

# Every Person A Missionary:

Living Life  
On Purpose!

*The Retreat*



*Authors*

Catherine Pate & Jennifer Lee Robinson

*Production Editor*

Tana Kjos

Published by A Renewal Enterprise, Inc.

A Renewal Enterprise, Inc.,

40 E. 9th Street #1416, Chicago, Illinois 60605, U.S.A.

First published in 2009 by

A Renewal Enterprise, Inc.

Copyright (c) A Renewal Enterprise, Inc., 2009

Permission to reproduce, store, or transmit all or part of these materials by any means by members of the Indiana-Kentucky Synod (ELCA) for use within the Indiana-Kentucky Synod (ELCA) is granted without limit.

All other rights reserved.

Without limiting the rights under copyright reserved above, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise), without the prior written permission of the copyright owner and publisher of this material.

The scanning, uploading, and distribution of this book via the Internet or via any other means without the permission of the publisher is illegal and punishable by law. Please purchase only authorized electronic editions and do not participate in or encourage electronic piracy of copyrightable materials. Your support of the authors' rights is appreciated.



# Introduction

God is on a mission to save and bless the world, and you are part of it!

This one-and-a-half-day retreat will provide a process by which groups and individuals will:

Consider how God comes to us and works through us;

Write a personal purpose statement within the context of God's loving mission to save and bless the world;

Gain a new perspective of where God is at work and how to jump in.

## Getting Ready

### **Participant Preparation:**

Read Reclaiming the "V" Word. (Copyright info)

### **Leader Preparation:**

Ensure you have a space that is conducive to both large group activities as well as offering breakout space for individual reflection and journaling. An ideal location would be one with easy access to good walking paths or near a lake or other scenic setting.

Don't forget to pay attention to food. So often we consider this part of an event a necessary evil; something to provide with the least expense and energy. But, how often have you been at an event where the food was mediocre or not plentiful? How did it affect your day and, afterward, your perception of the day? Taking care of issues of hospitality gives participants the sense that they matter and encourages positive conversation--not to mention ensuring productive discussions by providing much-needed brain food! Remember---A healthy, well-balanced, enjoyable menu is a critical component of a successful event.

As facilitator, your role throughout the event is to ensure that the goals and objectives are clearly articulated and that participants feel like important contributors in the process. You can do this by:

Continually referring to the goals for each section to ensure that the conversation is leading toward and not away from the stated goals.

Looking for social cues which may indicate participants are losing interest or becoming confused. If this occurs, take a minute between activities to go back over the day's progression so far, summarizing what you have done and where you are going. Be sure the needs of the group are coming before your needs or those of the agenda.

Not taking yourself too seriously. This event is all about empowering people for God's mission. God uses us in the most unlikely ways, places and circumstances. In other words, God has a great sense of humor and so should you.

The agenda provides space for "Time Out" (individual or pairs), "Small Group" (6-8 people) and "Large Group" (everybody) activities and discussions. This event has been designed to challenge personal perspectives, offer new insights and inspire personal and corporate action. Most importantly, the event should be a whole lot of fun.

**Supplies Needed**

All of the questions printed out on handouts or as PowerPoint slides for projection.

Lots of stick-up poster paper

Post-it notes (lots, variety of colors)

Thin colored markers and colored pencils

A number of copies of the local newspaper (If there is more than one local publication in your area, have multiple copies of each)

Mini Play-Dough containers for each person

A 1 yard length of string/yarn for each person

A “found” object for each person (found objects are things you’ve found around your neighborhood- leaves, rocks, flowers, twigs, but also things like wood, nails, spare change, a discarded water bottle, etc...)

A clock with a second hand (could be watch or stopwatch)

Bibles (invite participants to bring their own but have a few extra on hand)

Card stock paper in various sizes

A bowl of coarse salt (1/2 full)

Lots of small pieces of paper (about the size of a large post-it note)

Copies of Evangelical Lutheran Worship for all participants (or electronic version)

T.V. and DVD player or laptop (for movie clips)

LCD projector (optional--for movies and hymns)

Ask participants to bring a recent copy of a local newspaper.

