and over.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.

**Benediction**

Stand in a circle for the benediction, based on 1 Thess. 5:23:

May the God of peace make you holy in every way and keep your whole being—spirit, soul, and body—free from every fault at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Alleluia! Amen!<sup>5</sup>

4. Andrew Kosten, trans., *Devotions and Prayers of Martin Luther* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1956), p. 81.

5. *Book of Common Worship*, p. 161, no. 4.

**Evaluation**

- What did the participants already know about Martin Luther? What word portrait of Martin Luther came alive in this session?
- Try to imagine yourself in Luther's congregation. What from his teachings would stir your heart?

**Scene 1:** On July 2, 1505, Martin Luther was traveling from visiting his parents in Eisleben to the university in Erfurt, Germany. With miles to go, a terrible thunderstorm broke and lightning struck so close to him that he was knocked to the ground. Sure that he was going to die, he cried, "Saint Anne, save me and I will become a monk." Luther survived the storm unharmed and entered a monastery called the Black Cloister. In 1507, he was ordained a priest.

**Scene 2:** In 1510, Luther was given the opportunity to travel to Rome. Overcome by excitement when he could see the city skyline, he dropped to the ground, crying, "Blessed be thou, holy Rome!" The way the Italian priests rushed through Mass and the stories he heard about crimes there saddened him. His favorite part of the trip was seeing the catacombs, where the early Christians had worshiped secretly and where martyrs were buried.

**Scene 3:** Luther received his doctorate of theology from the University of Wittenberg in 1512. Throughout his studies, and even before, he was worried about his own salvation. No matter what he did, he was not assured that he merited the grace of God.

Finally, in 1513, as he studied the Letter to the Romans, he came to understand that people are saved by faith alone, not of their own doing (Rom. 1:17). He could not earn God's mercy through fasting, praying, or reading Scriptures. God gives that mercy freely.

**Scene 4:** In the spring of 1517, Johann Tetzel, a Dominican brother, came to the area selling indulgences. People bought them for themselves or for deceased relatives. The theory was that these indulgences were used for the cancellation of part or all of the punishment that happened while in purgatory, a place to make satisfaction for past sins so that human beings could go to heaven.

Luther, now assured that the mercy of God comes from faith, not work or indulgences, was ready to debate the sale of indulgences. He wrote down Ninety-Five Theses (statements) about indulgences and the grace of God and nailed them to the door of the church in Wittenberg on October 31, 1517. This was the normal way to invite others to debate the statements. Professors did this regularly.

**Scene 5:** Within a few months after Luther nailed his theses to the door, they had spread all over Germany, thanks to the new printing press. Three years later (1520), Pope Leo X realized that this Luther was creating a problem for him because fewer indulgences were being sold. So the pope issued a bull (named for the seal attached to the official document), which gave Luther sixty days to withdraw his teachings and to submit to the pope. Across Germany, the pope ordered that Luther's writings be burned. Luther announced to his students and friends that there would be a big bonfire in Wittenberg on December 10. Into that fire Luther threw writings of the great church scholars of the past, decrees of popes and councils, and finally the bull from Pope Leo X.

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1. Sources for this story: Williston Walker, *A History of the Christian Church* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959), pp. 301–320; John McManners, ed., *The Oxford Illustrated History of Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 235–257; Roland Bainton, *Christianity* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000), pp. 230–258; Carter Lindberg, *The European Reformations* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1996), pp. 56–88.

**Scene 6:** Luther was ordered to appear before the Diet (legislative assembly) of Worms, a German city, in 1521. Some were ready to excommunicate Luther, but the princes of Germany, especially Frederick of Saxony, demanded that Luther not be condemned without a hearing. Some of Luther's friends urged him not to go, remembering the fate of John Huss. But Luther did go. When he arrived there on April 16, a trumpet blast announced his arrival and the whole town came out to see him.

On April 17, he appeared before the emperor and all the princes of the Holy Roman Empire and was asked to recant his writings. After explaining why he could not take back what he had written, he uttered his most famous words, "Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason, I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. I cannot do otherwise, here I stand, may God help me. Amen."

**Scene 7:** This new church allowed the priests to marry, taught that Christ was present in the communion elements but that the bread and wine did not become Christ's body and blood, counted as sacraments only baptism and communion, abolished the office of bishop, used German instead of Latin for the service of worship, and emphasized preaching in worship. As part of this new church, Luther married Katherina von Bora, a nun, in 1525.

## Producing a Scene from Luther's Life

1. Review the scenes before and after your scene.
2. List the people in the story or who could be added to the scene. This will become your cast.
3. Determine the setting. Is this in a village or the countryside? During the day or night? In the summer or winter? Write your decision down so you remember the setting.
4. Create a story line for your scene.
  - What happens first?
  - What happens next?
  - How does the scene end?
5. Write the dialogue for your scene. Who says what? Will a narrator provide additional information?
6. Assign parts and rehearse the scene. During the rehearsal, one person might create any props needed.

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# THE LAWYER PASTOR

## Session 2

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### **Purpose**

To meet the father of Presbyterianism, John Calvin.

### **Preparation and Materials**

- Make photocopies of pages 8–9 for each participant.
- Bring art supplies for the Calvin time line.

