

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."

6. Latah Loves —

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

Focus Areas:

- The Holy Spirit
- The Sacrament of Holy Baptism
- The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

Ice Breakers:

What is a song from pop-culture that resonates with you about the nature and perhaps the heart-ache of love? Jot dot a few of the lyrics that you can recall and share them with another person in the group...

Read.

"If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love I gain nothing. Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends..." (1 Corinthians 13:1–8, NRSV).

Review.

Why do you suppose the apostle Paul addresses this subject to the members of the church at Corinth? What interpersonal situation may have necessitated these definitions of love?

Compare this passage with the account of Apollos and his meeting with Priscilla and Aquila in Acts 18:24–28. What may have been missing for this eloquent man's presentation of the gospel message?

Reflect.

Apart from its use at weddings, what application does this passage have for the day-to-day activity of the church community?

Latah Valley Presbyterian Church loves the ever-expanding creation of God, including men, women and children who have been made in God's image. We love, not because of the desirable characteristics that we may notice in the objects of our love, but because of the example set forward in the person of Jesus Christ and because of the continual training that we receive by the Holy Spirit. The actual practice of the love of God and the love of neighbor, which have been required of us, are now powerfully demonstrated in tangible expressions of forgiveness, reconciliation and compassion.

Read this excerpt from *Eyes That See, Ears That Hear*, and reflect upon *The Holy Spirit*.

“This theology perceives God as a sort of divine lover, whereby the various elements of love are modeled with the Godhead itself. In order for God to be love, it is necessary for God to love his equal, for surely... love cannot be forced, coerced, or bought. Thus, if God is relational, another must have existed in God from the beginning of time. The incarnation of Jesus, then, represents the fulfillment of God’s love for humanity (among many other things). But the relationship between the Father and Son is not enough... Love for another is incomplete unless it is directed outward. In other words, God cannot fully love the Son and vice versa without a sense of mission that is directed outward.



Therefore, from the beginning of time, the Spirit existed in God as the outpouring of love between the Father and Son. In the end, God, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, models love for all creation. The relational triune God is perhaps best summed up in the concept, *perichoresis*.

‘Perichoresis’ means *being in-one-another*... One of the most effective images used to communicate this idea of *perichoresis* is that of a divine dance...” (James P. Danaher, p. 116).

Are there any Bible passages that you might connect with this image of divine dance?

John 14:15–21? Are there any experiences that you have had personally that might illustrate the concept of *being in-one-another*? What are they?

Connect the attribute or the activity of the Holy Spirit with the scripture text supporting it.

Creates and gives life	Isaiah 61:1
Re-animates the dry bones of Israel	Acts 15:28
Confesses that Jesus came in the flesh	Galatians 5:22
Searches the depths of God	Ezekiel 37:14
Pledge of our inheritance	1 Corinthians 2:10
First Fruits of Salvation	Joel 2:28–29
Helps us to pray	Ephesians 1:14
Activates gifts for ministry and the common good	Romans 8:23
Produces the fruit of love...	Psalms 33:6
Helps to make decisions about mission	1 Corinthians 12:7
Fosters intergenerational dreams and visions	Job 33:4
Prompts proclamation of good news	1 John 4:2

The Study Catechism

Question 67. How do I enter into communion with Christ and so with one another?

By the power of the Holy Spirit as it works through Word and Sacrament. Because the Spirit uses them for our salvation, Word and Sacrament are called “means of grace.” The scriptures acknowledge two sacraments as instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ – baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

Question 68. What is a sacrament?

A sacrament is a special act of Christian worship, instituted by Christ, which uses a visible sign to proclaim the promise of the gospel for the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. The sacramental sign seals this promise to believers by grace and brings to them what is promised. In baptism the sign is that of water; in the Lord’s Supper, that of bread and wine.

Discussion: *The Sacrament of Holy Baptism.*

Pour a pitcher of water into a basin or a large bowl in the midst of the group.

Invite each person to touch the water with one or two fingers and to then mark his or her own forehead with the sign of the cross. Read Mark 1:9–11.

“In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.’”



Invite each person to touch the water again, but this time to mark the forehead of the persons to the right and to the left. How is this physical encounter different from the one prior to the reading of Mark’s gospel?