Movie Clips: Chariots of Fire, (Scene 19 56:06-1:00:18)

A copy of the Every Person a Missionary Journal - Jump on Board for each participant.

**Room Set-up**

Tables and chairs with room to move around freely.

# *Evening Session Day 1:*

## *God is on a Mission*

2.5 hours

### ***Supplies Needed***

LCD projector, laptop and screen (for movie, prayers and questions)--may also use T.V. and DVD player for movies.

“Chariot’s of Fire” clip (Scene 19 56:06-1:00:18)

Lots of paper (colored and white)

Markers (enough for every table to have a selection)

Scissors (2/table)

Pencil crayons (enough for every table to have a selection)

Glue (1/table)

Copies of Evangelical Lutheran Worship or electronic version.

Copies of the Bible (a variety of translations)--at least 1/table

### ***Goals for this evening:***

- New relationships;
- A renewed understanding of what God is up to;
- A renewed understanding of what it means to be the church.

### ***Opening Prayer***

O God,  
we are tangled in our schedules,  
surrounded by demands,  
caught up in the spectacular, the superb, the superior.  
One day, we discover:  
we never have enough;  
we never accomplish enough;  
we never are enough.

O God,  
in the midst of this chaos,  
may the still, small voice tug at us  
until we stop---listen---consider.  
And, turning around in our tracks,  
see ourselves and this world  
again, through your eyes.  
Amen.

from Joy is our Banquet: Resources for Everyday Worship  
by Keri K. Wehlander  
copyright 1996 The United Church Press Publishing House  
Reprinted by permission of The United Church Publishing House.

## Hymn

Suggestion: “You Are Mine,” Evangelical Lutheran Worship, 581.

### Introductions and short ice-breaker (5 Minutes)

Spend 5 minutes introducing yourself and telling 3 or more people the craziest, boldest, most daring thing you’ve ever done.

### Large group discussion:

What did we learn? (10 minutes)

Spend the next 10 minutes debriefing the ice-breaker activity. In your large group feel free to shout out your answers to the following questions. What did you learn...

About ourselves?

About each other?

About the Church?

About God?

## 1. What in the World is God up to? (20 minutes)

We really are bold people sent out to do bold things! We are called to do these things in our own lives and in the lives of others. We don’t do this for our own sake, even when it is good for us. We are called to be bold for the sake of God’s mission. It might help to get a glimpse of what God’s mission is. What is the purpose of our boldness? What does God need us for? God has a mission, and God’s mission has a church. Let’s see what it looks like.

### Small Group

Break up into small groups of six to eight people.

Each group should read all of the following out loud together:

- Acts 1:6-11

- Acts 2:1-11

- Acts 6:1-7

- Acts 8:26-40

- Acts 10:34-48

After hearing these words, talk about them. Don’t feel confined by these passages. Acts tells the story of the beginning of the church but it’s only a place to start. Keep in mind that God has been on this same mission since the dawn of time. So, dive in. Based on these passages and what you know about God, reflect out loud on these questions together:

1. What is God’s mission?
2. What does it look like?

### Mini Time-Out (10 minutes)

Often in our prayer life or conversations with each other, we ask for a neon sign or a big billboard from God, providing us with clear directions. Some of us may have even seen the billboard campaign with messages from God as you have travel the highways and byways in years passed. One of them said: "Let's meet at My house Sunday, before the game. Love God."

Pair off with someone from your small group and, based on the readings from above, create a new billboard telling the world about the God you just met in Acts. What is God's Mission, and what would it look like emblazoned on a big billboard? Imagine what that billboard looks like. Draw it on a piece of poster paper! At the top of the paper write: "I am God. I am on a mission to \_\_\_\_\_." And fill in the blank. Have fun. Be creative. But, most important be, clear.

