

A Mighty Fortress

(Hymn #656/657 in the *Lutheran Service Book*)
Read a verse, then answer the questions below.

Verse 1: What is a fortress? Why do people build them? How does God act as our shield or weapon? Who is “the old evil foe”? What is guile? How does the devil try to trick us?

Verse 2: What would happen if we tried to fight the devil all on our own, without God’s help? Who is “the valiant One” who fights for us? What does valiant mean? What does Sabbath mean? (Lord of hosts — that is, Lord over the army of angels)

Verse 3: Discuss the image of devils surrounding us, but Jesus leading us safely through. What are times when we are afraid? Remember that Jesus, our shield and weapon, protects us during those times. Who is the world’s prince? (Satan)

Verse 4: Discuss how Christians around the world face great dangers for their faith in Jesus Christ. Some of them have lost their jobs, their families, or even their lives. How is it a victory if all those things are taken from us?

Now sing together this great song of faith in Jesus!

We pray:

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for the gift of your Son, Jesus Christ, who died on the cross to take away our sins. Thank you for being our “Mighty Fortress” who keeps us safe from death and the devil. Send your Holy Spirit to make our faith strong. Bless our mission project to give children around the world Bible storybooks and catechisms, so that they can know how much You love them, too. Keep us all safely in Your care.

In Jesus’ name,
Amen.



Continuing What Luther Began Classroom Devotion



Continuing What Luther Began - Devotion

Responsive Reading: Psalm 46

- Group 1:** God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
- Group 2:** Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way,
though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea,
- Group 1:** Though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble at its swelling.
- Group 2:** There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.
- Group 1:** God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved;
God will help her when morning dawns.
- Group 2:** The nations rage, the kingdoms totter;
he utters his voice, the earth melts.
- Group 1:** The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.
- Group 2:** Come, behold the works of the Lord,
how He has brought desolations on the earth.
- Group 1:** He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the chariots with fire.
- Group 2:** "Be still, and know that I am God.
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth!"
- Together:** The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.

"The Kingdom's Ours Forever!"

Even when you're a very famous person, life can be hard. Just think of Martin Luther, for example. Back in the 1500s, Martin Luther was famous – everyone knew how he had nailed his 95 Theses to the church door and started the Reformation.

But not everything was easy for Martin Luther. Leaders in the Catholic Church were so angry about Luther's actions and teachings that they put him on trial. When Luther refused to back down from preaching the truth, the Pope excommunicated him and even threatened him with death. To save his life, Luther had to hide in his friend's house for more than a year.

Then in the year 1527, more bad things happened. A friend who followed Luther's teaching was martyred – killed because he stood up for his faith in God's Word. Later that year, a terrible disease called the plague broke out in Germany, where Luther and his family lived. Thousands of people died.

But perhaps hardest of all was in May 1528, when Martin and Katie Luther's baby daughter, Elizabeth, died. Even though Luther knew that little Elizabeth was now with Jesus in heaven, he missed her very much and was very, very sad.

Even during these very hard times, God kept Martin Luther's faith strong. It was then that Luther wrote the words to his most famous hymn, "A Mighty Fortress is Our God." Luther based the hymn on Psalm 46, where it is written, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

Are there times in your life when you are sad or afraid? Are there times when you worry about things going on in your family or at school? Don't be afraid – Jesus died for you!

Luther's hymn, which is sometimes called "The Battle Hymn of the Reformation," has brought strength and comfort to many people throughout the years. Let's read through this powerful hymn now, keeping in mind your own tough times and how God promises to always be with you.