

FOUNDATION SESSION 4 — EVERY MEMBER A MINISTER

SESSION OBJECTIVES

By the end of the session, participants should be able to:

1. Explain the biblical basis for the **Priesthood of All Believers**.
 2. Understand the distinction between the **priesthood** and the **pastoral office**.
 3. Recognize their daily vocations as holy callings.
 4. Identify where God is already using their gifts to serve their neighbor and the church.
 5. See discipleship not as “extra credit Christianity” but as everyday life in Christ.
-

OPENING ACTIVITY

Prompt:

“Who is the holiest person you know? What makes you think of them that way?”

Follow-up:

“What qualities do we typically associate with ‘holy people’? Are those qualities always biblical?”

Consider:

“Luther’s insight — drawn straight from Scripture — is that *every Christian is a priest*. Not because we feel holy, but because Jesus has made us holy in His blood.”

CORE TEACHING CONTENT

A. The Priesthood of All Believers: The Heart of Christian Identity

Definition:

Every baptized Christian is a priest before God — able to pray, intercede, and serve — because Jesus, the High Priest, has made us His own.

Key Scriptures:

- 1 Peter 2:9 — “A royal priesthood.”
- Revelation 1:5–6 — “Made us a kingdom of priests.”
- Hebrews 4:14–16 — We approach God confidently through Christ.
- Galatians 3:26–28 — All are one in Christ Jesus.

Notes:

- No Christian is spiritually “higher” or “lower” than another.
 - Pastors are not “super-Christians”; they simply hold a specific office within the priesthood.
-

B. What Priests Do — According to Scripture

1. **Offer spiritual sacrifices**
 - Romans 12:1 — Bodies as living sacrifices (daily life).
 - Hebrews 13:15–16 — Praise, doing good, sharing with others.
2. **Pray for others**
 - 1 Timothy 2:1–2 — Interceding for all people.
 - James 5:16 — Praying for one another.
3. **Proclaim the Gospel in everyday life**
 - 1 Peter 3:15 — Hope within you.
 - Matthew 28:19–20 — The Great Commission includes all disciples.
4. **Serve through works of love**
 - John 13:34–35 — Love one another.
 - Galatians 5:13 — Serve in love.

Leader Notes:

Priesthood ≠ platform

Priesthood = service

C. Distinguishing Between the Priesthood and the Pastoral Office

Priesthood of All Believers:

- A universal identity shared by all Christians.
- Everyone prays, serves, shares, loves, forgives.

Pastoral Office (Public Ministry):

- A specific calling to preach the Word and administer the Sacraments publicly.
- Rooted in Scripture (1 Timothy 3, Titus 1).
- The pastor serves **on behalf of the congregation**.

Why this distinction matters:

- Prevents spiritual hierarchy.
 - Protects the integrity of the Sacraments.
 - Empowers every Christian while honoring the pastoral role.
-

D. Vocation: Where Priests Serve

Vocation (Latin *vocare* = “to call”) means places where God calls us to serve others.

Luther emphasized that God hides Himself in ordinary roles:

1. **Family**
 - Parent, spouse, child, sibling
 - Everyday acts = holy service
2. **Work**
 - Teacher, nurse, mechanic, manager
 - Work is cooperation with God’s care for the world
3. **Church**
 - Serving in worship, discipleship, mission
 - Using gifts for the good of the body
4. **Community**
 - Neighbor, citizen, volunteer
 - Justice, mercy, truth-telling

Notes:

Vocation is not about finding the “perfect job.”

It’s about serving whoever is right in front of you, each day.

E. Why the Priesthood of All Believers Matters

1. It empowers every Christian.

No one is spiritually insignificant.

2. It decentralizes ministry.

The church is not a building or staff — it’s a people on mission.

3. It creates a culture of participation.

Every member has spiritual gifts to contribute.

4. It shapes relationships.

We forgive, encourage, pray for, and support one another as priests.

5. It sustains mission.

The Gospel spreads fastest through everyday relationships.

SCRIPTURE CONNECTIONS (Optional Reading)

- Acts 2:42–47 — Life of the early church
 - Matthew 5:13–16 — Salt and light
 - Ephesians 4:1–16 — The body grows as each part does its work
 - James 2:14–17 — Faith active in love
 - Colossians 3:12–17 — Daily life as worship
-

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **Where do you already function like a “priest” without realizing it?**
 2. **Which vocations in your life feel most meaningful right now? Which feel messy?**
 3. **How does distinguishing the pastoral office from the universal priesthood help you?**
 4. **What spiritual gifts has God given you for service?**
 5. **Where is God calling you to take one new step of active love this week?**
-

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

A. Identify Your Current Vocations

Have participants list:

- Home
- Work
- Church
- Neighborhood

Then ask: “Who is my neighbor in each?”

B. Prayer as Priesthood

Choose one person per day to pray for intentionally.

C. Serve Like a Priest

Pick one tangible act of love this week toward a coworker, family member, or neighbor.

D. Participate in the Body

Encourage identifying a simple place to serve in the church — not to earn God's love, but to express it.

SESSION SUMMARY

- Every Christian is a priest because of Christ, our High Priest.
 - Priests pray, serve, share, love, and proclaim God's goodness.
 - The pastoral office exists within, not above, the priesthood.
 - Vocation is the arena of priestly ministry.
 - God calls ordinary Christians to extraordinary love in ordinary places.
 - Chesapeake Community of Hope thrives when every member lives their priesthood.
-

HOMEWORK

From Luther's Small Catechism:

- **Confession / Office of the Keys**
Reflect:
Where do I need to receive Christ's forgiveness, and where is Christ calling me to share His forgiveness?