



WELS Discipleship



Our calling

WELS Discipleship exists to strengthen the connection of God's people to Christ and to one another at every stage of life. To that end, our mission is ***"to provide resources, encouragement, and training to assist congregations and their ongoing walk of faith."*** That walk of faith:

1. spans the totality of life. Therefore, our calling encompasses ministry to all members of the Christian family in their unique callings: men and women, young children, teens, college-age and young adults, singles, parents, marriage spouses, etc.
2. involves KNOWING and DOING. Discipleship involves more than instruction. It's the Christian life in service to God and to each other in our homes, churches, and communities.

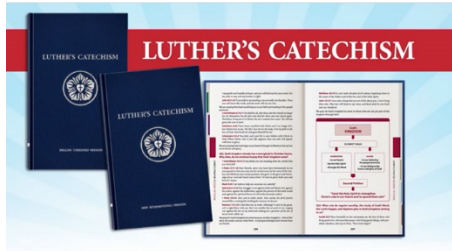
Ongoing Resources

WELS Discipleship produces a variety of resources to help the members of our congregations stay connected to Christ. That connection begins in the home.



WELS Family Devotions is an online resource that encourages parents to engage their children in home devotional life. Three brief devotions are provided weekly based on the previous Sunday's Scripture lessons. Age-appropriate questions allow for families to engage in spiritual discussion. They are available for a parent to read or to just listen via a podcast. Subscribe at [https://wels.net/serving-](https://wels.net/serving-you/devotions/family-devotions/)

[you/devotions/family-devotions/](https://wels.net/serving-you/devotions/family-devotions/)



A growing number of congregations are discovering the blessings of parent involvement in confirmation classes.

A Different Approach to Confirmation Class explores a thirst for class materials that reflect a variety of learning styles as well as various degrees of pastor and parent partnership in a child's spiritual growth. Samples models can be found at

<https://welscongregationalervices.net/catechism-class-sample-models/>.



Keeping teens and their identity connected to Christ at a critical stage of life cannot be overstated. It's why WELS Discipleship offers ministry resources for them.

"Transformed" is a weekly devotion posted every Sunday at wels.net/transformed written with a teenager's life in mind.

Additionally, facilitator guides accompany the devotions to help leaders of youth further discussion in a group setting.

<https://yfm.welsrc.net/download-yfm/the-foundation-teen-facilitator-guides/>



"WELS Youth Night" (YN) provides a series of youth-focused events three times per year (fall, winter, post-Easter) to gather youth from area congregations for fun fellowship and connecting with each other through Scripture. With more congregations facing a shrinking number of teenagers, Youth Night creates an opportunity to pool our youth together in a larger setting. The resource kit provides all the

pieces needed to plan, train, promote, and host a Youth Night event. Resources include keynote video, small group discussion guide, and event planning guide. Check it out at

<https://welscongregationalervices.net/wels-youth-night/>. Return in August for the release of the fall YN kit!



"Who Am I?" is a video-based topical series that equips youth leaders to engage teens in a timely discussion on teen identity. Adapted from a 2022 youth rally presentation, the three-part series looks at real-life problems that overwhelm teens with feelings of being unloved, worthless, guilty, anxious, lonely, and more.

<https://welscongregationalervices.net/youth-bible-study-who-am-i/>



Healthy congregations and families are closely connected to healthy marriages. WELS Discipleship offers a variety of marriage resources to strengthen the bond of husbands and wives.

"Marriage Moments" are two-minute-long weekly videos that focus on a single marriage thought as a source of encouragement and inspiration. A discussion question at the very end gives a couple a

chance to then apply what was learned into their married life. For individual use or to share at the congregational level, subscribe at <https://welscongregationalservices.net/ministry-resources/marriagemoments/>.



"Marriage Maintenance" are online marriage-based Bible study videos. With short video introductions and accompanying guide sheets for couples to engage in meaningful discussion, this resource can flex between a target audience of individual couples or small group settings at the congregational level.

<https://welscongregationalservices.net/marriage-maintenance/>



Marriage Keys is an entry-level three-part series with leader guides for congregations to strengthen the bond between husbands and wives with Christ. The materials can be used in a small group or couples Bible study or as a weekend seminar to nurture members and reach out to couples in your community.

<https://welscongregationalservices.net/marriage-keys/>



Marriage Enrichment Workshop & Get-Away Weekends are held to strengthen couples in renewing their commitment to a healthy marriage. Visit <https://wels.net/serving-you/christian-life/discipleship/marriage-enrichment/> to learn how to bring this marriage event to your area.

A key factor in congregational health is church members active in service to their Lord and each other. Women of all ages constitute half of every congregation's membership. Their involvement is vital.



