



Study resources for staff in Lutheran schools

LUTHER THE MOVIE:

and why we have Lutheran schools

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LUTHER the movie, which was released in cinemas throughout Australia on 3rd March 2005, has special significance for Lutheran schools. Martin Luther valued education and was vehement in advocating for the education of both boys and girls. Education for Luther was important not only to read and study God's word, but also to equip young people for service in community.

Since the time of Luther the churches that have borne his name have also always valued education. Whether it was Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, Germany, South Africa, Brazil, Zimbabwe, USA or Australia, wherever Lutherans went they established schools. Thus in Australia the first Lutheran school was established in Adelaide on the banks of the River Torrens in 1839.

When Lutheran schools pursue excellence in education they follow in the tradition of the university teacher Martin Luther. LEA schools are also influenced by his teachings as they provide an education in the Lutheran tradition.

LUTHER the movie is a wonderful opportunity to reflect again on our heritage and why we operate Lutheran schools. It is also a very good movie!

This package contains the following resources that have been developed and compiled for staff study in Lutheran schools:

- (a) Viewing Guide
- (b) Film Study Guide
- (c) Focus Lutheran Themes
- (d) Reading resources:
 - Bartsch, M. Insights from Luther on current educational issues. In M Worthing (Ed) *Perspectives on Martin Luther: Papers from the Luther Symposium held at Luther Seminary March 1996*
 - Christenson, T. (2004). *The gift and task of Lutheran higher education* Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress 2004
 - Sturm, W. *Luther's views concerning education* Adelaide: Openbook

Our hope is that principals, pastors and staff in Lutheran schools will use the opportunity provided by the movie on Luther to reflect on his contribution to what we do each day – teach in a school.

We are indebted to Anne Dohnt for her outstanding work in the compilation of these resources.

These resources can be used for private reading and reflection, staff study groups or as part of a **whole school** in-service. The Luther DVD will be available in the second half of the year and there will be **even** greater possibilities to use the opportunity provided.

I commend these resources for use by staff in Lutheran schools.

Adrienne Jericho
Executive Director
Lutheran Education Australia

March 2005



VIEWING GUIDE

Prior to viewing

After some reflection on what you know about Martin Luther record words you would use to describe Luther?

Viewing

As you view the film record any ideas or questions that you wish to discuss later.

JOSEPH FIENNES

ALFRED
MOLINA

JONATHAN
FIRTH

CLAIRE
COX

SIR PETER
USTINOV

BRUNO
GANZ

LUTHER

ONE MAN HAD A VISION
THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

M 15+ RECOMMENDED FOR MATURE
AUDIENCES 15 YEARS AND OVER
LOW LEVEL VIOLENCE

After viewing

What words from the film will you most remember?

Who was your favourite character? Why?

What scenes from the film had the biggest impact on you?

How did the film's representation of Luther challenge our ideas about Luther?

Film Study Guide

The film Luther is an excellent resource for teachers and students in Lutheran schools. This film study guide is provided for teachers in Lutheran schools as a resource for staff professional development, staff devotions or staff Bible study. A film study guide specifically for teachers to use with students is provided on the website www.lutherthemovie.com . However some parts of this guide may be suitable for use with students.

The film provides exploration of a number of themes and once teachers have viewed the film they are encouraged to identify and discuss those they feel are most relevant for their context. Those identified by this guide include images of God, the church, truth, religious freedom and a Lutheran identity. Please do not be limited by the suggested themes, as other themes may be relevant for your context.

The resource could be used in a full day's exploration of the film or a number of shorter study sessions. Ideally teachers view the film in its entirety and then review segments of the film to explore the related themes.

Viewing Guide

A Viewing Guide is provided for teachers to record their thoughts, reactions and questions upon viewing the film for the first time. Teachers in Lutheran schools may have varied knowledge of Martin Luther and the reformation and are encouraged to reflect on what they know and what they would like to explore further.

Film Study Guide

Prior to viewing the film, it may be helpful for teachers to conduct a think/pair/share with a partner to reflect on what they know about Martin Luther. The four themes correspond to four segments of the film. The time segments for each theme are provided.

IMAGES OF GOD

(Time: 0:00 – 23:58)

In the first segment Luther's changing view of, and relationship with, God is explored. Two distinct images of God are depicted.

God as 'a judge, threatening with the fires of hell'
'God of love' with a 'friendly heart'

Individually or in groups develop a mind map to show how holding each of these images of God might impact on how a person responds to these questions:

- Who am I?
- What is my relationship with God?
- What gives life meaning?
- What do I fear most?
- On what do I depend?

How do you think the wider society generally views God?

How do you think students generally perceive God?

What challenges or opportunities does this create for you and the school?

Spiritual Guide

"Look to Christ, bind yourself to Christ and you will know God's love. Say to him, 'I am yours, save me'.

These words of Staupitz were to have significant impact on Luther. Staupitz was Luther's 'Father in Christ'. Describe his relationship with Luther.

Have you had a spiritual guide who has been instrumental in your life?

Do you think it is important for people to have a spiritual guide? Why or why not?

Are there any phrases of faith that have been significant for you?

THE CHURCH

(23:58 – 46:58)

In *Luther*, how is the church in the Middle Ages depicted?



During this time, how would you describe the church's relationship with people?

Birkett in, *The essence of the reformation*, describes a disparity between the church and the people during the Middle Ages.

