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# 6 Great Ends

LEADERS' GUIDE



Each episode of these videos is intended to allow pastors or other church leaders to walk their congregations, sessions, Sunday school classes, small groups, or other gatherings through the Six Great Ends of the Church, as articulated in our Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Book of Order (F-1.0304).

**There are six videos, each covering a different Great End of the Church.**  
***Each video includes:***

- 1. An introduction about the Great End that the video discusses,**
- 2. Insights and experiences, from a diverse variety of our Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) pastors, elders, and leaders – all involved in the Fellowship Community – expanding on what each Great End means in theory and practice, and**
- 3. A series of two to three questions that allow the leader to pause the video to engage the audience, inviting them to share their perspectives and experiences related to the Great End being discussed and its application in their particular context.**

The objective is to give Fellowship Community churches in the PC(USA) a common experience of learning together, both how they interpret and understand their collective mission and what they have in common with thousands of other Fellowship Presbyterians across the United States.

We believe that walking through this video series will encourage your Fellowship church members in a few ways. It will demonstrate that their pastors or other leaders are taking intentional steps to help them define what makes Fellowship congregations distinct. It will help them learn together some of the deepest points of our Reformed Faith, and how we should best carry them out in our church communities. It will demonstrate the common values, beliefs and mission that Christ is doing in and through those affiliated with the Fellowship Community in the PC(USA).

**NOTE:** *Pastors or church leaders should use this series as a means to learn more about what their congregants are really thinking. Are they on the same page regarding some of these most deeply important aspects of your church's Christian mission and ministry? Try and keep these to a stated period of time, typically 60–90 minutes per episode, depending on the size and make-up of the audience. Leave them wanting more!*

# EPISODE 1: Proclamation of the Gospel

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## INTRODUCTION

Episode 1 opens with an introduction explaining how the Six Great Ends of the Church not only tie us together as Presbyterians, but articulate our biblically grounded mission in the church and the world.

“The Proclamation of the Gospel” episode discusses this Great End from the various standpoints below.

During this episode, the video will pose three discussion questions allowing the leader to PAUSE THE VIDEO and INVITE THE VIEWERS TO DISCUSS how they would respond to each.

### 1. What does the Proclamation of the Gospel mean to us?

Prompting questions for shy audiences — *When and how did YOU first hear the Gospel? What made it “Good News” to you? If someone you loved, but who isn’t a Christian were here today, what would you say or do if uninhibited to help them understand God’s love that you have experienced?*

### 2. How Do We Proclaim the Gospel?

Prompting questions — *Is proclamation of the Gospel only the pastor’s responsibility on Sunday morning, or do others share in this in some ways? Is proclaiming the Gospel done in what we do, or in what we say?*

### 3. TWO POSSIBLE CONCLUDING FORMATS:

- 1) Again, prompt the audience with questions allowing them to respond, then close as you choose (song, prayer, etc.). Suggested prompts — *In your experience, how are we doing in proclaiming the Gospel now? How could we be doing it better?*
- 2) Pastor or Leader closes — The pastor or leader articulates the ways their church shares the Gospel, adding ways that they might do that differently or better.

**For example:**

- Learn more about the church's changing local community or culture to allow for more effective evangelism.
- Implement some of the ideas of how to proclaim the Gospel that they just heard from either the audience or from other church leaders on the video.

**NOTE:** *Challenge the audience to engage in some action or activity that they can do to improve the church's implementation of this Great End in the next week, month, or other specified time frame.*

# EPISODE 2: Shelter, Nurture, & Spiritual Fellowship of the Children of God

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## INTRODUCTION

Episode 2 addresses the second Great End of the Church — The Shelter, Nurture, and Spiritual Fellowship of the Children of God. The First Great End of the Proclamation of the Gospel is about how the church speaks to the not-yet-believing-world around it in what we say and do. This second Great End, however, is arguably more about how the church speaks to and treats its own. How do we foster deeper discipleship? How can we best encourage and help one another grow in trying times?

“The Shelter, Nurture, and Spiritual Fellowship of the Children of God” video episode includes Presbyterian leaders from across the church discussing this Great End.

During episode 2, the video will pose three discussion questions after several leaders from across the church address those questions. When you see the discussion questions on the screen, PAUSE THE VIDEO and INVITE THE VIEWERS TO DISCUSS how they would respond to each.

