

# Women's Ministry Resources



My Father's house has many rooms;  
if that were not so, would I have told you that  
I am going there to prepare a place for you?

— John 14:2 (NIV)



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# Education Programs



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## **Education Programs**

# October 2019 – Hygge – A Cozy Home

Español

October 1, 2019 By [Major Betty Anderson](#) 0 comments



## Scripture



“When God’s people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality” (Romans 12:13 NLT). “Share with God’s people who are in need. Welcome others into your homes” (Romans 12:13 NIRV).

## **What is *Hygge*?**

Our education program considers the beauty and traditions of Scandinavian, Nordic and Baltic homes and culture. The word "*Hygge*" [hooga] is a Danish and Norwegian word, which is used to describe the importance of creating an environment of peace, contentment, warmth and welcome. In America, we get that feeling when we come home after a long trip and say, "Ah, home, sweet home!" We have to be intentional about creating a place of calm, sweetness, refreshment, peace and joy both for the body and for the soul. *Hygge* must be a deep longing in our hearts for release and renewal. Paul must have thought so too because he instructed all who lived in Rome to practice hospitality by welcoming others into their homes. Whether the home is tiny or large is not important. It's how you create a space for people to slow down and let the worry of the world go for a little while. Invite others into this kind of space and you will be blessing them with calming sweetness for their mind and soul.

Commissioner Nancy Moretz writes: "I grew up in a very humble home. My parents struggled to make ends meet. They experienced the Great Depression as teenagers, yet they acquired a kind of resilience that carried them through their own personal needs and family challenges. We didn't always have lots of groceries on hand, but there was always a tea bag or a small pot of coffee ready to cook on the stove. I recall Dad saying to me, 'If you have room in your heart, you have room in your home.' When my husband and I were appointed to the Times Square, New York Corps as young lieutenants, Dad reminded us, 'Keep the coffee pot on. People will come. It's a caring, loving, hospitality kind of evangelism.' It might be why Jesus loved so much the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus. I think that Jesus understood that we need *Hygge* because He invited us to 'Come to Me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens and I will give you rest' (Matthew 11:28)."

## **Norway**

Major Betty Anderson writes about Norway, a country of welcome and peace: "The highly revered Nobel Peace Prize is awarded in Norway, and their Independence Day Parade is one of peace and family and joy rather than a demonstration of military power. John in The Revelation speaks about 'the healing of the nations' (Rev. 22:2). At home, in our cities, in our nations, in our world—the Lord is the Prince of our peace and will heal. Norway has always maintained a traditional policy of neutrality but were forced it into war when the Nazis invaded the country on April 9, 1940. For five long years the Nazis occupied Norway and imposed many restrictions and demands. Families lived in fear; their homes were regularly searched. When the war ended and the Nazis left, everyone dug up their precious Norwegian banners and went into the streets where they formed a parade of joy and thanksgiving, carrying their symbols of freedom and love of peace and home. As peace is important in Norway, so should it be important for us to create an atmosphere of peace within our home."

## **A Warm Scandinavian Home**

At the beginning of October in Scandinavia, sunlight diminishes with fewer daylight hours. Residents of these countries—Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Norway—experience shorter hours and days. They have many windows to bring the natural light in and small crystal pendants hanging in the center of them to capture the light. But even in these darker days, when you enter a home in Scandinavia you will see a wooden carving with the hand painted word, *Velkommen*. Yes, all are welcome and all are greeted! The aroma of a Swedish cup of coffee is a welcoming and warming sign. There is always time for coffee! A *Hygge* home celebrates friends as a priority and sets aside time to invite them in for “coffee and ...” This fellowship can take place in the kitchen, dining room or living room.

Christmas time, Jul, is an amazing time in Scandinavia with lots of traditions—cookie baking, visiting and celebrating with family and friends. The candle light, the brightness of the snow on the tall evergreens, the ice on the fjords, the Northern lights on display in the Arctic speak of the sure and certain truth that “the Light of the world has come.”