### **Gathering**

#### **Opening Prayer**

Allow a few moments for the participants to gather their joys and concerns and to become quiet. Invite their sentence prayers. If they are reluctant to pray aloud, have a time of silent prayer. Conclude the prayer with:

God be in my head, and in my understanding;  
God be in my eyes, and in my looking;  
God be in my mouth, and in my speaking;  
God be in my heart, and in my thinking;  
God be at my end, and at my departing. Amen.<sup>1</sup>

### **Review**

Ask what the participants recall about Martin Luther. If necessary, use the information on pages 3–4.

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1. *Book of Common Worship* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), p. 25.

**Continuing the Reformation****Hear about John Calvin**

Invite the participants to review the time line of Calvin's life by reviewing "John Calvin, a Second-Generation Reformer" (pp. 8-9). Then have each participant select an event or time in Calvin's life to create a symbol for or to illustrate. The illustrations and symbols will be used to make a large time line on banner paper or shelf paper. Have the participants check off their selections on one list so there are no duplications. Invite their creativity in designing the time line. It could be a series of squares linked together with yarn. Colors can indicate different periods in Calvin's life.

When the time line is finished, go over it together. Ask:

- What are the distinguishing features of Calvin's life and his contribution to Christianity?
- How is he alike and how is he different from Luther?
- What do we use in the church today that comes from Calvin?"

**Additional Activity**

Read "Beliefs Important to Calvin" (p. 9). Talk about each one and help the participants put each belief into their own words. Together create a rap with their words for these beliefs. If you're not sure how to begin, ask the participants. Someone will know.

## **Closing**

### **Close the Session**

Pray the Jesus prayer for a few moments, remembering the importance of prayer for Calvin. Invite the participants to close their eyes and say the prayer softly and slowly to themselves, over and over.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.

### **Benediction**

Stand in a circle for the benediction, based on 1 Thess. 5:23:

May the God of peace  
make you holy in every way  
and keep your whole being—  
spirit, soul, and body—  
free from every fault  
at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
Alleluia! Amen.<sup>2</sup>

### **Evaluation**

- In what ways were the participants able to compare Luther and Calvin? How were the participants able to link Calvin with their congregation today?
- What are you discovering about your connection with the history of the church as you prepare and lead these sessions?

**1509.** Is born on July 10 in Noyon, France. His mother dies when he is five or six.

**1523–1528.** Studies at the University of Paris and completes his undergraduate degree. His father has planned for Calvin to study theology. However, as his father is quarreling with the Catholic church officials in Noyon, he decides that his son should study law at Orleans and Bourges.

**1532.** Although Calvin has received a degree in law, after the death of his father, he switches to Greek and Hebrew at the University of Paris.

**Between 1532 and 1534, date unknown.** Experiences “sudden conversion,” which he never describes. From his writings, it appears that God has spoken to him through Scripture and he firmly believes that God’s will must always be obeyed.

**November 1, 1533.** His friend Nicholas Cop gives an inaugural address as the new rector of the University of Paris. He includes quotes from Erasmus and Luther, which bring accusations of Lutheranism.

**1534–1535.** Leaves France, where it is unsafe for him, and arrives in Basel, Switzerland, a Protestant city.

**February 1535.** Francis I, king of France, issues a letter charging French Protestants, also called Huguenots, with plotting to overthrow the government.

**1536.** Completes his first manuscript of *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. It contains six chapters on the Law, the Creed, Lord’s Prayer, and the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. It also contains arguments against the other five sacraments of the Catholic Church, and Christian liberty. The preface is a letter to King Francis defending the French Protestants. He continues to work on this document for many years.

**1536.** Is waylaid in Geneva on his way to Strasbourg because of a war in the area that blocks the road. William Farel urges Calvin to stay in Geneva to help him manage the city. Calvin refuses, but Farel charges that if he leaves he is turning his back on God. Calvin stays. The town fathers appoint him Bible lecturer and list him in the records as “that Frenchman.”

**January 1537.** Farel and Calvin recommend the following to the town council: monthly communion, the appointment of people in different parts of the city to report those misbehaving to the church for discipline (which could range from refusal to serve the guilty party communion to excommunication), adoption of a catechism written by Calvin, and the acceptance by every citizen of a creed written by Farel. Recommendations are accepted, but with many changes.

**January 1538.** Council votes that no one can be refused the Lord’s Supper and that unleavened bread for communion will be used. Calvin and Farel refuse to use it because they have not been consulted, a matter of pastoral freedom.

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1. Sources for this story: Roland Bainton, *Christianity* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000), pp. 267–271; Williston Walker, *A History of the Christian Church* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1959), pp. 348–357; Carter Lindberg, *The European Reformations* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1996), pp. 249–273.

**Easter 1538.** Neither man serves communion to anyone and both are banished. Their work in Geneva appears to have failed miserably. Farel goes to Neuchâtel, where he spends the rest of his life. Calvin goes to Strasbourg, where he pastors a church of Huguenots and lectures on theology. While in Strasbourg, he expands *Institutes* to seventeen chapters, writes a commentary on Romans, compiles a book of French psalms and liturgy for his congregation, and prepares a paper on the Lord's Supper.

**1540.** Marries Idelette de Bure, a widow with two children. Over the years, they have three children who die in infancy. However, he takes in his brother's eight children.

