

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."

3. Latah Lingers —

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

Focus Areas:

- Place & Time: The Importance of Context
- The Love of God in Jesus Christ
- Embodying The Gospel Message

Ice Breakers:

On an index card write *your name* in the center. In the upper left corner: *your passion*. In the upper right corner: *a significant event* in your life (good or bad). In the lower left corner: *a person who has had a profound impact* upon your life. In the lower right corner: *A special place where you have felt close to God*. Share the four corners with the group.

Read.

“But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you... If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked...” (Luke 6:27;32–35, NRSV).

Review.

What is the recurring rhetorical question that Jesus asks in the passage? Why does he keep asking it?

Reflect.

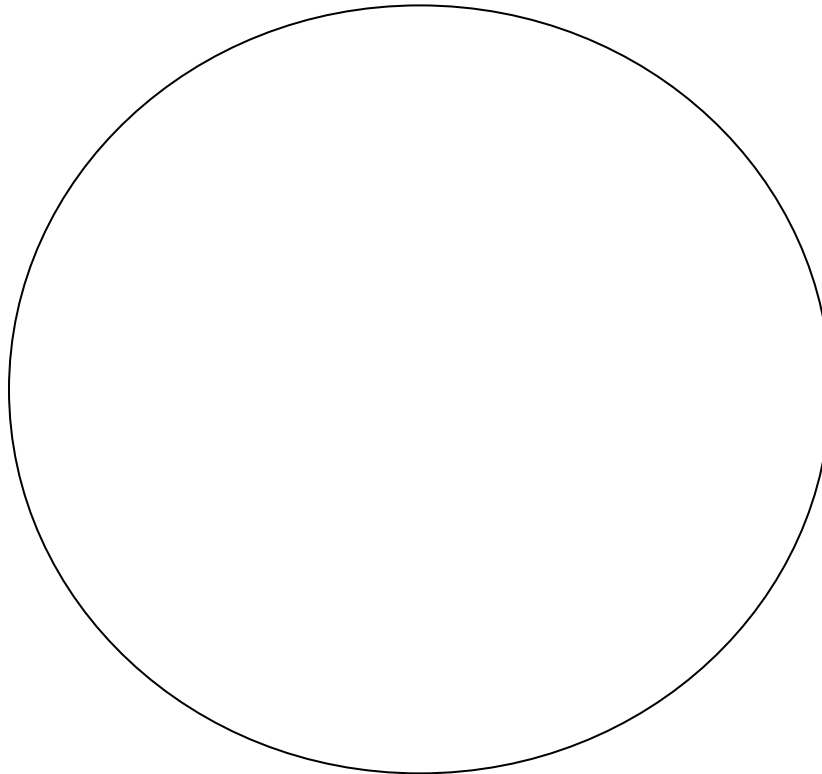
How might love that expects love in return be manipulated or distorted?

If we were to indeed practice the *love of enemies* that Jesus describes, where would we have to hang out? What amount of time would we have to devote to relationships which are hostile, indifferent or apathetic?

Latah Valley Presbyterian Church lingers in homes, homeless shelters, workplaces, hospitals, schools, courthouses, prisons, department stores, fitness centers, public squares and other social settings with the explicit purpose of embodying the good news that in Jesus Christ we are known and loved. Latah Valley participants share the love of God through a ministry of presence and in a sensitive style of communication that recognizes differences in personality, ethnicity, cultural background, etc.

Place & Time Exercises.

Sketch a pie-chart below that suggests the estimated proportion of time that you spend in weekly conversation with immediate family, co-workers, extended family, friends, acquaintances, strangers, sales clerks, customers, clients, fellow club members, teachers, students, church folk, prayer partners, pedestrians, etc.



Divide into triads, or smaller groups of three, and invite each member to share her/his pie-chart. Discuss whether you feel good or bad about the allocation of time. Then read the respective passages below:

Triad A: John 4:7 – 12

Note the references to time and place:

Triad B: John 4:13 – 20

How does Jesus take the conversation to a deeper level?

Triad C: John 4:21 – 30

In what ways does Jesus overcome the woman's efforts to keep things on the surface?

Discussion: *The Love of God in Jesus Christ.*

Triads A, B & C are invited to share how the story of the Samaritan woman might relate to our own efforts at communicating the gospel message. What obstacles get in the way? What words, phrases or images are most conducive to going deeper?

Complete the following sentences:

The Love of God differs from romantic love in this way: _____.

The Love of God differs from friendship-love in this way: _____.

The Love of God differs from family-love in this way: _____.

Read Hosea 2:10–13. How is the Love of God like romantic love?

Read John 15:14–15. How is the Love of God like a friendship?

Read Mark 3:31–35. How is the Love of God like a family?

Take a short break and prepare to view Scene 19 from the DVD/film, *The Big Kahuna*:

Or, read through the following excerpt from Walker Percy's novel, *The Second Coming*:

Just before she reached... the bench, a young woman approached and did not veer... She was dressed in the old style, skirt, blouse, cardigan sweater, shoulder bags, penny loafers. Her long black hair was parted in the middle and framed an oval face like a madonna's. Seen close, she was not so young. Her face was chapped. Evidently the woman had something to say to her or expected her to say something, for she did not step aside. As she watched the woman's radiant smile and cast about in her mind for where she might have known her, she noticed that the woman held a sheaf of pamphlets in one hand and that her fingers were ink-stained. From the pressure of the strap of the shoulder bag on the wool of the sweater, she judged that the bag was heavy. Perhaps it was filled with more pamphlets. The woman, still smiling, was handing her a pamphlet. Anxious to make up for not being able to recognize the woman, she began to read the pamphlet then and there. The first three sentences were: *Are you lonely? Do you want to make a new start? Have you ever had a personal encounter with our Lord and Savior?* While she was reading, the woman was saying something to her. Was she supposed to listen or read?

"Why don't you come to a little get-together we're having tonight? I have a feeling a person like yourself might get a lot of it?"

She considered that question, "I'm not sure what you mean by the expression, 'a person like yourself might get a lot out of it.' Does that mean you know what I am like?" (p. 33)

Embodying The Gospel Message.

Invite the group to debrief the conversations, depicted in either the film clip or the novel excerpt.

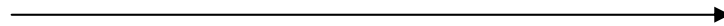
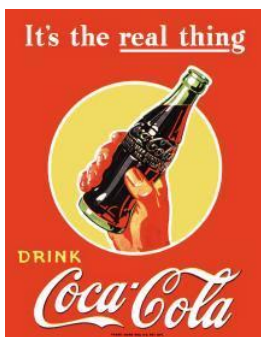
Review the following passages in triads and write a one sentence summary of how the Love of God is embodied, or lived out in relationships:

Triad A: 1 John 4:7 – 16

Triad B: Acts 8:26 – 40

Triad C: Acts 17:22 – 34

Return to the large group and match one of these captions to one of the passages:



We take the initiative and talk to a crowd of “religious” people.



Someone else takes the initiative and asks a question of us.

Because God takes the initiative in loving us first, we ought to love one another.

Pray.

Dear God of Love, there are people in my life who have demonstrated your love for me and for the world that you have made. Thank you for them. And now, I ask you to help me become that kind of person as well. Teach me how I may take the initiative and declare the wonderful news of forgiveness and new life in Christ. Inspire me also to answer the questions that come in my direction with sincerity. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

