

Studying the Scriptures with Students

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Being a member in the LCMS means that we believe that the Lutheran Confessions in the Book of Concord are a true and pure exposition of the Word of God. While this might sound a little abstract at first, this has had a very tangible meaning for how we have engaged with students in Bible study. In years past, the campus ministry of All Saints has had an assortment of different Bible studies. But on campus and dealing with college students coming from many and varied backgrounds, the conversations would again and again end up going toward denominational differences. What is it that makes Lutherans different from other denominations? Why do other denominations believe some of the things they do? How can we be sure that Lutherans have the correct understanding of Scripture? These are the sorts of questions that students would wonder about.

Eventually, Pastor Deal decided to address these questions more head on. He decided to study the Augsburg Confession with our student group, the written confession that stands at the core of Lutheran identity. This might seem like an odd choice at first. After all, people coming to a “Bible study” aren’t going to expect going through a confessional document. But we rightly understand that these confessions are nothing more than a correct exposition and interpretation of Scripture. Although we are going through the Augsburg Confession, we are using it to study Scripture. That is the entire point of the Augsburg Confession, after all!

This has proved quite successful with the students. Although attendance at this student Bible study has gone up and down, as the demands of college life and assignments vary, the engagement and interest is always high. Having a systematic way to talk about what Christianity is, what it teaches, and what it means to be and live as a Christian is helpful beyond belief for these young Christians, who are trying to grow in their understanding of what they believe and have been taught. It gives them the opportunity to dig not into just one small portion of Scripture, but to see the big picture of what the Scriptures say as a whole, and to dig into all of the Scriptures more deeply and systematically. It also gives them the opportunity to ask and answer the questions that they are facing in their own life and that their friends and family from different backgrounds ask them. Even students who join us from non-Lutheran backgrounds, they appreciate the fact that we are willing to address the denominational differences head on and have real, serious conversations about what the Scriptures have to say about a given topic, that might not come up normally.

Even if it might seem odd at first to address these studies and questions about the Scriptures in this systematic, almost too head-on way, it really shouldn’t surprise us. The Word of God is consistent with itself in its totality; it is completely and entirely true, so it will stand up even under systematic scrutiny, as going through the topics addressed in the articles of the Augsburg Confession demands. In going through this, it therefore also enables these young students to have the ability to stand up under scrutiny and to understand what the Scriptures truly confess and what the faith is that is purely taught in the evangelical Lutheran Church.



A number of students from Grove City College have been coming to All Saints, and have also enjoyed our student Bible Study on campus.