**September 1541.** Leadership changes in Geneva and the town fathers beg Calvin to return. His reaction? "I would rather die a hundred times!" However, he is able to write his own terms and goes back. On the Sunday of his return to Geneva, the Scripture he uses to begin his sermon picks up where he left off three years before.

**1541–1548.** The Council adopts Calvin's church constitution, with the following offices:

- pastor, who meets weekly for public discussion, examines ministerial candidates, and prepares interpretations of Bible passages
- teacher or doctor, who is in charge of the school system
- deacons, who care for the poor and supervise the hospital
- elders, six laymen who, with the ministers, make up the consistory, which meets every week and is in charge of church discipline.

**1550–1562.** During these years, Geneva, with its immigrant leader Calvin, attracts seven thousand immigrants, particularly French Protestants, who are fleeing persecution.

**1559.** Founds the Genevan Academy, an immediate center of theological instruction for the Reformed world.

**May 27, 1564.** Dies and is buried, at his own request, in an unmarked grave.

### **Beliefs Important to Calvin**

- God is in charge of everything.
- Prayer is a necessary food for the Christian life.
- There are but two sacraments instituted by Jesus Christ: baptism and communion.
- In communion, the physical presence of Christ is not present. The bread and cup are symbols of his body and blood.
- The call of church officers has two components: an inner working of God and the recognition of the people. In this way, the congregation has a choice in officers, rather than being given them by a higher official.
- We obey God's law not to attain salvation, which God gives freely, but as an expression of our faith in God.



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# THREE STYLES OF WORSHIP

## Session 3

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### **Purpose**

To identify how differences in worship style and theology were reflected in the sanctuaries of Lutheran, Reformed, and Catholic congregations.

### **Preparation and Materials**

- Make photocopies of page 14 for each participant.
- Tour your community to see what styles of church buildings there are. If possible, go inside to see the sanctuaries. Plan a tour for the participants (see Additional Activity, p. 12). Consider using Internet searches to see church sanctuaries of different denominations.
- Gather supplies for constructing church sanctuaries.

### **Gathering**

#### **Opening Prayer**

Allow a few moments for the participants to gather their joys and concerns and to become quiet. Invite their sentence prayers. If they are reluctant to pray aloud, have a time of silent prayer. Conclude the prayer with:

God be in my head, and in my understanding;  
God be in my eyes, and in my looking;  
God be in my mouth, and in my speaking;  
God be in my heart, and in my thinking;  
God be at my end, and at my departing. Amen.<sup>1</sup>

### **Review**

Review the names and stories of Martin Luther and John Calvin.

1. *Book of Common Worship* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), p. 25.

**Worship Style Dictates Worship Space****Compare Sanctuaries**

Allow the review of Luther and Calvin to move the conversation to the differences that resulted in worship spaces. Have the participants read “From Style to Space” (p. 14). Look at the differences in the lists for the Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed congregations. Encourage the participants to make connections with how a congregation worshiped to the way the sanctuary looked. Ask:

- What would you need in a worship space where the congregation sang hymns?
- How does the placement of the pulpit indicate the importance of the sermon?

Then form three groups. Provide each one with a cardboard box about the size of the lid of a large gift box. If the sides won't stand straight, reinforce them with cardboard or tape. One group will prepare a floor plan for a Catholic worship service, one for a Lutheran worship service, and the last for a Reformed worship service. They are to use the information on the charts. The box lid can be the floor of the church building, or it can be the property, and the participants decide how the building is situated on it. Provide rulers, pencils, construction paper, tape, glue, scissors, and anything else you think would be helpful for the participants to use.

When they have finished, put the sanctuaries on display for everyone in the group to see. If there is a place the sanctuaries can be displayed for the congregation, have each group create a sign.

**Additional Activity**

Take the participants on a tour of churches in your community. Select two or three that represent the types of arrangements discussed in this session. Be sure to get permission from parents and guardians in advance to take the participants off the church grounds.

**Additional Activity**

After reading and discussing “From Style to Space” (p. 14), take the participants to the sanctuary in your church building. Have them identify what makes it a Reformed sanctuary and what about it is not Reformed.

## Closing

### Close the Session

Pray the Jesus prayer for a few moments. Invite the participants to close their eyes and say the prayer softly and slowly to themselves, over and over.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.

### Benediction

Stand in a circle for the benediction, based on 1 Thess. 5:23:

May the God of peace  
make you holy in every way  
and keep your whole being—  
spirit, soul, and body—  
free from every fault  
at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
Alleluia! Amen!<sup>2</sup>

### Evaluation

- Which young people were able to make the connections between theology and worship? Who showed special skill in creating the sanctuaries? Which team worked particularly well together? Why?
- How has the information in this session helped you understand the worship of your congregation?

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2. *Book of Common  
Worship*, p. 161, no. 4.

