



## Challenge Card Instructions

Dear pastors and leaders,

One of the key components of “A God-Lived Life” is the use of the challenge cards. The challenge cards serve three purposes:

1. To involve the entire congregation in the challenges in a way that encourages personal participation.
2. To help members encourage each other in the challenges (iron sharpens iron).
3. To assist your congregation in having a record of members who are interested in any community outreach or hospitality activities undertaken by your congregation.

**Please Note:** The following information includes suggestions for how to use the challenge cards. Please customize your plan based on the size and resources of your congregation. For example, the way a smaller congregation distributes the challenge cards may be very different than the way a larger congregation distributes the cards (sending the cards in the mail to every household vs. handing the cards out during worship).

### WHO SHOULD COME UP WITH THE CHALLENGES?

One unique aspect of the program is the opportunity for the leaders of the congregation to come up with their own challenges. Church leaders are most familiar with the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and challenges of their congregation. The challenge card templates provide a list of ideas, but every leadership team is encouraged to come up with opportunities for their people to do the kinds of things that are best tailored to their ministry setting.

Consider the importance of setting aside agenda time during the planning months for healthy “challenge” discussion and brainstorming among leaders. We recommend that your leadership team creates a master list of all the possible challenges for your congregation. After that, you can narrow down the list to your top challenges (about 3-4 per challenge card).

The goal is to produce as broad a congregational buy-in as possible. The more members involved means more ministry getting done and more people being served.

### WHAT TO PUT ON THE CHALLENGE CARDS

Challenge card items should be customized to your congregation and ministry goals. For example, for Challenge #1 (A life of being a disciple), you can list discipleship options that are offered at your congregation, like attending your weekly Bible study, joining in your congregational Bible reading plan, attending Sunday school, etc.

You can also point your members to the variety of resources available through wels.net, like family and teen devotions, marriage devotions, ministry blogs, Bible reading plans, etc.

Please see the section at the end of this document titled “Challenge Card Topic Suggestions” for ideas. You can include challenges for members of all ages.

## HOW TO CUSTOMIZE AND PRINT THE CHALLENGE CARDS

- Download the customizable challenge card Word document
- Customize each challenge card for your congregation (include blank lines for members to write in their own personal challenges)
- Print the challenge cards in full color on white cardstock (print 2-sided)
- Cut each challenge card sheet into four cards
- Print extra challenge cards each month



## WHO RECEIVES THE CHALLENGE CARDS?

It is recommended that each member receive his or her own challenge card since individuals may want to choose unique personal challenges.

Options:

- One card per family unit
- One card per confirmed family member
- One card per family member, including children

## HOW AND WHEN TO DISTRIBUTE THE CHALLENGE CARDS

Options:

- Mail a full set of challenge cards to members several weeks prior to the program with the introductory letter
- Distribute challenge cards during worship at each month's launch Sunday (ushers hand out as people enter worship, ushers hand out immediately after the sermon, etc.). Have extra challenge cards on hand each Sunday of the month to hand out as needed.
- After each launch Sunday, send a link to an online challenge card form to members via e-mail, host the form on your church website, or post a link to the form on social media

## HOW TO FILL OUT AND COLLECT THE CHALLENGE CARDS

Your congregation may or may not want to collect the challenge cards; however, collecting the cards can help with personal accountability and a sense of mutual encouragement among members.

Options:

- Members fill out the challenge cards during each month's launch Sunday (don't forget to provide pens). Encourage members to take a picture of their challenge cards before turning them in so they remember their challenges. Cards can be handed to the ushers on the way out of the service, placed in the offering basket, placed in a special box, etc.
- Members fill out the challenge cards at home, take a picture of their card for their reference, and bring the cards to worship to turn in. They could also e-mail a picture of their completed challenge card to your church.

- Members fill out an online challenge card form

### **HOW TO USE INFORMATION ON THE CHALLENGE CARDS IN YOUR MINISTRY PLAN**

Particularly for Challenge #2 (A life lived for others) and Challenge #3 (A life of hospitality), your church leadership can use the information on the challenge cards to identify members who are committing to serving at your congregation and in the community.