### **1. How are WE sheltering, nurturing, and caring for the needs of our community?**

Prompting questions — *Can you name ways that WE already are sheltering people in our church community? Ways we are nurturing them? Providing Spiritual Fellowship? Do you think these ways are truly meaningful to them? Why or why not?*

### **2. Is our congregation’s shelter, nurture and spiritual care intergenerational? Inclusive? How?**

Prompting questions – *This Great End speaks about providing for the “Children of God.” Do you think this literally should just include children? Why or why not? Do we provide shelter, nurture and spiritual care for all age groups? Are some stronger than others? If someone from a different culture or ethnic group comes to our church, would they feel welcomed and cared for? Are our various age group or other group ministries cross-pollinating and interacting, or might they feel separated from others?*

### 3. TWO POSSIBLE CONCLUDING FORMATS:

- 1) Again, prompt the audience with questions allowing them to respond, then close as you choose (song, prayer, etc.). Suggested prompts — *Are the Children of God just those within the church? What does it mean to shelter someone? To Nurture? To provide Spiritual Fellowship?*
- 2) Pastor or Leader closes —The pastor or leader articulates several ways that the church does, indeed, shelter, nurture, provide for the spiritual care of those within their church or even surrounding community. He/she can then add new ways to consider based on what was already said during discussions, or in the videos (best practices).

**For instance:**

- Devise better means to listen to the deep needs of those within the church community, to find out what would be most effective in caring for them.
- Learn more about the church's changing local community or culture to allow for more effective care for others.
- Implement some of the ideas heard in the video of how to better shelter, nurture, and provide spiritual care for your church community.

# EPISODE 3: Maintenance of Divine Worship

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## INTRODUCTION

Episode 3 focuses on the third Great End of the Church — The Maintenance of Divine Worship. This episode is distinct from the others in that much of the video focuses on the differing styles, approaches, and locations for worship, even within our Reformed Presbyterian denomination. This video also focuses on practical illustrations, lifting up one Fellowship congregation in particular to show how their church has come to use different styles of worship to engage different audiences and cultures within their single, but diverse, community.

“The Maintenance of Divine Worship” video includes Presbyterian leaders from across the church discussing this Great End. But it also shows several examples of varying types of worship present across the nation throughout our PC(USA) congregations. Note that this video is shorter, because it ends with a suggestion that you take some time to worship together as a group in whatever way you as a leader feel led to do.

During episode 3, the video will pose two discussion questions after several leaders from across the church address the same questions. When you see the discussion questions on the screen, PAUSE THE VIDEO and INVITE THE VIEWERS TO DISCUSS how they would respond to each (**NOTE:** when the third question comes on the screen, it is immediately followed by a suggestion that you conclude this episode by worshipping together as a community.)

### 1. What attribute of worship is God illuminating to you right now?

Prompting questions — *What aspects of worship most give you a sense of God’s presence? Which parts of our worship services touch you the most deeply? As you have watched this video on worship, during which aspects did you sense God speaking to you or sense God’s presence?*



## 2. Is our style of worship reaching our community?

Prompting questions — *Does our church include people who like different styles of worship? What makes worship “Divine”? What makes worship meaningful to most people? (Statistics suggest that people most appreciate worship when they feel a connection with God.)*

## 3. CONCLUDE WITH YOUR OWN WORSHIP, AS YOU FEEL APPROPRIATE

While the final and third question appears on the screen, it is immediately followed by a conclusion from Rev. Jeff Meyers, who suggests that you close with a time of your own worship. After briefly discussing the last question, move to the time of worship. Make this as simple as a few people praying, to a time of worship music of hymns, or any other format you feel is appropriate in your context.

**NOTE:** *Challenge the audience to engage in some action or activity that they can do to improve the church’s implementation of this Great End in the next week, month, or other specified time frame.*

# EPISODE 4: Preservation of the Truth

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## INTRODUCTION

Episode 4 focuses on the fourth Great End of the Church — The Preservation of the Truth. This great end emphasizes what has been one of the most divisive aspects of the Judeo-Christian Community. Truth is often not perceived as tangible or something that we may value as much as we do things, or food and water, or money. People's adherence to and insistence on certain truths, though, have driven them to do both great and sometimes terrible things in the name of those truths. Truth is something that has at times unified Christians, and at other times, it has divided them. Because of these things, this Great End of the Church should not be treated as an academic discussion, but rather should engender a lively debate about the things that matter most to Christian communities.