<b>Catholic</b>	<b>Lutheran</b>	<b>Reformed</b>
service in Latin	service first in Latin, then changed to the language of the people	service in language of the people
focus is the Lord's Supper	focus is the sermon	focus is the hearing and preaching of God's Word
order and parts of worship are the same each week	order and parts of worship are the same each week	prayers are new each week
central feature of the sanctuary: altar	altar is still prominent, but pulpit closer to the people	pulpit is the central feature of the sanctuary
communion is observed weekly, even daily	communion is observed at each service of worship	communion is observed monthly, although Calvin promotes it at each service of worship
congregation receives only the bread in communion	congregation receives both bread and wine	congregation receives both bread and wine
special place for the choir, often in a balcony, which sings rather than the congregation	congregation sings popular hymns in own language	congregation sings only psalms and without accompaniment of any musical instrument
sanctuary is filled with stained-glass windows, statues, carvings of Bible stories and stories of saints, and a crucifix	sanctuary has illustrations of Bible stories and a cross	only decoration in the sanctuary is a cross
has kneeling benches for congregation to kneel during prayers	may or may not have kneeling benches	not likely to have kneeling benches

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# THE SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

## Session 4

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### **Purpose**

To appreciate how the interpretation of the Sacrament of Communion sets the Reformed tradition apart.

### **Preparation and Materials**

- Make photocopies of pages 19–20 for each participant.
- If you are unsure about the practices of observing the Lord’s Supper by your congregation, speak with your pastor.
- Ask your pastor to speak to the participants if you use Additional Activity (p. 16).

### **Gathering**

#### **Opening Prayer**

Allow a few moments for the participants to gather their joys and concerns and to become quiet. Invite their sentence prayers. If they are reluctant to pray aloud, have a time of silent prayer. Conclude the prayer with:

God be in my head, and in my understanding;  
God be in my eyes, and in my looking;  
God be in my mouth, and in my speaking;  
God be in my heart, and in my thinking;  
God be at my end, and at my departing. Amen.<sup>1</sup>

### **Review**

Review the information about worship styles and sanctuaries on “From Style to Space (p. 14) from Session 3.

### **The Sacraments**

Ask the participants to name the sacraments that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) observes (baptism and communion or Lord’s Supper). Then ask them to name those of the Roman Catholic Church (baptism, communion, marriage, ordination, penance, anointing of the sick, confirmation). Although the participants have not specifically discussed these seven sacraments, they may be aware of some of them through friends. Then ask them: “Why do we and other Reformed churches have two instead of seven sacraments?” (Both Luther and Calvin insisted that a sacrament had to be instituted by Christ. For baptism, it would be Christ’s baptism and the commission to the apostles in Matthew 28. For communion, it would be the last supper with

1. *Book of Common Worship* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), p. 25.

his disciples, found in all the Gospels.) To conclude this conversation, note that how the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, also called the Eucharist or communion, was very important at the time of the Reformation, and not to accept the view of the Roman Catholic Church was to commit heresy.

### **Three Interpretations of the Lord's Supper in the 1500s**

#### **Examine Each Interpretation**

Direct the participants to "What Does It Mean?" (pp. 19–20). Have them read the lists for the Roman Catholic Church and for followers of Luther. Ask: "What are the differences in the two lists?" Then compare the list for followers of Calvin with the first two lists and look for the similarities and differences.

Finally, turn to "Communion Table Changes" (p. 20). Look particularly at figures 5 and 6. Wonder together about how the shape of the sanctuary affected both how the people worshiped and how the Sacrament of Communion was celebrated. Notice such things as the distance of the priest or pastor from the people and the furnishings. Also decide which diagram is most like your sanctuary.

Another way to explore the interpretations, if you have three leaders, is to form three groups and have each small group take a different interpretation to teach to the whole group. This can be done in a skit or report format.

### **Our Interpretation as the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Today**

Use Questions 60 and 61 from the *Study Catechism: Confirmation Version* as a vehicle for conversation (see Leader's Resource, p. 18). After reading them together, examine the answers for ideas that come from Luther and/or Calvin.

### **Additional Activity**

Invite your pastor to meet with the participants in the sanctuary, if possible. Ask her or him to talk about how your congregation observes the Lord's Supper and the roles of clergy and elder leadership. The participants might look at the page of communion tables to see which one is most like your sanctuary. After they have a time to ask questions of the clergy person, ask the participants: "What about our observance of the Lord's Supper is like that of the time of Luther or Calvin?"

**Closing****Close the Session**

Pray the Jesus prayer for a few moments. Invite the participants to close their eyes and say the prayer softly and slowly to themselves, over and over.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.

**Benediction**

Stand in a circle for the benediction, based on 1 Thess. 5:23:

May the God of peace  
make you holy in every way  
and keep your whole being—  
spirit, soul, and body—  
free from every fault  
at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
Alleluia! Amen!<sup>2</sup>

**Evaluation**

- What surprised you about the knowledge of the participants regarding the sacraments and particularly the Lord's Supper? Were most of the participants able to see some differences in the three interpretations?
- How do you understand the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper? What questions has this session raised in your mind?

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2. *Book of Common  
Worship*, p. 161, no. 4.

**Question 60.** What is the Lord's Supper?

The Lord's Supper is the sign and seal by which our communion with Christ is renewed.

**Question 61.** What does it mean to share in the Lord's Supper?

When we celebrate the Lord's Supper, the Lord Jesus Christ is truly present, pouring out his Spirit upon us. By his Spirit, the bread that we break and the cup that we bless share in his body and blood. As I receive the bread and the cup, remembering that Christ died even for me, I feed on him in my heart by faith with thanksgiving. His life becomes mine, and my life becomes his, to all eternity.

