The PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS talk calls the participants to embrace a special call to ministry as young people. The call in this talk is not to become ordained clergypersons but to become part of the ministry shared by all Christian believers over the centuries: the priesthood of all believers. The call is not to a special club or place of privilege. Rather, the call is to assume responsibility for the continuation of Christ’s ministry in the world from generation to generation.

The priesthood of all believers, similar to “the people of God,” is a biblical concept that is important for understanding the church and the role of laity in the church. It means that all believers, lay and clergy alike, have a common ministry and authority to be priests to one another, to represent Christ to one another in a way we cannot do for ourselves. It means that the popular notion that clergy do ministry and laity are consumers (only on the receiving end of it) is wrong and nonbiblical. Every person who confesses Jesus as Lord is a minister in the church.

The PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS talk is the next to last presentation of the three days and is given by the Lay Director. It gives the LD the opportunity to sum up the importance of the three days and to focus on Christ’s call to the young people. Having established himself or herself as a true servant and friend while enabling the mechanics of the three days, the LD now communicates personally and from the heart the call to live for the cause of God’s kingdom, to accept the ministry of Christ, and to be the church in the world.

The outline elaborates on the meaning of the points, not to provide a script but in order to stimulate the speaker in developing the talk in his or her own words. Personal examples are to be used as the speaker feels comfortable and as they fit the text. This talk is designed for 15–20 minutes. Visual aids help convey the main points of the talk. The reflection guide will pose the following questions:

1. What thoughts surface as I think about the role of a priest and my being the hands of Christ in my home, church, community, and school?
2. Where do I feel Christ is calling me to represent his love back home as I think about returning?
3. What do I need in order to put my faith into action at these points of concern?

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ALD—“With a clean sheet of paper, pen in hand...”; followed by the before-talk chorus, at which time the speaker will enter the conference room (participants should be standing for the chorus). The speaker will ask the participants to join in “The Prayer to the Holy Spirit” found on the last page of the Chrysalis Worship book. The speaker will then ask the participants to be seated.

Introduction
Share a personal experience that illustrates the effect of one person’s reaching out to share God’s love.

“My name is __________________, and the title of this talk is PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS.”

I. Christ is calling you during these three days.
   A. While we have been here in this loving atmosphere, the world has not changed.
      1. Though we are more aware of God after three days here, the world still lives as though God does not exist, turning its back on Christ. People still treat one another like strangers rather than family.
      2. Humanity is like a stranded starfish, dying of thirst (drowning in air) while only a few feet from the water.
   B. During these three days we have heard how Christ is calling us to be part of God’s mission. Briefly review the message of the three days.
      1. Day One: God reaches out to us in Christ. We see in him God’s ideal. We begin to have faith in God, to accept God’s love, to die with Christ to those things that keep us from God.
      2. Day Two: Having died with Christ, we rise with Christ to new life of hope by growing. We become his disciples, begin to share his heart and mind, grow in his grace, and live in his presence.
      3. Day Three: Having been raised with Christ, we go forth with Christ as Christian community in action. The Holy Spirit empowers us to be Christ to one another, to share Christ’s love with others, to carry on Christ’s ministry to the world.
   C. Christ is counting on you.
      1. Christ is calling every one of you to ministry, not necessarily to be a pastor but to play an active role in the ministry of the church:
         a. To make his love real for the others only you can reach.
         b. To share with others the grace you yourself have received.
         c. To bring God’s healing grace to the hurts of people you know.
         d. To do your part in throwing back the starfish.
      2. Christ is giving you responsibility to carry forward his ministry of love in the world.
3. Christ is counting on you to play an active part in the priesthood of all believers. None of us can do all that is needed; Christ simply calls you to do your part. Christ’s way of reaching people is through his friends, through us. Christ can only be present to the people in your life through you. You are the only Jesus some will ever know.

