

Be Prepared

Purpose:

1. To introduce the title and main theme of this course: Prepare.
2. To indicate how this theme will be handled lesson by lesson.
3. To see the need for intentional preparation with two stories, one of a teenager who is prepared and one of a teenager not prepared.
4. Showing the importance of preparation by connecting each story with what is in the Bible and in Luther's Small Catechism.

Welcome to this class and curriculum. We start with one beautiful reality - and it is love. Not fake love, not momentary love, and not conditional love. God has gone to the most unbelievable extreme measure to show it. Each one of us, each class member, each parent and grandparent is loved by God. This wonderful truth will be with us as we delve into these lessons. More importantly, the fact that we have a God who loves us will come through again and again as we proceed. Believing that, we are here to love one another, and to find other important ways to love one another. We are here to step out to show care for others.

The theme for all the lessons in this course is PREPARE. God wants us prepared for life. Most importantly, he is ready and willing to prepare us. Everyone needs to be prepared, right? We want to be prepared, don't we? Does anyone want to live a life full of hasty and foolish decisions? Does anyone want to keep getting caught off guard? We are going to look at stories where a person, often a young person, runs into a situation where they can be damaged in one way or another.

In some stories, this young person is prepared to deal with what he or she is confronted with. He or she has some wise skill or tool or belief that is going to help them avoid getting involved and hurt. In some stories, their wise decision-making may lead to being a positive influence in someone else's life.

In other stories, the young person is not prepared, and not equipped with a wise skill or tool or belief. So, they find themselves in trouble; trouble that in some cases can be hurtful and long-lasting to them and others they love.

The main goal here is to equip you to deal with difficult circumstances and the evil people you may meet. God wants you to trust him and to be safe. He has provided ways for that to happen.

We will be looking at some of Martin Luther's Small Catechism which highlights some of the main points of the Bible. Luther understood danger, evil, and deceit. Studying the Catechism will help you be prepared. There will also be Bible stories and passages to aid us in accomplishing our goal of preparing you, of getting you ready for the life you have before you. Along with these, we will be learning from some modern authors who can help us see more clearly what tools God has provided to keep us whole and safe.



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Discussion Question: Name something that you prepared for. What did it take for you to prepare for it? If these lessons can help you prepare for the one life you have to live, what attitudes can you bring to this class that would help you get the most out of it?

This class is not about some fantasy world but the real world we live in. To be a Christian means one is willing to face reality. It is not about being in denial. The best way to get real is to tell real-life stories. That is what we are going to do. In this session, we are going to hear two such stories.

Here is one story from <https://www.kcrg.com> [Dubuque teen forced into human trafficking used lesson learned from movie to escape](#), a Cedar Rapids, IA news source: *“The mother of a Dubuque, Iowa teenager who police say was sex trafficked said a movie her family watched helped her daughter escape her traffickers. It’s a crime that seemed like a movie, but police said it was all too real. Last week, Cedar Rapids Police said Tana Torres and Jarod Anderson abducted a young girl in Dubuque, drugged and abused her, and sold her to men from a Cedar Rapids motel.*

The mother said Wednesday was the first time she would be able to see her daughter since she was taken from her Dubuque neighborhood. The girl was missing for five days before she said she escaped her captors. The mother believed the 2018 movie “Believe Me: The Abduction of Lisa McVay” taught her daughter some valuable lessons.

The Quality Inn in Cedar Rapids was where police said Jarod Anderson and Tana Torres brought a minor from Dubuque. Police said they gave her drugs including methamphetamine, took explicit pictures of her, and sold the teen for sex. “My daughter was gone for five days,” said the mother of the Dubuque teenager.

She said after five days, her daughter was able to escape, learning what to do after watching the movie “Believe Me: The Abduction of Lisa McVay”. “I thought it was insightful and really helpful, and it was all this girl did too, and I had my daughters watch it,” she said.

The movie follows the true story of 17-year-old Lisa McVay, who was abducted by serial killer Bobby Joe Long. In the film, Lisa is seen leaving behind evidence of her abduction, items with DNA on them that could give police valuable leads. The teen’s mom said it was something her daughter was able to do while trying to escape.

“She was smart enough to do the fingerprint thing, she was smart enough to be able to hide a phone, there’s just a lot of things that she took from that movie,” said the mother.

Those with Riverview Center, a nonprofit that helps people who have been sexually abused, said the movie gives people an inside look at what an abduction looks like, but they said what this young girl did wasn’t easy.