### Large Group (10 minutes)

It's show and tell time! Share your billboard with the large group. Each pair has only one minute to present. Place them around the room so you are surrounded by God's loving mission.

## 2. God's Mission Comes To Us and Through Us To Others

Look around at all the billboards that describe what God's mission is. Now it's time to think about how God gets that mission done! Let's take a look.

Have someone read Genesis 12:1-3 aloud to the entire group. (No worries - all easy words to pronounce!)

OK, now, spend a couple minutes drawing your answer to the following questions. Yes, draw them! These do not have to be masterpieces. Let yourself remember how much you used to enjoy coloring and drawing as a kid. Let the little kid inside of you have the crayons back!

1) How has God's blessing of love, forgiveness, healing, reconciliation, peace, or freedom come to you recently?

2) How has God been at work through you, like God was at work through Abraham and Sarah, making a difference in the world and/or in somebody else's life?

After everyone is done, share your drawings with the other people in your small group. (At the end of this retreat, take your drawing home and put it on your refrigerator. You know you want to!) (20 Minutes)

### Small Group (20 minutes)

In your small groups revisit the Acts passages from above. Based on these passages and the billboards that you created, do the following:

Everyone at the table should have 1 mini jar of clay or Playdough, a piece of string, and a "found" object (see examples in the "supplies needed" list above)

Work together and, as a small group, use what you have to build "the church" from the Book of Acts

**Large Group** (10 minutes)

Pick a spokesperson. Take a field trip around the room to each group's table. Share your sculptures along with what you used, how you used it, and how it works with the large group.

After each group has had a chance to share the sculpture, spend a few minutes debriefing the experience. Talk as a large group about the following:

What did you notice about the churches we built?

What did the churches all have in common?

What things that people often think about when they think of "the church" did the groups not build into their sculpture?

What did you learn?

**Mini Time-Out** (5 minutes)

Based on the stories in Acts, God's mission, and the sculptures you just built and experienced, on your own, complete this sentence: God's purpose for the church is \_\_\_\_\_. Write your sentence on a small sheet of paper using less than 10 words (not counting "God's Purpose for the church is").

**Small Group** (10 minutes)

Get back into your small groups to share your sentence. Now put all your sentences together so that you can come up with a single sentence for your group. This will take a little patience on everyone's part, but it is excellent experience. It is great learning to collaborate and listen for God together. After you have come up with a group sentence write it on a big piece of poster paper. When you have completed your statement hang it on the wall. Take a look at the other teams' statements.

NOTE: Keep the papers and sculpture on the table and walls for tomorrow!

**3. Getting Personal****Mini Time-Out** (5 minutes)

God is on a mission and God's mission has a church. The church is people! And we have a purpose. Look around at the papers hanging on the walls and the sculptures you've built. Take a few minutes and write down your answers to these questions:

What does this all mean for me, personally?

How does (or should) the purpose that we share as the church shape me, including my home and work life?

You don't have to share this yet but keep this paper with you for tomorrow.

**Large Group** (10 minutes)

Begin bringing this evening to a close by watching this inspiring movie clip together: "Chariots of Fire" (Scene 19 56:06-1:00:18). Here's the background for the clip: Scotsman Eric Liddell grew up with his sister in the Missionary Field in China. He was also a gifted runner. In this clip, Eric tells his sister what he believes his purpose is.

Review what you have done this evening and share any “aha moments” or key learnings with the group.

Answer these questions:

What new thing did you learn or experience?

What was the highlight of the night for you?

What surprised you?

What challenged you?

What made you smile?

**Summing it Up** (5 minutes)

**LEADER:**

(Sum up the evening using whatever words the Holy Spirit gives you but include...) God is on a mission to save, bless and reconcile the world! God comes to us through Scripture, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, and through us to other people. In fact, God is already out in the world coming through amazing and sometimes unlikely people to accomplish this.

