

THE SEVEN L's of LATAH VALLEY

A Catechetical Training
In The Christian Faith
For the Post-Modern World

1. Latah Lives —

the fullest life of community that God intends us to live, according to the witness of Holy Scripture.

2. Latah Listens —

to the stories of people near and far and especially to God's Story through them.

3. Latah Lingers —

in the places where, and in the moments when, people need to hear about the love of God in Jesus Christ.

4. Latah Laughs —

at the serious business of the world, knowing that even the best methods of human beings won't make things perfect.

5. Latah Learns —

from those humble people who are willing to admit that they don't always know for sure.

6. Latah Loves —

by the power of the Spirit of Christ, who trains us in forgiveness, reconciliation and compassion.

7. Latah Longs —

for the coming kingdom of the risen Christ where there will be no church, no temple, no suffering, no sighing and no death... "but the Lord God will be their light."

4. Latah Learns —

from those humble people who are willing to admit that they don't always know for sure.

Focus Areas:

- Prayer
- Worship
- Sabbath-Keeping

Ice Breakers:

Describe the characteristics of your favorite teacher? What subject or subjects did he or she teach? How did your favorite teacher go about presenting the material?

Read.

“They went to Capernaum; and when the Sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and **taught**. They were astounded at his **teaching**, for he **taught** them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, ‘What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.’ But Jesus rebuked him, saying, ‘Be silent, and come out of him!’ And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, ‘What is this? **A new teaching**— with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits and they obey him.’” (Mark 1:21–27, NRSV).

Review.

What appears to distinguish Jesus’ teaching style from others who may have taught in Capernaum? How is the interruption to his lesson incorporated in the lesson itself?

Reflect.

Considering the last remark of the unclean spirit, in verse 24, why might the teacher want to shut him up? Is there such a thing as arriving at the correct answer too soon or too quickly or with too much certainty? Why might it be significant that Jesus’ teaching take place in a synagogue and on the Sabbath Day?

Synagogue: literally *Assembly* in Greek; a place of meeting for Jews to read and interpret Torah, Mosaic Law; a local center of Jewish life and thought in the absence of the Temple in Jerusalem

Sabbath: a day of festival, dedicated to Yahweh, celebrated from sundown on the sixth day of the week to sunrise on eighth day of the week; Exodus 20:8–11 commands that no work is to be performed on “the seventh day” (Saturday).

Latah Valley Presbyterian Church engages in a communal process of learning by which we receive the inherited traditions of the Christian Faith, respect the authority of Jesus of Nazareth as the interpretative key to understanding those traditions, but also offer up our own unique and spontaneous experience as another tool which is used by God’s Spirit to teach and to inspire continuing growth toward maturity.

Prayer Exercises.

In which of the following ways have you been taught about prayer?

- Prayer is talking to God privately.
- Prayer is talking to God publicly.
- Prayer is what you do when you've run out of reasonable options.
- Prayer is a great way to get what you want.
- Prayer is the responsibility of professionally trained clergy.

Define *Prayer*, as you understand it today:

Write a brief prayer, which incorporates the following components:

- **Adoration** – describing God's attributes and alluding to events in the Bible and in the world which have evoked a sense of reverence and wondrous delight.

- **Confession** – admitting to God our personal and corporate brokenness; our contrition over sin.

- **Thanksgiving** – expressing to God our profound gratitude for his forgiveness and his love for us, which have been demonstrated in the person of Jesus Christ and in other ways.

- **Supplication** – offering to God concerns for ourselves and for others, for troubling circumstances near and far.

Gather in Triads A, B & C, sharing your definitions and one component of your written prayer.

Return to the large group, and invite someone to read **Luke 18:9–14**.

What elements of the Pharisees' prayer resemble your own?

What elements of the tax collector's prayer resemble your own?

Discussion: *Worship*.

Read this excerpt from Mark Labberton's book, *The Dangerous Act of Worship*:

"When worship is our response to the One who alone is worthy of it—Jesus Christ—then our lives are on their way to being turned inside out. Every dimension of self-centered living becomes endangered as we come to share God's self-giving heart. Worship exposes our cultural and even spiritual complacency toward a world of suffering and injustice. In Jesus Christ we are called to a new way of living. Through the grace of worship, God applies the necessary antidote to what we assume is merely human—our selfishness. Worship sets us free from ourselves to be free for God and God's purposes in the world..." (p. 14)

How might being safe and comfortable in worship betray an inappropriate understanding of worshipping God?

Read **Jeremiah 7:1–4** and **Isaiah 40:1–2**. Which is more comforting? Which feels safer? How do you account for the difference in tone?

Take a break and prepare to view the final scene of *Places In The Heart*.

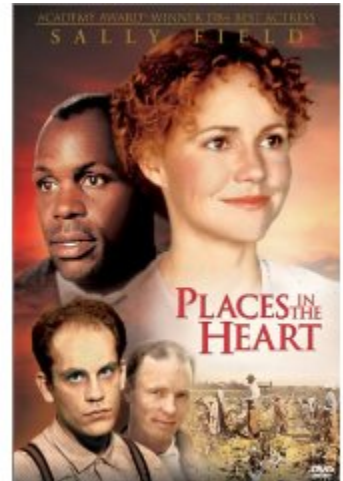
Without knowing what events precede this service of worship, what is the distinguishing trait of all those who participate?

Sabbath-Keeping Exercise.

Read this excerpt from Marva Dawn's book, *A Royal Waste of Time*:

"Since Sabbath keeping is preparing for the final rest of God's Reign, a foretaste of eternity, there is a very deep need for the Church to recover Sabbath keeping as the daylong setting of our morning worship... It is essential that we encourage members of our congregations to continue remembering that the whole day of Sunday is a day for God; then we could end the worship service's enslavement to the clock..."

In our culture there is a frantic need—emphasis on the word *frantic* because our technological milieu constantly increases its pace—for true rest, for a genuine ceasing from the madness and frenzy of our society, for a better set of values and way of life to embrace, for unfeigned feasting that is a true celebration and not merely an attempt to suppress the profound pain of our lives." (p. 368)



What are the social issues that are addressed in these paragraphs?

Why is the advice she offers so difficult for us to hear?

How might the practice of keeping Sabbath cultivate a spirit of humility?

Pray.

Dear God of Sabbath Rest, thank you for the way that you teach. You do not force upon us formulae for living, but through the Spirit of Jesus, you nurture us gently in relationships with humble men, women and children. You do not require us to be certain, but to be faithful in words and deeds, the results of which we cannot comprehend. Amen.