Sweden celebrates the traditional Lucia Fest. The story of Lucia began in Italy where she was born into a wealthy family. Her name was derived from the Latin word for light, *Lux*. A devoted Christian, Lucia dedicated her life to God. She was committed to sharing the Light of the world and distributing her wealth among the poor. When her mother urged her to marry a pagan from a wealthy family, Lucia refused her suitor. When asked to sacrifice to idols she replied, “I know no other God but my Father in Heaven and no other Savior than Jesus Christ.” The unsympathetic suitor had Lucia brought to trial where she was condemned to death. She was martyred on December 13, 304 AD.

The Vikings celebrated Lucia Day on December 13, winter’s shortest day and longest night. Daylight gradually returned to conquer the long dark days. Today, the oldest daughter in the family portrays Lucia by wearing a gown of white with a red ribbon around her waist. On her head she wears a crown of lighted candles set in a wreath of evergreens. She carries a decorated tray filled with homemade goodies—Lussekatter, Pepparkakor, Spritz—and a pot of steaming coffee. Outside each bedroom door she sings the familiar melody “Santa Lucia” and then enters the room with “*Kaffe pa sangen*.” Santa Lucia represents courageous Christian testimony and a radiant, uncompromising faith.

### **Prayer for Our Homes**

Take a few moments to pray specifically for the homes and families of the women present.

### **Share**

- 1 How have you experienced *Hygge* in your own home or in someone else’s home?
- 2 Is *Hygge* practiced in your culture?
- 3 Pray together asking God to help you create a special environment in your home for family or friends.

- 4 Read *The Salvation Army Yearbook and* note the number of corps and services the Army provides in Nordic territories and pray for them.

### Closing Thoughts

Scandinavians are wonderful people. The Nordic countries are amazing places with rich cultures. They have royal families with kings and queens. They love all that is natural and bright. They eat well—foods like fish, beef, chicken, yogurt, cheese, salads, berries, vegetables and lovely open face sandwiches. They value children and peace, sports and the Olympics. They teach us, “If you have room in your heart, you will have room in your home” – *Hygge*.

**Benediction** (The Songbook of The Salvation Army #1035/ Tune #7)

O Father, let Thy love remain,

O Son, may I Thy likeness gain.

O Spirit stay to comfort me,

O triune God, praise be to Thee. Amen

### Game

Quiz – Scandinavia, Nordic and Baltic Countries

- 1 This country is known as “the land of the Midnight Sun” and is the northern most country in Europe. **(Norway)**
- 2 The capitol of this country is Helsinki. **(Finland)**
- 3 The capitol of this country is Reykjavik. **(Iceland)**
- 4 The Volvo and SAAB automobiles come from here. **(Sweden)**
- 5 Artic reindeer and the most families who are reindeer herders live here. **(Norway)**
- 6 You will find lots of “Moose Crossing” signs in this country. **(Sweden)**
- 7 Lego toys were created here. **(Denmark)**
- 8 The pacemaker and the computer mouse come from here. **(Sweden)**
- 9 In this country, a flag is flown outside when it is your birthday. **(Denmark)**
- 10 In this country’s polar region, the sun shines for only three hours or less each day in winter. **(Norway)**

### Let’s Sing! Song Suggestions

- 1 “God is Good, All the Time” – This is a happy song by Don Moen, set to a contemporary Viking style rhythm and is lots of fun to sing. It can be found on [YouTube](#)<sup>®</sup>.
- 2 “Peace, Perfect Peace,” written by Erik Leidzén, can be found in several Salvation Army YouTube presentations. It is published in *The Salvation Army Songs of Faith*, #87. Erik Leidzén was born in 1894 in Sweden. An outstanding musician, composer, teacher and bandmaster, he played in both the Danish and Swedish Staff Bands and has had a great influence on Salvation Army music.
- 3 “His Love Remains the Same,” by Generals John Larsson and John Gowans, was written as a part of the musical “Hosea.” The music of Gowans and Larsson stir the heart and also provide that sense of *Hygge*—inviting us all in to a place of spiritual comfort and warmth. “His Love Remains the Same” is published in *The Salvation Army Songs of Faith*.
- 4 Finlandia – “Be Still My Soul” with music by Jean Sibelius and words by Katharina Von Schlegel is published in *The Salvation Army Young People’s Songs*, copyright 1951. The tune is known worldwide and has been a blessing through many generations. It provides a calming sense and helps us to breathe easier when the weight of the world is upon us. You can find a number of versions of this song on [YouTube](#).