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1. *The Study Catechism: Confirmation Version* (Louisville: Geneva Press, 1998).

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper and what it meant was a bitter controversy at the time of Luther's posting of the Ninety-five Theses. It remained a hot issue throughout the years we now call the Reformation.

**For the Roman Catholic Church**

- The Lord's Supper, also called the Eucharist, was celebrated at every service of worship, not only on Sunday but during the week. The priest celebrated it, whether anyone else was present or not.
- Every person was expected to go to confession and partake of the Lord's Supper at least once a year.
- The Lord's Supper was seen as the sacrifice of Christ now, not just in memory of his crucifixion. This interpretation of the meaning of the sacrament came to be known as transubstantiation meaning that, at the time the priest consecrated or pronounced holy the bread and wine, they actually became the body and blood of Christ.
- The body and blood of Christ were believed to be present in both the bread and the wine. This belief allowed the people to take only the bread and still receive the whole body of Christ.
- The practice was to place the bread on the tongue of the person, so it was never touched by that person's hands if it fell to the floor.

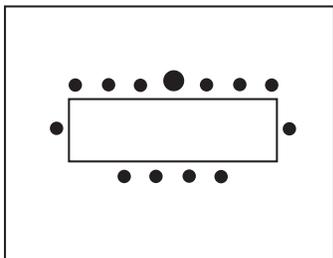
**For Those Who Followed Martin Luther**

- The Lord's Supper was celebrated regularly.
- The sacrament was a meal, a meal like the one Jesus shared with his friends, rather than another time that Christ was sacrificed. That sacrifice was made once and for all at the crucifixion.
- The sacrament was to be celebrated only after hearing the Word of God. This combination of Word and sacrament was the means by which the Holy Spirit might be given to the worshipers.
- This interpretation of the meaning of the sacrament came to be known as consubstantiation. Luther said, "Christ is present with, in, and under the elements." The elements do not become the actual body and blood of Christ. Luther acknowledged that what happens at the Lord's Supper is a mystery that cannot be explained.
- The people received both the bread and the wine.

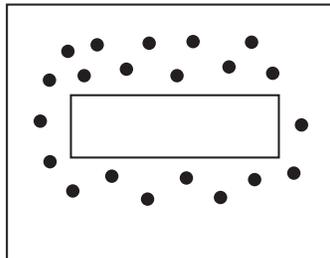
**For Those Who Followed John Calvin**

- The Lord's Supper was celebrated monthly, although Calvin insisted until his death that it should be celebrated each time the Word was read and preached.
- Worship rightly consisted of the reading of God's Word, a sermon, and the sacrament, and in that order.
- The sacrament was a meal, as Luther taught, and not a sacrifice.
- A strong connection was made between how you lived your life and whether you could take communion. The elders and pastor, who were responsible for discipline, checked regularly on the conduct of each member.
- In the Lord's Supper, the real or spiritual presence of Christ was affirmed, as Christ was received by faith through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- The people received both the bread and wine.

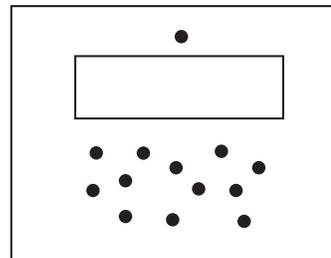
### Communion Table Changes



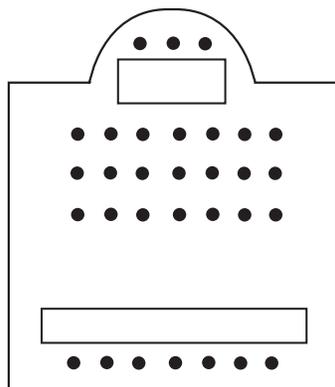
1. Jesus and his disciples worshiped in the upper room. The table for the Last Supper was probably the main furnishing.



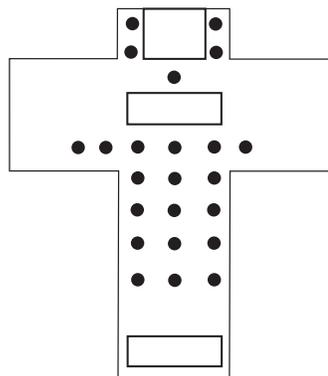
2. The early Christians worshiped in house churches. They gathered around the table to share their faith and eat together. The meal ended with communion.



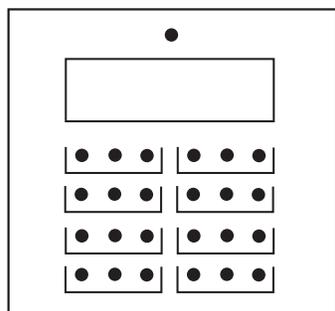
3. When chapels were built, the communion table was placed at the side or at one end. The bishop sat behind the table for worship.



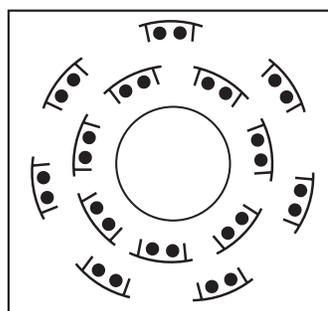
4. Later, the narthex, usually a porch, was added to the chapel. It provided a place for people who were learning about Christianity.