Women's Ministry exists to nurture, encourage, and equip women to faithfully use their gifts for services in God's kingdom through online webinars, Bible studies, devotionals, training materials, and programs like Advent/Lent by Candlelight. Resources and personal contact information is found at www.wels.net/womens-ministry.



One of the challenges COVID exposed in congregational ministry is members who became increasingly disconnected from their former spiritual habits. People have gone missing. Research is beginning to suggest that many aren't coming back. Three key factors can help: attendance tracking, member involvement, and elder-training.

Welcome Home is a video-based program designed to help equip lay leaders of your congregation to identify and reach out to missing members from your church family. The videos are short yet focused and include accompanying guide sheets to facilitate immediate discussion about how to increase the congregation's shepherding activity. *Welcome Home* aims to create a culture within your church where missing members will be pursued lovingly and aggressively. Creating that culture requires church leaders themselves to be strengthened and encouraged for this endeavor. This is why "before" and "after" devotionals are included with every video chapter. The resource is found at <https://welscongregationalervices.net/welcome-home-elder-training/>

A Look Ahead

WELS Discipleship will continue to identify common needs within our congregations and produce the resources to meet those needs. Here are some upcoming efforts, events, and resources.



- ***“A Time for Everything”***– Stewardship is the lifelong management of all the resources God has given us . . . including a quickly depleting resource called “time.” So much competes for our time. How we manage the time we have left has huge implications on what we as individuals and as a church do for the rest of our lives . . . beginning today. “A Time for Everything” provides four weeks of worship, sermons, Bible studies, and devotional resources as congregations consider these important times: A Time to PRIORITIZE, A Time for PERSPECTIVE, A Time to PLAN, and A Time to PAUSE. This resource will be available by the end of *June 2023*.

In the coming biennium, similar sets of resources will be developed for Talent, Treasure, Temple, and Truth. Together, they will form ***“The Stewardship Legacy Series.”***

- **Marriage for Life** is a pre-marital course with a focus on forgiveness, the essence of marriage, marital roles, love, and communication. The course incorporates the use of *Marriage Moment* videos to reinforce truths learned. This resource will be available *July 2023*.
- **Small Group Ministry** – This online module will share various ways to approach using small groups and step-by-step instructions for how churches can arrange small groups in their ministry setting to build better connections among members to care for each other and serve in their church. This resource will be available *Fall 2023*.
- **Identity, Gender, and Human Sexuality** – Every generation has identified and grappled with the issues of their time in history. Gender and human sexuality have become the issue of our day and one of the reasons our church body is losing people. Churches and schools are asking, “What do we do? How do we handle this?” A gender/human sexuality task force has been working to better understand and respond to this ideology and its cultural implications. Here are three things this group is working on: (1) Development of a website (devotionals, Bible studies, educational resources) that comes at the issue from a confessional Lutheran perspective to help struggling individuals and families, (2) A speaker’s bureau who can present on these issues to congregations, and (3) Church/school resources to give guidance for handbooks, policies, statements, etc. Launch of the “madeknown.net” landing page is slated for *Fall 2023*.
- **Sunday School** – This module will help congregations assess a struggling or declining Sunday school ministry and provide healthy approaches that build on a needed commitment from parents as partners in Sunday school ministry. This resource is looking to be uploaded *September 2023*.
- **“Welcome Home”** – Not to be confused with the elder-training program with a similar name, this missing member resource is for the active member to heighten their personal involvement in reaching out to members who have gone missing from the church family. From a congregational Bible study to promotional videos and planning for a special “Welcome Home” Sunday this fall, the goal is to send a clear message to a missing member: “We miss you and want you back.” Resource available by *July 2023*.
- **Youth Ministry Resources** - Multiple video-based topical series like “*Defending the Faith*” (June 2023), “*Never Too Young to Talk about Jesus*” (June 2023), and “*Everything LGBTQIA+*” (August 2023) will equip youth leaders, called workers, and parents to engage teens in timely discussion on the issues of apologetics, sharing their faith, and a Christian approach to gender and sexual orientation.

Most of the above resources will be disseminated at welscongregationalservices.net and are free.

- **2024 WELS Youth Rally** (a 50-year celebration of serving WELS youth) - The youth rally exists to provide youth and youth leaders from across the synod a large-scale worship, education, fellowship, recreation, and service opportunity that deepens commitment to Christ and his

church. Planning has begun for next summer's rally schedule, which will run June 25-28, 2024, and be hosted by Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colo.

WELS Discipleship desires to serve you even better. Please let us know how we can do that for you in your unique ministry setting. May God bless our united efforts to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18).

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