**Closing Prayer** (chosen by the leader)

This can be a prayer you use on a regular basis (i.e., The Lord’s Prayer, etc.). You could ask someone to close in prayer, using their own words. Maybe you would like to try a popcorn prayer (i.e., ask one person to start the prayer and one person to finish it - after the first person starts it, everyone can just popcorn in with their prayer until it seems like all the popcorn is popped and then the end person can finish with a sort of “wrap up” prayer). This is your time. Pray in a way that makes sense for your group.

**Announcements & Overnight Assignment** (2 minutes)

Before we get back together in the morning, find some quiet time alone to reflect on the question: If God is on a mission to save and bless and reconcile the whole world, what is my purpose and calling in that? Write your thoughts, along with key learnings in the empty pages of your EPAM journal or at the back of this booklet. Tomorrow we will be taking a look at our unique, personal purpose in God’s mission.

# All Day Session - Day 2

## God is on a Mission & You have a Purpose

### Supplies Needed

Movie clips:

“The Incredibles” (Scene 16 1:00:34-1:03:30)

“Billy Elliot” (Scene 12 1:09:13 - 1:13:04)

“We are Marshall” (Scene 8 33:38-38:4)

LCD projector, laptop and screen (for movie, prayers and questions)--may also use T.V. and DVD player for movies.

Lots of paper (colored and white)

Thin colored markers (enough for every table to have a selection)

Scissors (2/table)

Pencil crayons (enough for every table to have a selection)

Glue (1/table)

Copies of Evangelical Lutheran Worship (or electronic version)

Copies of the Bible (a variety of translations)--1/table (invite participants to also bring their own)

Lots of stick-up poster paper

Post-it notes (lots, variety of colors)

A number of copies of the local newspaper (If there is more than one local publication in your area, have multiple copies of each---ask participants to bring one with them)

A clock with a second hand (could be watch or stopwatch)

Card stock paper cut into strips the size of bookmarks (enough for 1/person and a few extras)

A bowl of coarse salt (1/2 full)

Lots of small pieces of paper (about the size of a large post-it note)

### Morning Session 2 hours, 45 minutes (approx)

#### Opening Prayer/Gathering Song

Start the day off centered in God. Ask someone to lead an opening prayer.

After the prayer sing together. There is something about putting our voices together to “make a joyful noise.” One hymn suggestion for the day could be “How Clear Is Our Vocation, Lord” Evangelical Lutheran Worship, 580.

### 1. Digging into Purpose (90 minutes)

#### Make the Connection (10 minutes)

Look around the room at the papers you worked on last night. Look at how what you wrote down about how God’s mission and the purpose of the church does (or should) give shape to your own personal life.

In our work together last night we heard God speak to us through scripture, through each other, through billboards, even through play-dough & string. This morning we are going to dare to look and listen for God in the movies. Let ‘em roll.

“The Incredibles”-Scene 19 56:06-1:00:18

### **Set-up:**

Superhero Mr. Incredible and his family, along with all the other world’s superheroes, have entered a witness protection program, and can no longer use their superpowers to help the world. Tired of hiding out in suburbia, Mr. Incredible and his friend Frozone, have started sneaking out at night to secretly help people. Mr. Incredible’s wife Helen, aka Elastigirl, has discovered that Mr. Incredible hasn’t been entirely truthful with her about his activities, and seeks the advice of Edna, the family’s supersuit designer. In this scene Edna reminds Helen who she is.

### **Small Group** (30 minutes)

Get into small groups again this morning. You may want to change it up a bit and get into new small groups.

Don’t forget God speaks through all sorts of people! Give people time to think and get their heads wrapped around listening for God in new places. And remember God speaks to everyone differently. There are no wrong answers. It really is about what you heard. Let’s get to it. Discuss!

What do you hear God saying to you in this scene from the movie?

Now read Luke 5:1-11--Calling of Disciples and talk about these questions together:

What’s God doing here?

What do you hear God saying to you in this passage?

What connections can you make between the movie and the passage?

How is God working in both?