“It would be very difficult to be that levelheaded,” said Melody Kosobucki, the Program Director. She said it was good to pause and think how you might respond if you were in a similar situation. “There wasn’t one right way to do it,” said Kosobucki. “You have to determine what’s the best in the situation and what’s best for you too.” The police investigation continues, but this mother wants other people to know



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what the movie has done for her daughter and her family. "There's just a lot of things that she took from that movie that she used it," said the teenager's mother. "She used it, it helped her, it saved her." This is the end of the story. Let's remember that boys can be abducted and trafficked too.

So far, we don't know how this trafficking happened, so it is hard to say what this girl could have done before she became entrapped. Sometimes a gut feeling will tell you to get away from who you are with. In a later course, we will share how important it is to listen to and claim any gut feeling you have. Parents need to make sure they talk about this before anything happens. This girl did respond with prior knowledge that gave her the wise skills and tools to escape her captors.

Jesus was realistic about life as it is. He said he wanted us to be prepared. In Matthew 10:16 he tells us, "I am sending you out as sheep among wolves. Therefore, be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves."

Discussion Questions: Imagine you are being abducted: what feelings and thoughts would go through your mind? Discuss the difference between someone caught in such a situation with nothing to draw on that could help them, and someone who learned something that helps them escape. How would you apply Jesus' words about being as wise or as shrewd as a serpent to this story? Do you see any similarity between Jesus' words and what Luther says in the First Article of the Apostle's Creed? "God protects me from all danger and shields and preserves me from all evil." In what ways did God assist this girl to escape her captors?

Doesn't this story help us see the value of preparation? Think of what this girl's life would have been like had she not escaped. We are confronted here with the need to know what to say, what not to say, what to do, and what not to do. This trafficked girl had to keep her cool, use her wits, and remember what she had learned. She also had to act with courage.

Discussion Questions: Put yourself into the situation that the trafficked girl was in. What would it have been like to be her? What was she having to deal with? How did preparation make a difference? How valuable is it to have wise ideas in one's head when facing treachery and force? How many in the class have read the book of Proverbs? If you have read it, do you use it as a valuable resource for gaining wisdom and not being foolish? If not, would this be a valuable thing to do?

Here is a second story, also true: Jake was a junior in high school in a small town in North Dakota. He was out with his buddies. They all had had a few beers. It was after midnight. Greg was Jake's friend. He was the one who had a car and was giving everyone else a ride. When they came out of the place where they had been drinking, Jake noticed Greg was having trouble walking straight. Still, everyone was getting into Greg's car. Greg wanted to take a spin out to a farm some miles away. Jake knew Greg was a fast driver. The whole situation looked dangerous to Jake, but no one was saying anything. They were just getting into the car. Jake had a big decision to make. It would take courage. Was he going to tell his friends he was not in for this ride in the country? He didn't want to look like a sissy. So, he got in the car.

Soon Greg was zooming down a gravel road at a high speed. A sharp curve was coming up but Greg was not slowing down. Then he put on his brakes but it was too late. The car went off the road sailing



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through the air. Out of control, it hit a fence post and flipped over on its top. Jake was pinned down and couldn't move. He was in the worst shape of everyone in the car. About fifteen minutes later another car came along and stopped. An ambulance was called. Jake had to be lifted carefully onto a stretcher and taken to a hospital. He had a bad back injury and could not walk. For the rest of his life, Jake would have to be in a wheelchair. With great regret, he kept asking himself why he was so foolish as to get in that car. But now it was too late to change anything. He had to live with the reality of what had happened to him and his body.

Discussion Questions: How difficult is it to say 'no' to one's peers? What takes more courage—to just go along with the crowd, or to back off and not do what everyone else is doing when they seem to be dismissing the danger? From where could a person get the kind of courage needed to stand up against their peers? Was there any way Jake could have been so prepared that he would say 'no' to getting in Greg's car? What if when talking with his parents, the idea of setting a boundary had been discussed—a boundary like, 'I will not get into a car where it looks like an accident waiting to happen?'

Proverbs 22:3 The prudent see danger and take refuge, but the simple keep going and pay the penalty. (From 3,000 years ago).

Summary:

1. To state the theme of the course: Prepare.
2. To begin to see how that theme fits into the life of a teenager.
3. To see that God is there to protect his child whom he wants to be whole and safe.
4. To recognize how valuable it is to have wisdom, tools, beliefs based on truth, and the before-hand knowledge, if one is to not get entrapped, misled or harmed.

See Joshua 1:5-7; Acts 20:29-31; II Timothy 3:16, 17; I Peter 1:13

Remember the Small Catechism was written so parents would have truths of the Bible to help prepare their children for their lives.

See Quotes on Preparation