

Pre-Gathering Bible Studies

Creation is...
Human Beings are...
Salvation is...

NOT
for
SALE

CLAY 2016

Charlottetown PEI

Introduction

When the National Planning Committee first discussed the theme, we wondered exactly what “Not For Sale” meant. Did it mean that something should not be sold? Could it reflect that something is so precious or important to us that its value is priceless? Or did it indicate something that is given freely as a gift and cannot be purchased, not with money, not with trades and not with good deeds – like God’s gift of grace? What do YOU think?

As fellow members of CLAY 2016, we can all get more out of the experience with a little forethought, preparation and sharing. We invite you to explore your thoughts and feelings around the theme, Not For Sale, and subthemes of the gathering: Creation - Not For Sale, Human Beings - Not For Sale and Salvation - Not For Sale.

Join us in trying to put meaning in our everyday lives around Creation, Human Beings and Salvation - Not For Sale. Feel free to do it as one study or break into small groups around each of the four study sessions so that everyone has an opportunity to participate and contribute. It works great as a time to prepare your home team as you travel to Charlottetown, PEI! Do whatever works best for your group and adapt it for your own context in your geography, demographic or community.

We are SO excited to meet everyone at CLAY 2016 in August! Enjoy your time preparing for this fantastic event, safe travels as you come to join us in Charlottetown and we’ll see you when you get there!

- 2016 NPC -

Bible Study 1 - Not For Sale

The Thought:

As the Lutheran World Federation gears up toward the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation in 2017, it is exploring the theme of “Not For Sale” within the three contexts of “Creation”, “Human Beings” and “Salvation.” Each of these topics immediately resonate with youth in the world today. Young people are leading the way, taking action to change their lifestyles and choices, to respect and preserve the natural environment and resources, to support fairness and equity for people around the globe and to try to live a life of faith in today’s increasingly secular world. For these reasons it was important for CLAY to explore Creation - Not For Sale, Human Beings - Not For Sale and Salvation - Not For Sale at our biennial gathering and empower our youth to be reformers today.

The Word:

Genesis 1:26

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

Matthew 21:12-13

Then Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who were selling and buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer'; but you are making it a den of robbers."

The Deeds:

1. Explore the meaning of “Not For Sale”.

Does it mean something is not or should not be available to be purchased?

Are there some things that are so important that they are priceless to us?

Could it mean that we do not pay for some things, like our many gifts from God?

2. What do you treasure most in your life that you would consider Not For Sale?

3. How do these meanings apply to our lives of faith, at home and in our communities?

Do we need to *reform* our value on anything in our lives today?

Bible Study 2 – Creation Not For Sale

The Thought:

At the time of the Protestant Reformation, the world had a population of only 450 million people (about equal to the population of the USA and Mexico today) who shared the earth's resources and had only limited uses for them. In today's world, with a population nearing 7.5 billion people and all the advances in science and technology, many of our resources have become commodities for profit in our increasingly convenient lives. Creation Not For Sale is an opportunity for us to stop and reassess our consumer-driven culture and how we use and respect God's gift of creation.

The Word:

Leviticus 25:23-24

The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; with me you are but aliens and tenants. Throughout the land that you hold, you shall provide for the redemption of the land.

Ezekiel 34:17-18

As for you, my flock, thus says the Lord GOD: I shall judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and goats: ¹⁸Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture, but you must tread down with your feet the rest of your pasture? When you drink of clear water, must you foul the rest with your feet?

The Deeds:

1. In today's world, we can buy land, purchase water and even purchase air!
Should nature have a price and, if so, what should it be?
2. With the increasing stress on Creation, we are seeing that it does have a cost. Water, air and land are more polluted than ever and species are losing habitat and becoming endangered or extinct.
What are our responsibilities and what can we do as a community of faith?
Even more specifically, what can we do as Youth to lead our congregations?
3. Climate change is an established factor in our lives today, with more intense weather (storms, drought, etc.) and long-term changes in temperature.
How will this affect our daily lives?
What can we do about it as individuals and in our congregations – or at CLAY?

Bible Study 3 – Human Beings Not For Sale

The Thought:

It's sad to know that slavery has long been a part of humanity. In today's world human trafficking has a growing public awareness and concern. Human beings are often valued for profit, either directly or as a necessary part of production through our labour. As things become more expensive and people are regarded more as either a cost of business or just a purchaser of goods and services, we need to *reform* our stewardship toward each other as God's people. God has given us a gift in each person we meet. If we look at each other as a gift from God, it will begin a relationship between us based upon respect and value and, in doing so, we will build caring communities to serve the Lord.

The Word:

Galatians 3:25-29

But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

Matthew 20:25-28

But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."

The Deeds:

1. If we are all equal in the eyes of God, and one in Christ, how should that affect how we see and interact with each other?
2. What examples of Human Beings for sale do we see in our own communities today?
3. What can we do to respect and value those who are suppressed or struggling?

Bible Study 4 – Salvation Not For Sale

The Thought:

Most of us have heard that “God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son; that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Our Salvation is a gift from God that we cannot buy with money or good works and one which is definitely Not For Sale.

Nor can we take this gift for granted. We are called by God to be whole, to heal broken relationships, to promote dignity in life and to long for prosperity for all people. These things we are called by God to protect and nurture in our lives and in the lives of those around us. For our Salvation is not a result of our good works, but our good works are a consequence of being saved.

The Word:

Hebrews 10:24-25

And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Ephesians 2:8-10

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

The Deeds:

1. What relationships do you see that are broken in our communities or world?
What can we do about improving and healing these relationships?
2. We ask for things in prayer and we receive so many gifts by God’s grace – some we ask for and many we don’t. Share some of the gifts that you have received.
How do we and how should we respond to these gifts?
3. God approaches each of us with the gift of Salvation through grace and gives us each talents that we can share with others.
How can we help each other at CLAY, at home and in our communities, to acknowledge our gifts and share them with others?