5. Other sections were added to the chapel to form a cross. It provided a place at the head of the cross for the bishop and priests and for the communion table or altar.



6. The Reformation caused a return to the simple chapel with a communion table in front of the pulpit as the center of worship.



7. Today many churches are moving the communion table closer to the center of worship. Some churches have placed it right in the middle of the sanctuary and the seats or pews are placed in circles around it.

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# FROM REFORMATION TO REFORMATIONS

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## Session 5

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### **Purpose**

To follow the shock waves from Luther's Ninety-Five Theses across Europe.

### **Preparation and Materials**

- Make photocopies of pages 26–28 for each participant.
- Photocopy and post the “Decisions of the Roman Catholic Church after the Protestant Reformation” (see Leader's Resource, p. 24) so the participants can refer to them.
- Photocopy the map on page 25 and enlarge it, if possible.
- Bring thumbtacks and yarn (see p. 23).

### **Gathering**

#### **Opening Prayer**

Allow a few moments for the participants to gather their joys and concerns and to become quiet. Invite their sentence prayers. If they are reluctant to pray aloud, have a time of silent prayer. Conclude the prayer with the following:

O God of all power, who has called from death the great pastor of the sheep, our Lord Jesus: comfort and defend the flock which he has redeemed by the blood of the eternal testament.

Increase the number of true preachers; lighten the hearts of the ignorant; relieve the pains of such as be afflicted, especially of those that suffer for the testimony of the truth; by the power of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.<sup>1</sup>

### **Review**

Review the previous sessions on the Protestant Reformation. Present the information in “Decisions of the Roman Catholic Church after the Protestant Reformation” (see Leader's Resource, p. 24). After reading about the Council of Trent, help the participants recognize how many of those decisions were to counter the beliefs and actions of the Protestants. Draw from the sessions on Luther, Calvin, worship, and the Lord's Supper.

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1. Mary Batchelor, comp.,  
*The Doubleday Prayer  
Collection* (New York:  
Doubleday, 1966),  
pp. 267–268.

**Explore the Effects of Lutheranism and Calvinism**

Introduce this activity by reading or summarizing the following information about the Anabaptists:

Almost as soon as Luther nailed the Ninety-Five Theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg (1517), some Christians living in Zurich, Switzerland, who were also dissatisfied with the Roman church formed a group led by Ulrich Zwingli (about 1520). They also disagreed with Luther in two major ways. First, they saw no warrant in the Bible for infant baptism; and they baptized only believers, persons who could attest to their faith and live accordingly. The other disagreement was over the definition of the church. Both Luther and Calvin expected a state church, where the whole nation would be of the same faith. Zwingli's group believed the church should be a voluntary society (a free church), with its membership controlled so only those who were worthy would be included. Thus, baptism of the believer was the entrance to church membership. These dissenters, called Anabaptists or Baptists, were at odds with the government because they refused to take oaths (to swear loyalty), to enter into military service, and to pay the taxes or tithe.

Although Zwingli agreed with much that Luther preached, he did not allow images in the church building, nor was music of any kind permitted in the worship service. He preached that Christians should reject anything that was not specified in the Bible.

The time came when both the Roman church and the Protestants agreed that the Anabaptists had to be stopped. Conrad Grebel, an ally of Zwingli, pressed for immediate action to make the changes the Anabaptists wanted, while Zwingli sought a more conciliatory reform by proclaiming reformation. On January 21, 1524, Grebel baptized fifteen adults, among them a priest, at the home of Felix Mantz in Zurich. This prompted action against him and others, and the penalty for rebaptism (these adults had already been baptized as infants) was drowning, an ironic twist on their view of baptism. Grebel died of the plague in August 1526, but Mantz was drowned on January 5, 1527, making him one of the first Protestant martyrs executed by Protestants.

Other free church and pacifist groups were formed, in Holland by Menno Simmons (the Mennonites) and in Moravia by Jacob Hutter (the Hutterites).

Form three groups and assign each one a country: France, England, and the Netherlands. (If your group is small and you would prefer to have two groups, provide the information about the Netherlands as the two groups report.) Direct them to pages 26-28 on the Participant's Resource pages. Display the map you've enlarged from the Participant's Resource (p. 25) so the participants can see it.

Give them this assignment: Read the page about your country and determine the important events related to the Protestant Reformation. Compile a list of these events, with annotations, on paper. Tack the paper to the edge of the map and connect it to your assigned country with a colorful piece of yarn.

Let the groups report on their country. Be mindful of the time to ensure all are heard before concluding the session.

### **Alternative Activity**

Prepare newscasts from the three countries. Have the three groups of participants prepare on-the-scene newscasts for their countries. Encourage them to write a script and present it to the whole group in a lively manner, as though this is breaking news.

### **Additional Activity**

Bring a list of the churches in your community, or have the participants look at a list in the yellow pages of the phone book. Which ones grew out of these years of denominational separation?

### **Closing**

#### **Benediction**

Stand in a circle for the benediction, based on 1 Cor. 16:13-14:

Be watchful,  
stand firm in your faith  
be courageous and strong.  
Let all that you do be done in love.  
Amen.<sup>2</sup>

### **Evaluation**

- The participants covered a lot of territory, both geographically and factually, in this session. How did the reporting go? Did the participants note how some events in one place precipitated an event in another place?