## **Challenge Card Topic Suggestions**

Please see examples below of suggestions that can be customized to your congregation. This is just a sampling of possibilities. Every congregation is encouraged to create a challenge list that best fits their ministry needs.

### **Challenge #1: A life of being a disciple**

- Attend four Bible studies in the next four weeks (in person or via Zoom)
- Set aside time to pray daily (morning/night)
- Do daily Bible reading (at least 5 minutes per day)
- Do a nightly devotion with spouse (4x per week)
- Read a family devotion at dinner (3x per week)
- Pray before meals and at bedtime
- Start a prayer journal
- Complete Bible Information Class series
- Subscribe to and share church podcast
- Read and share church blog
- Memorize one Bible passage each week
- Start a Bible reading plan (<https://wels.net/serving-you/bible/>)
- Subscribe to a WELS devotion e-mail for individuals, families, couples, or teens (<https://wels.net/serving-you/devotions/>)
- Use the WELS Marriage Moments weekly devotions for couples (<https://welscongregationalservices.net/ministry-resources/marriagemoments/>)
- Take child(ren) to Sunday school each Sunday this month
- Attend Sunday school each Sunday this month
- Set aside 15 minutes each week to talk about the sermon/Sunday school topic with family

### **Challenge #2: A life lived for others**

- Participate in a congregation outreach effort (food drive, blood drive, vacation Bible school, fall festival, canvassing, etc.)
- Participate in the WELS “Let’s Go” outreach Bible study (<https://welscongregationalservices.net/lets-go/>)
- Organize a meal train for a family in the neighborhood that is struggling or who just had a baby
- Send a monetary gift or gift cards to a struggling individual or family
- Send an encouraging card, e-mail, or text to a struggling individual or family
- Make cookies for a neighbor and deliver them in person
- Volunteer to read a devotion to a shut-in
- Sign up to give someone a ride to church once per month

- Sign up for a volunteer activity at church
- Help in the nursery or in Sunday school once per month
- Talk to a friend about Jesus (or co-worker, family member, neighbor, acquaintance)
- Offer to pray for a hurting neighbor or co-worker
- Pray for a missionary, his family, and the people they minister to with the gospel

### **Challenge #3: A life of hospitality**

- Invite a neighbor, co-worker, or family member to worship or an event at church
- Invite an unchurched friend to an event at church or a youth group event
- Have a one-minute conversation with five people I don't regularly talk to at church
- Talk to someone I don't know well and introduce them to someone I do know well
- Introduce myself to someone who is standing alone before or after worship
- Arrive at church 15 minutes early one Sunday per month to help greet people
- Sit next to a new member each Sunday
- Help a young family with their children during worship
- Volunteer to hold a baby while the parents take communion
- Volunteer to set up coffee/treats one Sunday per month
- Invite someone out to lunch after church
- Invite a church member who has never been to my home to my home for a meal
- Find someone in the church who seems to be involved in everything and ask how I can help them

### **Challenge #4: A life lived shrewdly**

- For children: Set aside allowance money each month for three purposes: 1. Church 2. Charity 3. Savings
- Tithe 10% of my income to church this month
- Evaluate my percentage of giving and increase if motivated
- Choose a new charity to support
- As a family, donate gently used items to charity
- Host a rummage sale and give the proceeds to church or to charity
- Participate in a financial planning course
- Pay for a scholarship for a fellow member to participate in a financial planning course
- Give a gift for special outreach work at church
- Create or update my will to include the support of God's work
- Schedule a meeting with a WELS Christian giving counselor to talk about supporting God's work ([wels.net/givingcounselors](http://wels.net/givingcounselors) or [mcg@wels.net](mailto:mcg@wels.net))
- Save for an emergency fund
- Ask a member I admire as a godly example for advice on living shrewdly and handling the gift of finances
- Write out a family budget, evaluating the necessity of each expense, including a list of goals for our money