During episode 4, the video will pose two discussion questions after several leaders from across the church address the same questions. When you see the discussion questions on the screen, PAUSE THE VIDEO and INVITE THE VIEWERS TO DISCUSS how they would respond to each.

### 1. How do you determine Truth?

Prompting questions — *Jesus said, "I am the truth...." What do you think Jesus meant? What makes you doubt that something is true? How do you determine what you follow as truth? Are some truths more important to you than others?*

### 2. What is more important to you: Knowing the Truth or living the Truth?

Prompting questions — *What is the difference between knowing about something or someone versus knowing something or someone experientially? How does it make you live differently when you know about someone versus knowing them in person? Would some of you share how your life changed after coming to know Jesus personally versus just knowing about Him?*

### 3. TWO POSSIBLE CONCLUDING FORMATS:

1) Again, prompt the audience with questions allowing them to respond, then close as you choose (song, prayer, etc.). Suggested prompts — *Are we always going to agree on 'what is truth'? Can we agree to disagree on some things while agreeing fully on others? What happens when the church fails to live the truth it knows? What do we need to do in our church to preserve and live out the truth of Jesus Christ and the truths of Scripture?*

2) Pastor or Leader closes — The pastor or leader articulates the reality that sincere Christians don't always agree on what is true, especially regarding certain issues. Nevertheless, Christians are called to at least be agreeable with one another, even if they do not agree. (Psalm 133:1; John 17:33; Colossians 3:12-14) Further, when churches acknowledge biblical truths in their statements of faith or other contexts, but fail to live those things out in their community and world, those churches tend to become uninteresting and unhelpful to those around them. They often wither or even die. Finally, the pastor can then add new ways the congregation might consider living out the truths of Scripture in their community and world, based on what has already been discussed, or what was talked about from the standpoint of other churches as seen in the videos.

**For instance:**

- Suggest specific ways of introducing Christ to those in their community who know little about him.
- Through sermons, Christian education, Bible studies and other contexts, intentionally call into question cultural messages that are professing ideas that Christians do not recognize as true.
- Implement some of the ideas heard in the video of how to preserve the truth in your church community.

**NOTE:** *Challenge the audience to engage in some action or activity that they can do to improve the church's implementation of this Great End in the next week, month, or other specified time frame.*

# EPISODE 5: Promotion of Social Righteousness

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## INTRODUCTION

Episode 5 focuses on the fifth Great End of the Church — The Promotion of Social Righteousness. This end makes clear that the church exists not only for its own sake, but for the sake of the world around it. We are called to carry our discipleship into action; to proclaim the gospel in deeds as well as words. In many ways, this end is the complement of the second great end. Our shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship as God’s children prepares and equips us to promote social righteousness in the unjust world where God has placed us. “The Promotion of Social Righteousness” video includes Presbyterian leaders from across the church discussing this Great End.

During this episode 5, the video will pose two discussion questions after several leaders from across the church address the same questions. When you see the discussion questions on the screen, PAUSE THE VIDEO and INVITE THE VIEWERS TO DISCUSS how they would respond to each.

### 1. Is the promotion of social righteousness a priority for your congregation?

Prompting questions — *Some on the video suggest that righteousness is essentially justice. Do you agree with this? How is social righteousness (or justice) different from individual righteousness? Reformed Christians since Calvin (in Geneva) often referred to the Old Testament prophets (see e.g., Isaiah 58) to emphasize that Christians are called, not simply to serve poor or needy individuals, but to remedy entire systems that make people poor in the first place or that create widespread injustices. How could our congregation engage in activities that seek to remedy larger problems like this? (Consider the impact of partnering with already existing programs, or starting after-school programs in economically challenged neighborhoods, etc.)*

### 2. Has our community changed? Are we responding with social righteousness?

Prompting questions — *Are we experiencing demographic change in our community that has brought with it social righteousness or justice challenges? If yes, how might we better understand those challenges to partner with our neighbors to help them remedy problematic systems they face? Do all of the children in our surrounding school communities start off with the same advantages? (e.g., health, nutrition, school supplies, English language skills,*