True or False or Maybe?

_____ In Holy Baptism, the Holy Spirit confirms that we are going to heaven when we die.

_____ In Holy Baptism, the Holy Spirit washes away our sin and gives us a clean slate until the next time that we commit a sin.

_____ In Holy Baptism, the Holy Spirit marks and seals us as belonging to Christ and welcomes us into a dramatically new way of life.

Review the following questions that we ask during a typical service of Holy Baptism:

Trusting in the gracious mercy of God, do you turn from the ways of sin and renounce evil and its power in the world?

I do.

Who is your Lord and Savior?

Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior.

Will you be Christ's faithful disciple, obeying his Word and showing his love?

I will, with God's help.

At Latah Valley Presbyterian Church we baptize adults who are prepared to answer these questions for the first time as well as the infants and children of (at least) one believing parent or legal guardian. Those who have been baptized as infants or children may *renew* their baptismal vows upon joining the active membership/ministry of Latah Valley. Holy Baptism is intended to be experienced once in a lifetime, as a sign of God's fundamental decision for us. (See Matthew 28:18–20; Ephesians 4:4–6; Galatians 3:27–28; Romans 6:3–4 and Acts 2:39.)

Exercise: *The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.*



Invite the group to gather into triads and recall the final scene of *Places In the Heart*, which we viewed during the last gathering. (You may want to see it again!) Also consider these passages:

Triad A: Exodus 12:14–27

_____ is the name of the Jewish festival from which the Lord's Supper derives its historic significance.

Triad B: Matthew 26:17–30

Jesus re-defines the nature of the Passover meal, identifying the unleavened bread with his _____ and the cup of wine with his _____.

Triad C: 1 Corinthians 11:17–34

The apostle Paul rebukes the house churches in Corinth for partaking of the Lord's Supper in an _____ manner, and exhorts them to _____.

Re-convene in large group and discuss the changes that must have taken place as celebrants of the feast move from a totally Jewish to a totally non Jewish context. Are there changes that we must account for today?

True or False or Maybe?

_____ In the Lord's Supper, the Holy Spirit determines who belongs and who doesn't belong in the body of Christ.

_____ In the Lord's Supper, the Holy Spirit provides believers with a cozy sense of togetherness over against the world which is going to hell in a hand-basket.

_____ In the Lord's Supper, the Holy Spirit offers nourishment for the journey of faith toward God's future kingdom.

Review the following prayers which we say during a typical celebration of the Lord's Supper:

Holy God, we praise you. Let the heavens be joyful and the earth be glad.

We bless you for creating the whole world, for your promise to your people Israel, and for Jesus Christ in whom your fullness dwells.

Born of Mary, he shares our life.

Eating with sinners, he welcomes us.

Guiding his people, he leads us.

Visiting the sick, he heals us.

Dying on the cross, he saves us.

Risen from the dead, he gives new life.

Living with you, he prays for us.

Send to us your Holy Spirit

That, being made one with Christ,

We may be one with each other

And one in ministry to all the world,

Until Christ comes in final victory.

We praise you, eternal God, through Christ your Word made flesh, in the holy and life-giving Spirit. Amen.

Read and discuss the following excerpt from Jurgen Moltmann's book, *The Church In The Power of the Spirit*. Pay special attention to the concept of "conversation about the current problems..."

"In the Lord's Supper, Christ's redeeming future is anticipated and this hope celebrated in remembrance of his passion. In this meal his past and his future are simultaneously made present. This present actualization frees the assembled congregation from the powers of the world which lead to sin and gives it the assurance of the divine future... The fellowship of the Lord's Table involves fellowship with one another, and in the framework of that fellowship conversation about the current problems and tasks of our daily work in the world. In the messianic understanding of it, the Lord's Supper is not a mystery cult which the initiated celebrate in separation from their surrounds; it is a public and open meal of fellowship for the peace and righteousness in the world" (p. 243–44).

Pray.

Loving Lord, as we are trained by your Spirit and these Sacraments, bless us to forgive, to seek reconciliation and to show compassion for the whole world and for all people in the name of Christ. Amen.