II. The priesthood of all believers is people who represent God’s love in the world.

A. A priest is a person who represents God’s love in the world.
   1. A priest is not just a clergyperson dressed in dark clothes. A priest is someone who has experienced God’s grace and friendship and who helps others experience God’s love too.
   2. Jesus is the great high priest, the model representative of God to the world (Heb. 7:23-25). Christ overcomes the gap between God and the world. Jesus makes his own life a sacrifice of love for our salvation (John 1:29). Through Jesus people can become friends with God (2 Cor. 5:17).
   3. All believers share in Christ’s priesthood. The Christian community makes up a royal priesthood (1 Pet. 2:4-5, 9-10). Like Christ we give of ourselves to make God’s love real to people, to help them become God’s friends too.

B. The priesthood of all believers is the church.
   1. The church is not a building; it is the people. We are the church, believers working together to be Christ’s example to the world (1 Cor. 12:14-16).
   2. Write the word church on the board. You can remember who is the church by finding the two letters in the middle of the word church: UR. UR the church when you are making Christ’s love real for others (1 Pet. 4:10).

C. The priesthood is a mission. The characteristics of a mission are these:
   1. It is personal; start with yourself. Be real.
   2. It is spiritual. Spiritual is not worldly; it is openness to God’s presence among us.
   3. It is servant-oriented. Our mission is to serve as Jesus served (John 13:2-5).
   4. It is shared. The mission requires teamwork. Teamwork means appreciation and use of the gifts each person brings. It means laity and clergy working as partners. We cannot do it alone.
   5. It calls for our best. God gave God’s best for us (John 3:16). In turn we give our best for God.

D. Share one to three examples of your youth group, friends, congregation, or you personally being the church by sharing Christ’s love.

III. The priesthood is a call to be the hands of Christ.

A. In Mainz, Germany, a beautiful statue of Christ stood with hands outstretched in this fashion (demonstrate by holding hands out front in a bidding fashion). During the heavy
bombing of World War II, the hands of the statue were broken off. Following the war, a sculptor was hired to repair the statue, but the church members decided not to replace the hands. Instead they put a small plaque at the base of the statue reading, "Christ has no hands but yours."

B. You are called to be the hands of Christ, sharing the forgiving and reconciling love that God has in store for the world.

1. You have the opportunity to make your lives modern-day translations of the gospel and examples of the ministry of Jesus Christ.
2. Go and be the hands of Christ. Engage in Christian love and action. Be good examples of a Christlike life in your daily living.
3. Offer examples of ways and places to share Christ's love for others.
   a. Personal relationships: in school, at home, with friends, with persons in need, with the forgotten and left out
   b. Community projects: food banks, Students Against Drunk Drivers (name local efforts)
   c. School activities: projects that contribute to the common good, standing up for what's right
   d. Church-sponsored activities: youth group, worship, Sunday school, Bible studies, ministries to shut-ins, mission projects

C. Each one of us has a personal mission that cannot be transferred to any other person.

1. God gives you gifts and talents to represent Christ's love in ways that only you can do where you are, among the people you know (1 Pet. 4:10).
2. In each new generation, God calls forth leaders. "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? Who will be our messenger?' I answered, 'I will go! Send me'" (Isa. 6:8-9, TEV). Christ is counting on you to carry on his ministry. What is your response?

At the close of the talk, the table groups may begin discussion using the two-page reflection guide that follows. Permission is granted to make one copy per participant.
TALK #14: PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS

Christ is counting on you to play an active part in the priesthood of all believers.

1. What thoughts surface as I think about the role of a priest and my being the hands of Christ in my home, church, community, and school?

2. Where do I feel Christ is calling me to represent his love back home as I think about returning?

3. What do I need in order to put my faith into action at these points of concern?
TALK #14: PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS

Scripture References

Hebrews 7:23-25
John 1:29
2 Corinthians 5:17
1 Peter 2:4-5, 9-10
1 Corinthians 12:14-16
1 Peter 4:10
John 13:2-5
John 3:16
Isaiah 6:8-9