*supportive-parent households, etc.) If not, how might our church create systems or contexts to support those children who face special challenges?*

### **3. TWO POSSIBLE CONCLUDING FORMATS:**

- 1)** Again, prompt the audience with questions allowing them to respond, then close as you choose (song, prayer, etc.). Suggested prompts – *Congregations often want to concentrate on what happens within the walls of their church community, growing in numbers, deepening the discipleship of their adherents. But the missional church is called to both ‘make disciples,’ but also to go outside of its own boundaries to reach out to the lost and those in need around them. Do you feel satisfied that our church has a good balance in this aspect of our calling? If you could dream for a moment, can you name some areas of real need in our community that are affecting large numbers of people that you wish our church could help to remedy? Would you personally and with others in our congregation be willing to begin asking the Lord how you/we might serve those needs?*
- 2)** Pastor or Leader closes – The pastor or leader articulates several ways that the church does, indeed, promote social righteousness within their church and surrounding community. He/she might identify one or two glaring or desperate needs created by broken systems that exist in the immediate community. Then, he/she can suggest that they begin in earnest a process of working toward a ministry or program that could seek to remedy the identified problem. These suggestions may be based on what some among them have already said during discussions, or what was said in the videos (best practices).

**For instance:**

- Help with a battered women’s shelter network
- Start or partner with another church to open a ‘food pantry’ service or create other systems (working with local grocers or restaurants) to provide simple nutritious meals for impoverished communities
- Implement some of the ideas heard in the video of how to promote social righteousness in your church community.

**NOTE:** *Challenge the audience to engage in some action or activity that they can do to improve the church’s implementation of this Great End in the next week, month, or other specified time frame.*

# EPISODE 6: Exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the World

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## INTRODUCTION

Episode 6 focuses on the sixth and final Great End of the Church – The Exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the World. This end brings together all of the others, with implications for each of us as individual Christians and together as Christ’s Church. It puts before us the question, “When people look at us individually and collectively, what do they see”?

During episode 6, the video will pose two discussion questions after several leaders from across the church address the same questions. When you see the discussion questions on the screen, PAUSE THE VIDEO and INVITE THE VIEWERS TO DISCUSS how they would respond to each.

### 1. What is the Exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the World?

Prompting questions — *Is the Exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven something we tell or something we do? Is it an individual task or a community event, and how so in each case? One person speaking in the video talked about this Great End as a Christian life driven by a missional purpose. If you agree with this, what might that look like? Another speaker compared the Exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to a movie trailer. If our congregation’s exhibition were a movie trailer, what do you think it would convey?*

### 2. How do you personally exhibit the Kingdom of Heaven?

Prompting questions — *Is there a Christian you know whose life exhibits the Kingdom of Heaven, and if so, what are the ways that he or she does this? [Is it the ways that person talks, treats others, is generous, etc.] Have any of you had a moment when someone asked you what was different about your life, and was referring to some aspect of your Christian faith?*

### 3. TWO POSSIBLE CONCLUDING FORMATS:

- 1) Again, prompt the audience with questions allowing them to respond, then close as you choose (song, prayer, etc.). Suggested prompts – *Is there a specific Christian teaching or central Scripture that defines for you what it means to exhibit the Kingdom of Heaven, and if so what and why? Are there ways our church is particularly good or could improve in exhibiting the Kingdom of Heaven?*
- 2) Pastor or Leader closes – The pastor or leader articulates several ways that the church does, indeed, exhibit the Kingdom of Heaven to those in the community and the world. He/she can then add new ways they might consider based on what was already said during discussions, or in the videos (best practices).

**For instance:**

- Begin to learn some of the cultural traditions of your congregation's neighbors in order to minister to them by honoring these traditions.
- Discover some of the greatest pain points of those in your congregation's community, and find ways to reach those deepest needs.
- Implement some of the ideas heard in the video of how to exhibit the kingdom of heaven in your church community and beyond.

**NOTE:** *Challenge the audience to engage in some action or activity that they can do to improve the church's implementation of this Great End in the next week, month, or other specified time frame.*



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