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1. *Book of Common Worship* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), p. 160, no. 3.

Following the advent of the Protestant Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church began what is known as the Counter-Reformation. Seeing the need for change, the Roman church made important decisions about administration and the morality of the clergy, and it further defined doctrine. Unfortunately, these decisions did little to reduce the tension between the Protestants and the Roman church.

Most of the decisions that shaped the Counter-Reformation were made by the Council of Trent, one of the Roman Catholic Church's most important councils.

This Council met three times between 1545 and 1563. At the first convocation, the church was not yet divided into denominations. By the last meeting, the split between Protestant and Roman Catholic was complete. For the first time, the votes were counted one per individual person rather than one per nation. In decisions made over the course of the three meetings, the Council decreed:

- The church remains under the authority of the pope.
- Justification by faith can include the accumulation of merits or good works.
- The traditions related to the apostles have equal authority with Scripture in the teachings of the church.
- The Vulgate (Latin) translation of the Bible is the authorized translation.
- The clergy are not to marry.
- The idea of purgatory is retained.
- The clergy have to live in their parishes. One priest cannot be assigned to more than one parish.
- The doctrine of indulgences is appropriate.
- The writings of Erasmus are condemned.
- There are seven sacraments: baptism, communion, marriage, ordination, penance, anointing of the sick, and confirmation.
- The bread and wine in communion actually become the body and blood of Christ when the priest pronounces them as such (the doctrine of transubstantiation).
- Since both the body and blood are present in both the bread and wine, the laypeople will continue to receive only the bread.



The story of John Calvin and his escape from France gives you the first clue that being a Protestant in France was not easy. Calvin did not forget the French Protestants, known as Huguenots, when he found success in Geneva. By 1536, a French translation of the Bible with a Latin foreword by Calvin was available to them. The academy in Geneva trained men to be pastors of the churches in France, even if some of them had to go undercover. By 1567, over one hundred pastors had come from Geneva to organize the Huguenot congregations.

Although they often had to be secretive about their faith, the French Protestants formed a national organization in 1559 and adopted a confession of faith written by Calvin. That same year, however, an alliance was formed between France and Spain, both Catholic countries, which included a clause stating that each would get rid of all heresy in the land. Nevertheless, in certain sections of France, particularly where the nobility were sympathetic, the Huguenots came close to flourishing. In 1561, they formed the National Synod of France with over two thousand congregations. In early 1562, an Edict of Toleration allowed them to hold services of worship in private homes and outside the town walls.

On March 1, 1562, the Duke of Guise, a Catholic, was on a hunting expedition with some two hundred armed men. They came upon a barn where a large company of Huguenots were worshipping. The duke and his party attacked the Huguenots and over seventy of them were killed. This attack brought on many other massacres. Up to this point, the Huguenots saw martyrdom as a positive sign of a strong faith; but after the massacres, they took up arms against their enemies. Over the next thirty years, both Catholics and Huguenots were murdered and slain.

The most notorious occasion was on St. Bartholomew's Day (August 24, 1572). Catherine, regent of France, arranged the marriage of her daughter Margaret of Valois to Henry of Navarre. This would unite a princess and the leader of the Protestants. The wedding was set for August 18 in Paris. Leaders of the Huguenots, as well as French royalty who were Catholic, arrived for the parties before and after the wedding day. On August 24, all the gates to the city were locked, leaving the Huguenot troops outside. A fanatic follower of Guise, Claude Marcel, was heard to say that the king had ordered all heretics slain. A list of names was provided. At a signal given by the king, the Huguenots were slain while still in their beds throughout Paris. About six thousand Huguenots in Paris and thousands in the smaller cities around the country died in the massacre and other massacres that it prompted. Outside France, Protestant leaders mourned but did nothing.

When Henry of Navarre, a Huguenot, came to the French throne, he eventually converted to Catholicism. However, he did issue a policy of limited tolerance, the Edict of Nantes, in 1598. While it proclaimed France to be a Catholic nation, the Huguenots were granted the right to worship on their own estates and in some other places, but not within five leagues of Paris. They were also granted civil rights.

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1. Sources for this story: Carter Lindberg, *The European Reformations* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1996), pp. 275–297; Williston Walker, *A History of the Christian Church* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959), pp. 380–382; Roland Bainton, *Christianity* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000), pp. 282–285.

Cambridge University was a place for teachers who believed in Luther's doctrine that you were saved by faith, not penances, fasting, or pilgrimages. Thomas Bilney of that faculty was burned at the stake in 1531 for preaching Luther's doctrine. At that same time, William Tyndale went to Europe in order to prepare a new translation of the Bible in English because the bishop of London turned down his request to do one. By the time Tyndale died, he had translated the New Testament and much of the Old Testament. He also translated some of Luther's writings, but he did not acknowledge that they were Luther's. Tyndale was burned at the stake in 1536. His final prayer was, "Lord, open the king of England's eyes!"