### **Time Out** (45 minutes)

The movie clip and scripture have created a good foundation to begin to think about your purpose in God’s mission. If you want, jot down some of the reflections you see around the room about God’s mission and the purpose of the church. We often forget that the church is people. The only way the church fulfills its purpose is for us to understand our part in it. That is only possible if we have some sense of our own purpose. For the next 45 minutes or so we are going to take some time to listen for God specifically around God’s call on each of our lives. Feel free to take your Bible with you too.

Spend some quality time on your own. Before you begin take some time for prayer asking God for open eyes and ears and a soft heart. Reflect on the following questions and write down your answers to them. Be ready to share your answers with your small group. These answers will help you articulate your own purpose statement later today:

What are your favorite stories or sayings of Jesus and why?

What do you appreciate/admire most about Jesus?

Which scripture passages have shaped your understanding of what it means to be a disciple (or follower) of Jesus in everyday life?

What do you find influential about those passages?

Who are your favorite Bible characters?

What do you admire about them and why?

How have these figures shaped your own faith journey?

Name the “heroes” you look up to and why (living and in the communion of saints)?

How have these people shaped your faith journey?

### **Small Group** (15 minutes)

Come back together in your small groups. Share your a couple of your answers and stories with one another. Make sure everyone has a chance to share something.

## **2. Getting to the Point** (40 minutes)

### **Movie Clip:**

“Billy Elliot:” (Scene 12 1:09:13 - 1:13:04) Set-up: Billy Elliot takes place in an economically depressed part of Scotland. Billy’s father, a striking mine-worker, sends his son off for boxing lessons, and Billy stumbles upon a ballet class. Through the course of the movie Billy discovers that not only does he love to dance, he’s actually very gifted. Of course, his father thinks dancing is only for girls. In this scene Billy confronts his father and declares who he is.

### **Small Group** (10 minutes)

Take some time in your small groups to answer these two questions. As you go into your conversation remember how God continues to speak today through the Holy Spirit who blows as she will in our work places, our homes, and even at the movies!

Where do you see God in action in this clip?

What is God saying to you personally in this scene?

The little time we have spent in conversation and in this short little clip it should be clear - Who we are and how we see ourselves matters. And, more importantly our purpose in God’s mission can change the world. Or, at the very least our families :)

### **Time Out** (30 minutes)

During the next 30 minutes we will spend time with the both the personal and the group work we have completed so far and use it to move forward. Who we are and what God is about are connected.

This is a great opportunity to go and stretch your legs. Find a nice quiet spot to write in your journal. Go back over your journal entries from earlier.

Think about what connections you see between biblical passages/characters and your personal heroes/role models. Use this information to answer the four questions. The first three questions and the work that you have done up to this point will help you with question four. This fourth question sums up everything you have heard throughout our time together so far. It really asks when put together, “What does this all mean?”

Write one sentence to sum up your life to this point.

If people were to make a list of five participles (verbs ending with “ing”) about you, what five words would you like them to use?

What are your values in life. Make a list of the top 5-7. These should be in the format “I \_\_\_\_\_ (verb)...” (no more than 5-7 words each)

What is your purpose in life? Write a sentence or phrase that uses less than 10 words.

Return to large group room

### 3. Making Art Out of It (30 minutes)

Let’s channel our inner child again. When we play together we can dream together, risk together, and make mistakes. Have fun. Let it all hang out. Remember we used to live for these moments and then somebody said we couldn’t use crayons, glue and scissors any more.

Using the art supplies provided & write out your purpose statement on the bookmarks provided. Decorate them!

### LUNCH (60 minutes)

**Afternoon Session** 2 hours, 30 minutes (approx)

### 4. Hopping On (60 minutes)

#### Large Group

#### **Gathering Song:**

“You Have Gone Down to the Lakeshore,” Evangelical Lutheran Worship, 517.

#### **Prayer:**

Invite someone to help begin the afternoon and the final stretch of your time together. Remember this does not have to be anything fancy, just a few words between a group of [re]new[ed] friends and God.

