

Barbecues, Deli Stops, and Classrooms:

Where Pat Goes, the Gospel Goes

How many people could come to know Jesus if we each challenged ourselves every day to recognize faith-sharing opportunities like Patricia Mayer, an on-the-go mom, does?

At Christ Lutheran, Patricia Mayer's home congregation in Rancho Palos Verdes, California, the annual church and school barbecue featured a new twist: "bring a friend to the BBQ." Patricia invited her friends, Jennifer and Mike, to attend.

The event's festivities included an opportunity for guests to register for the church's "So I Might Know Him" eight-week Bible course introducing the LCMS church and the Christian faith. Patricia's friends joined seven other families in signing up for the course.

"I was so excited to see my friend and her husband sign up," says Patricia, who is the principal at Christ Lutheran School. "Considering our conversations, I hope she and her family will be baptized by the end of the year. Also, two of my son's soccer teammates brought their families to the barbecue, and they stayed to see the puppet show that shared the Gospel in a fun and easy-to-understand way. God used this day to show all of the fruits of His Spirit. What an awesome God, and what an awesome day!"

Patricia found another opportunity to share her faith with a fellow patron at a deli that she frequents. "I noticed a man who looked really down. I asked how he was and found out that his mother-in-law was very ill — he had no idea whether she would live. I then asked if I could pray for him, encouraging him by saying that God is always there to help him through the hard times. He was shocked, but he prayed with me. Now I follow up



every time I see him at the deli, and he has been asking me more about my faith."

On yet another occasion, God provided an opportunity for Patricia to share the story of her personal redemption through Christ in her graduate studies class. "During a class presentation, I shared Scripture from the New Testament to explain Who I believe called me to be a teacher and why I take it so seriously. I explained that God has worked in my life to shape me into someone He can use to feed His lambs.

"I loved the way that the Holy Spirit gave me the right words to answer some of the more scoffing questions. I also described how I've seen God working in the life of one of my classmates to call him to teach children who are one step away from doing hard time in jail. My classmate recognized that 'something' was guiding him to take such a job and to embrace it as his vocation. When I told him that I truly believed that it was God guiding his life, even if he did not believe it himself, he was uncharacteristically quiet and thoughtful. I pray that God nurtures this seed to bring my classmate to faith in the one redeeming God."

Isn't it amazing how the Spirit of God works through us? What opportunities are there in your life for the Spirit to work through you in order to confront people with the message of Jesus as their Savior?

This is what the LCMS **Ablaze!** movement is all about. For more information, visit www.lcms.org/Ablaze.

*Contributed by the
Synod's Board for
Communication
Services and LCMS
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