

# WELS Ministerial Growth and Evaluation Process

## Module 1 – The WELS Teaching Standards

### Bible Study



Ministerial Growth  
& Evaluation Process

## Part 1 – Calling

God has known you before the beginning of time and by his grace, he called you to be his own even before you were born! God knows you even better than you know yourself and has also called you into the teaching ministry to equip his lambs and his sheep. Your calling before time, and your calling into the teaching ministry, bring great comfort as well as great responsibility. You serve not because of something inherent in you, but because God in his grace has chosen you and equipped you. He knows not only what you are, but also what you will be!

### Lessons from Peter's Calling and Ministry - John 1:35-42

<sup>35</sup>The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. <sup>36</sup>When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!"

<sup>37</sup>When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. <sup>38</sup>Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?"

They said, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?"

<sup>39</sup>"Come," he replied, "and you will see."

So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon.

<sup>40</sup>Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. <sup>41</sup>The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). <sup>42</sup>And he brought him to Jesus.

Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter<sup>[6]</sup>).

### What's in a name?

We know little about Simon before his calling, and his name certainly didn't stand out as being of deep significance. In the Greek, "Simon" has to do with hearing, listening, or perhaps invoked the image of one who was "flat-nosed." Simon's parents may have named him with some intentionality, or perhaps they just liked the name. However, in verse 42, Jesus clearly re-named Simon with intentionality. He would be known as Peter, or the Rock.

1. Describe and discuss the parallels in your life and calling between your names, given by parents and given by God, and those of Simon in this reading.
2. Based on your understanding of Scripture and New Testament lessons, what do you believe was Jesus' reasoning for Jesus giving Simon the name of Peter, the Rock?

3. Jesus re-named Simon based not upon what Peter was in the moment, but upon what Peter would be. As a child of God, and as a called teacher, what comfort do you gain from Jesus' renaming of Simon?

## **Part 2 – Growth**

The re-naming of Simon as Peter reminds us that in our calling we are not yet all that we can be. It is true that we are fully redeemed children of God who have been washed clean in the blood of Christ. We are now clothed in Christ's righteousness and God's true dear children possessing a sure hope of eternal life. In the sense of your justification, God's work is complete. However, in regards to your life of sanctification, your holy living in accord with God's good and gracious will, your life is always a cycle of sin and grace as daily your new creation in Christ fights against your old sinful nature. Being called as a child of God and, in your case, as a Christian teacher does not mean that you are complete in your faith, gifts, and abilities. Rather, you seek to grow daily in your faith, your gifts, and your abilities as you serve your gracious Savior.

### **Lessons from Peter's Encounter on the Water – Matthew 14:22-32**

<sup>22</sup> Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. <sup>23</sup> After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, <sup>24</sup> and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

<sup>25</sup> Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. <sup>26</sup> When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear.

<sup>27</sup> But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

<sup>28</sup> "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."

<sup>29</sup> "Come," he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. <sup>30</sup> But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

<sup>31</sup> Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

<sup>32</sup> And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. <sup>33</sup> Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

### **More than a Sinking Feeling**

Peter is often remembered for sinking as he looked as the wind and waves around him; however, there is much more to learn from this Scripture lesson. When we first saw him as Simon, Peter showed curiosity in an unusual man, but Peter's curiosity has been replaced by the Holy Spirit with faith. Peter's sinking is not the point of the lesson – what is?

1. What attributes does Peter demonstrate that we too desire in our own lives and ministries?
2. In what ways has Simon more fully become the Peter that Jesus so clearly envisioned when he named him?
3. Do you think Peter saw this experience in a positive or negative sense as he replayed the scene over in his mind in the years ahead? Share your reasoning for your answer.
4. Share a trial in your life through which God has strengthened your faith and ministry.