'This disparity between a desire for genuine religious life on the part of the simple people, and the decaying political games of the church hierarchy, became a source of great stress. The church was not providing what people anxious for salvation wanted.'

[*The essence of the reformation*, Birkett, K. (1998) Matthias Media, p. 31.]

How do you think the Christian church is perceived today?

Or

What do you think people are anxious for the church to provide today?

During the Middle Ages both implicitly and explicitly, the church promoted that salvation was through the purchase of indulgences and reverence for relics. What message of salvation do you think is promoted by the Christian church today explicitly and implicitly?

Luther's challenge to the church was an act of faithful criticism. He had no intention of destroying the church, but he did want to correct its course. Luther believed that reformation was an ongoing process and that the church must continually be reformed. This is a process of continual critique and correction.

How is this process of ongoing critique and correction evident in the church today?

TRUTH

(46:58 – 1:25:10)

“I am interested in the truth.”

For what truth was Luther willing to risk everything?

During the Middle Ages the pope and the church determined ‘truth’.
How is truth determined today in the different Christian churches?

The search for ‘truth’ and a meaning to life is common to all people.
What are some of the ways people seek ‘truth’ today?

What issues does ‘truth’ create for the church in a multicultural and multi-religious society?

How does the issue of ‘truth’ impact on how Christianity is presented to students?

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

(1:25:10 – end)

Opponents of Luther suggest he has set the world ablaze with his inflammatory writings.

Why do you think Luther's work was an impetus for religious freedom?

Luther wrote a great deal about the freedom of the Christian;

'A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant to all ... Freed from the vain attempt to justify himself ... [the Christian] should be guided in all his works by this thought alone ... considering nothing but the need of the neighbour ... This is a truly Christian life.'

What is your initial response to these words of Luther?

'The fact that we are embraced by God means that we are free to be fully and honestly human'.

Christenson, T *The gift and task of Lutheran higher education*

How well do you think the Christian church communicates the freedom of Christianity?

For Luther it was essential that the ordinary man was free to read and study the Bible and so he translated the New Testament into German.

The following verses were significant for Luther.

Romans 1:17

Romans 3:21-26

Romans 10:2-13

Romans 10:17

Ephesians 2:8-9

Philippians 3:9



What is their message?

Can you recall scenes from the film where these were the basis for what was said?

LUTHERAN IDENTITY

1. After viewing the film what do you think it means to have a Lutheran identity?

2. When we say a Lutheran preschool, primary school, secondary school, what does this mean for you?
 - a school affiliated with the Lutheran Church of Australia?
 - a school for Lutherans?

In his book, *The gift and task of Lutheran higher education*, Tom Christenson, raises the question:

How does the term Lutheran tell us about the knowing, learning or human becoming pursued?

Discuss in groups your response to this question.

3. Christenson goes on to describe education shaped by the Lutheran tradition as
'neither closed, parochial, nor antirational, but open, free, fearless, respectful of other views and faiths, and thoroughly devoted to the whole truth.'

What do you think are important features of education in a Lutheran school?

Focal Luther themes for staff in Lutheran schools

The following themes are authentically Lutheran themes that have relevance for the Lutheran school and its teachers. The readings selected for this package of study resources highlight Luther's contribution to education. Here we select four key lens for reflection.

Grace

Central to a Lutheran school is the message of the gospel, the story of God's love for all people.

'So what god or gods do Christians worship? In one sense it is the god without a name, a god who responds, when asked for a name, "I am there whoever I am there," who frustrates every effort to be named. In another sense it is a god with three names: Creator, Redeemer, Spirit-that lives-in-us. In another sense it is the god with only one name, Love –Love that embraces the world in a way that takes the shape of a cross, a love that, in turn, transforms everything and can be shared by each of us by embracing our world and those in it.

That's the story at the heart of the Lutheran telling of the Christian vision, which is itself a telling of an old Hebrew story of a loving God. That's the story about which we ask, "How does this story inform knowing, learning, teaching and human becoming in the contemporary world? What kind of college or university should be built and maintained by those who tell such a story? What kind of work is there for us to do in such a place?"

Individually reflect on these thoughts of Christenson and what they mean for you as a teacher in a Lutheran school.

Freedom

Read Christenson's description of freedom.

What do you find encouraging from such an understanding of what it means to be a Christian?

Vocation

Work in pairs with one person reading Bartsch's writings on vocation and one reading Christenson.

After reading share the main points from your reading and any excellent descriptions of vocation.

Prepare an OHT to show without words a Lutheran understanding of vocation.

Education

Read the section from Sturm's article on Luther and education.
What did Luther see as the purpose of education.

Christenson suggests that having a Lutheran identity '*shapes an understanding of what it means to be human, the enterprise of knowing and learning and our understanding of community ... It ought to say something about how we engage in inquiry; how we conceive learning; how we pursue teaching; how we understand the community we create to facilitate these things; how we understand ourselves, our students, and the world about which, in which and into which we educate.*'

How do you think Lutheran theology informs the school's beliefs about?

- learning
- teaching
- community
- ourselves, students and the world

In the final scenes of the film, Melancthon excitedly tells Luther that they had been able to read their creed or statements of belief at Augsburg.
Work in groups to develop a creed for your school.

RESOURCES

- Bartsch, M. Insights from Luther on current educational issues. In M Worthing (Ed) Perspectives on Martin Luther: Papers from the Luther Symposium held at Luther Seminary March 1996
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