Indeed, the eyes of King Henry VIII were opened. In 1537, he authorized the publication of the Tyndale Bible. However, Henry had marriage problems. His wife, Catherine of Aragon, was the widow of his brother, and it was against the law to marry your brother's wife. With no male heir in sight, Henry decided that his marriage was null and void. He waited for the pope to agree, but the pope was silent. Henry convened the bishops of England, and the pope continued the silence. In 1533, Henry appointed Thomas Cranmer (who was secretly married in 1532) as Archbishop of Canterbury. Cranmer declared that Henry had never married Catherine, and Henry now married Anne Boleyn. In 1534, the pope threatened to excommunicate Henry. In response, the Parliament made the king the head of the English church. Although this was a break from the papal authority, the church in England still followed the Roman Catholic theology and used the death penalty for anyone who denied the doctrine of transubstantiation. Cranmer also prepared the *Book of Common Prayer* for use in the English church.

The tide changed in 1553 when Mary Tudor, a Catholic, became queen. She quickly removed Protestant clergy from the churches because they had broken the vow of celibacy. Heresy trials, combined with treason charges, resulted in the burnings of nearly three hundred people. Even though Cranmer signed papers denouncing Luther, he too was sentenced to burn. At the stake, he denounced his signed confession. Cranmer's enemies claimed they found his heart in the ashes because it was so filled with wickedness that it would not burn.

After Mary, came Elizabeth I, who was determined to have a country with one faith. She was just twenty-five, but she had a way with words and could speak French, Latin, and Italian, as well as her native English. A fleet from Spain came to England to assure that it stayed Catholic. However, the British navy defeated this Spanish Armada. Now the way was laid for the Church of England, a middle ground between Lutheranism and Catholicism. In 1559, Parliament passed the Act of Supremacy, which made Elizabeth I the head of the Church of England, the Supreme Governor.

In 1563, the Act of Uniformity was passed. Archbishop Cranmer had written the Forty-Two Articles outlining the Protestant church in England. Elizabeth took part in the revision of them to thirty-nine articles. The Church of England kept the vestments for the clergy and the liturgy of the Catholic Mass; however, the service was in English rather than in Latin. The language for communion, always a sticky point, suggested the actual presence of Christ's body, as well as a memorial to Christ. The premise behind this revision was that what is not forbidden in the Bible is permitted.

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1. Sources for this story: Carter Lindberg, *The European Reformations* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1996), pp. 309–334; Roland Bainton, *Christianity* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000), pp. 286–287; Williston Walker, *A History of the Christian Church* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959), pp. 357–367.

The first martyrs of the Reformation in the Netherlands lived in Antwerp and were killed in 1523. By most counts, the Netherlands had more Protestant martyrs than any other country in Europe. Luther wrote the first hymn of the Reformation about them, "A New Song Here Shall Be Begun." One reason for the large number of martyrs was that no nobility in the Netherlands patronized the reformers. Thus, they were forced underground from the beginning.

Early on, Luther was the most influential reformer in the Netherlands, but then Anabaptists took hold in the lower classes. Famous among them was Menno Simmons, whose followers were known as Mennonites.

The Protestant struggle in the Netherlands was closely tied to the desire to rid the country of Spanish domination. William of Orange, a Catholic, became the central figure in this resistance. By 1566, mobs were destroying churches in order to rid them of images. Although William of Orange opposed this kind of violence, he needed the support of the northern provinces where Calvinism was strong. When three hundred nobles sent a petition to Spain requesting that the harsh religious edicts and inquisition be stopped, the Duke of Alva was dispatched to Brussels. His "Council of Blood" executed thousands of people suspected of heresy in the Netherlands and levied high taxes. William of Orange escaped to Germany.

William and others returned in 1572 to fight for their country. He had expected help from the Huguenots in France, until they were massacred on St. Bartholomew's Day. Over the next four years, many battles were fought with the resisters staying barely afloat. Finally Elizabeth I of England came to their aid and William led his people to independence in 1581.

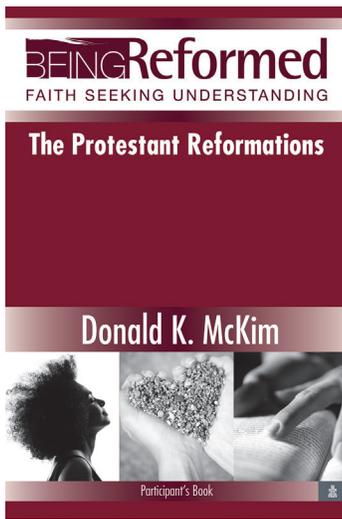
During these years, Calvinism grew in strength in the Netherlands. The First National Synod of the Calvinist Church in the Netherlands was held in 1571. By this time, William, originally a Catholic, had turned to Lutheranism and then to Calvinism. In 1575, a university was established in Leyden. That same year, the Reformed Church of the Netherlands was clearly organized to be Presbyterian. However, William's desire was to allow a certain amount of religious freedom and tolerance. Catholics were not allowed to worship publicly or to hold public office, but they could live and work there without being branded heretics. William was the first to offer tolerance to the Anabaptists. With this amount of freedom for religion, the Netherlands became a haven for groups who were persecuted elsewhere, such as the Puritans from England.

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1. Sources for this story: Carter Lindberg, *The European Reformations* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1996), pp. 298–308; Roland Bainton, *Christianity* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000), pp. 285–286; Williston Walker, *A History of the Christian Church* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959), pp. 380–388.



# Additional Reformation Resources



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