### **Lessons from Peter's Confession – Matthew 16:13-20**

<sup>13</sup> When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”

<sup>14</sup> They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

<sup>15</sup> “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

<sup>16</sup> Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

<sup>17</sup> Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. <sup>18</sup> And I tell you that you are Peter, <sup>[b]</sup> and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades <sup>[c]</sup> will not overcome it. <sup>19</sup> I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be <sup>[d]</sup> bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be <sup>[e]</sup> loosed in heaven.”<sup>20</sup> Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

### **A Bold Declaration**

Peter's growth in ministry was a life-long process; however, his ministry was planted rock solid on a clear confession of faith. As you read Scripture, at times this man whom Jesus chose and named by his grace appears more as Simon and at other times more as Peter. Growth is a process which includes both steps forward and steps backwards. You see this process in the faith life and ministry of Peter as well as in your own life of faith and ministry.

1. Initially, Jesus presented his disciples with a lower-level, rather easily answered question, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” However, this question soon gave way to a penetrating question that had deep implications for daily life and eternity. Consider Jesus question, “Who do you say I am?” Why might the disciples have been reluctant to immediately answer this question?
2. Consider Peter's answer. What does his answer tell us about Peter? What does his answer tell us about Jesus?

3. In verse 18, Jesus again calls Simon by the name of Peter, why is this an appropriate name for Simon at this time?
4. In verse 18, Jesus told his disciples that “on this rock I will build my church . . .” What is the Rock upon which the church is built?
5. Consider your last year of ministry. When have you been more like “Simon”, and when have you been more like “Peter”? How do you become more like Peter, the Rock?

### **Lessons from Peter’s Life of Faith and Ministry**

Simon was always “Simon”, and Simon was always “Peter”. He grew in his life of faith and ministry, but clearly his Savior always saw him as Peter just as he always sees you as his righteous dear children. Even as an apostle, Peter continued to grow in his faith and his ministry even to the point of accepting loving correction from a fellow apostle.

Take 5 minutes and read one the following lessons. After reading and consideration, share the lesson with your group and explain if you see more of “Simon” or more of “Peter” in the reading.

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| A. John 18:1-19      | Jesus’ Arrest and Peter’s Denial          |
| B. John 21           | The Miraculous Catch and Peter Reinstated |
| C. Acts 2:14-40      | Pentecost – Peter’s Sermon                |
| D. Galatians 2:11-21 | Paul Opposes Peter                        |

1. What comfort and hope can you take from Peter’s life of faith and ministry?
2. How can you grow in your faith and ministry so that you might become a Rock more and more each day?
3. How might WELS teaching standards and a process for spiritual and professional growth be a blessing to you and your co-workers in Christ?

### **Part 3 – Team**

Alone. For most, it’s not a word that excites the spirit and builds hope. You were never meant to be alone, and the very word can conjure feelings of fear and vulnerability. In his wisdom, God let Adam come to see what it meant to be alone so that he might come to appreciate the gift of the woman, his wife.

You are not alone. God is always with you, and just as God gives the gift of family to support and strengthen us, he has given you the gift of a family of called workers. Your faculty and staff are family from God. They each bring varying gifts needed for the health and ministry of your school team. Together, when you serve in humility with Christ as your loving head, you can continue to support and strengthen one another as you grow in your mutual ministries.

## Encouraging the Heart

Read each of the following Bible passages as a group. After each passage, discuss the questions listed below.

A. I Corinthians 13:2

*If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.*

B. Ecclesiastes 4:12

*Though one may be overpowered,  
two can defend themselves.  
A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.*

C. Proverbs 27:17

*As iron sharpens iron,  
so one person sharpens another.*

D. I Corinthians 12:14

*Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.*

1. What wisdom does this passage contain for the building of your school ministry team?
2. What strengths and weaknesses does this passage reveal about your school ministry team?
3. Give an example from your ministry setting of the truth revealed in this passage.
4. How might this passage be applied to the purpose of the WELS Ministerial Growth and Evaluation Process?

The WELS Ministerial Growth and Evaluation Process is meant to be a positive tool to assist you and your ministry team to grow in your lives of faith and ministry. This personal and team growth is aimed at strengthening your witness and instruction so that your students, God's lambs, might also grow in their faith, knowledge, and skills. May the Lord bless you and your ministry team as you work together to grow individually and as a family in Christ.