#### **Movie Clip:**

“We are Marshall.” Scene 8 33:38-38:45

#### **Set-up:**

In November of 1970, virtually the entire football team and coaches of Marshall University in Huntington, W.V. died in a plane crash. The city and university were so devastated that serious consideration was given to eliminating the football program all together. That spring, led by Nate Ruffin, a player who was ill and missed the fatal flight, the students rallied to convince the board of governors to play the 1971 season. The college president, Don Dedman, was charged with finding a coach. In this scene, Dedman pays a visit to Jack Lengyel, the only person to apply for the head-coach position, to find out why he’s interested in the job.

Ask someone to Read Isaiah 58:6-12 out loud to the whole group.

### Small Groups (30 minutes)

Get back into today's small groups. Spend the next bit sharing your answers to the following questions:

What's God doing here?

What happens when we jump on board with God's mission?

What are the connections between the movie clip and the Isaiah text?

What do you hear God saying to you through this?

[As a side note you might have noticed the repetition of many questions. These are purposeful questions meant to help you listen for God in scripture, but also to listen for God in all kinds of places. You can ask these questions at work, at school, in your relationships with friends and family. Things look different when you ask what God is doing here and how can you help.] As you think about your purpose and God's mission, let yourself start seeing a new way of being.

## 5. Let's Get Dreaming

### Time Out.....a Guided Visualization (40 minutes)

As you do this, take your time. Get into a comfortable place. Relax. Close your eyes. Really take the time to visualize the questions being asked. At the end of the visualization you should have some concrete ideas of what would be different. Spend about half the time in visualization and half of it processing what you saw, heard and now know. Again, God speaks to us in all kinds of ways. Expect to be surprised, challenged, and even changed.

**LEADER: (read this slowly while everyone else closes their eyes & listens)**

Think about your life. Think of all the places you move through and all the people you interact with on a daily basis; home, school, work, play, neighborhood, grocery store, etc.

Now, think about your purpose and calling as part of God's mission to save and bless and reconcile the whole world. Take some time to consider the following. What would be different about the following places if I lived out my purpose and values in a more intentional way?

Picture your personal life...

What would be different at home?

What would be different at work?

What would be different at school?

What would be different in my neighborhood?

Picture your congregational life.....

What would be different in my faith community?

What would be different about the community my congregation serves?

Now open your eyes & write about what you saw.

---

When you're finished, answer this final question: What one thing do you hear God calling you to do, right now, in either your personal life or your congregational life. Write it down

## 6. Mixing it up (60 minutes)

*Large Group* (2 minutes)

### **LEADER:**

For the last hour we will split into 2 large groups. If you hear God calling you to do something in your personal life, meet in one area. If you hear God calling you to do something in your congregational life, meet in another area.

Alternative (if more than 1 congregation is gathered): Divide into as many groups as necessary to create groupings amongst congregational members.

*Small(er) Group* (40 minutes)

On a sticky note, write down the one thing you hear God calling you to do. Take turns placing your sticky notes on a piece of large flip-chart paper.

Answer the following questions:

Living a new life of intention is an exhilarating, although sometimes challenging thing to do. How can you help each other to be intentional about living out your purpose in your context?

What do you need from each other to succeed? (e.g., time to share stories: successes, frustrations, prayer support; each other's phone numbers, etc.)

How can you work together?

What connections do you see on your flip-chart page? What's the same, what's complimentary?

This is not only a chance to see what others have discovered over these 2 days, but to begin to see how people can work together. You might see some natural connections to some new ministry ideas. You might develop new partnerships based on passions and callings. Expect God to show up on those sticky notes to have not just a plan for you individually, but for you together. Let your imaginations soar. You have been created in God's image as creative people!

## 7. Wrap-up (30 minutes)

Come back together as a large group and share the highlights of your discoveries. Once everyone has had a chance to share, ask for highlights from the day---ask each person to name 1 thing they will take with them from this experience.