“A Swedish Cup of Coffee”—words written by Colonel Edward Fritz

Tune: “There’s Nothing Like An Army Cup of Tea” (Larsson/Gowans)

There’s a joy for all in going to the Army

At Twaan we can sing and clap and pray

But the truth you ought to know is the reason that I go,

It’s to taste again that Swedish cup of coffee!

*Oh there’s nothing like a Swedish cup of coffee,*

*Oh there’s nothing like a Swedish cup of coffee!*

*For the brew is piping hot*

*Mit the egg shells in de pot.*

*Oh, there’s nothing like a Swedish cup of coffee.*

When to Heaven's gate I come to meet my Maker,

And He welcomes me to stop and rest a spell.

I expect that He will ask,

"Cream and sugar?" and He'll pass

A steaming, hearty Swedish cup of coffee!

### **Craft Time - Flettede JuleKurver - Woven Christmas Heart Baskets**

Many people in Scandinavia make paper heart baskets to hang on the Christmas tree. The baskets are often filled with candy and employ the national colors of the country. You can find a tutorial on making these baskets on [Pinterest](#). Type "Swedish Woven Heart Paper Craft" in the search engine.

### **Recipes to Share**

#### **Norwegian Fruit Soup (may be served warm or cold) - From Major Anderson's aunt, Tante Emma**

3 lbs. of peeled diced apples cut in half

1 - 7 oz box of Sunsweet pitted diced prunes

1 - 7 oz box of raisins

1 - 29 oz can of sliced peaches in natural juice—cut in half

1 - 29 oz can of sliced pears in natural juice —cut in half

1 bag of frozen sliced strawberries

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup quick cooking tapioca

16 oz can "All Natural Simply Mixed Berry Juice Drink"

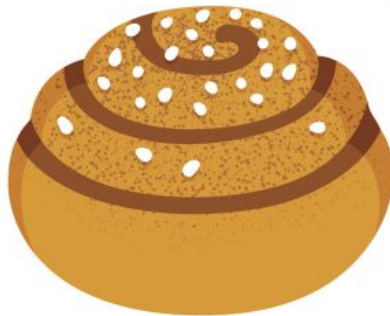
In a 5-quart pan, combine apples, raisins and prunes. Add water to cover  $\frac{3}{4}$  full. Cook until apples are almost done. Add  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup tapioca, a little at a time while stirring. Stir until it begins to boil. After it has cooled, add juice and canned fruit. Serve warm or cold.



# SWEDISH SWEETS



CHOKLABOLL



KANELBULLE



PEPPARKAKOR



SEMLA



LUSSEKATT



DAMMSUGARE  
(PUNSCHRULLE)

**Pepparkakor (Swedish Ginger Cookies) – From the kitchen of Lt. Colonel Ruth Avery**

*Sift together and set aside:*

1 ½ cups sifted flour

1 teaspoon baking soda

1 ½ teaspoon ginger

1 teaspoon cinnamon

¼ teaspoon cloves

*Cream together:*

½ cup butter

¾ cup sugar

Add gradually, beating thoroughly after each addition

1 egg, well beaten

1 ½ tsp dark corn syrup

Blend in dry ingredients in fourths and mix thoroughly. Chill for several hours.

Remove some of the chilled dough and place on a lightly floured surface. Roll out about 1/16 inch thick. Cut with lightly floured cookie cutters into various shapes. Transfer cookies to cookie sheet. Repeat with remaining chilled dough.

Bake at 375 degrees F – 6-8 minutes.

Carefully remove cookies to cooling racks to cool completely. Makes about 7 dozen

### **Norwegian Waffles – From the kitchen of Agathe Kristiansen**

Shared by Majors Ken and Shirley Kristiansen

4 eggs

1 ¼ cup sugar

2 cups flour

2 teaspoons baking powder

½ teaspoon baking soda

1 pint sour cream

1 teaspoon cardamom

Combine baking soda in sour cream. Beat eggs and sugar and then add sour cream mixture. Add flour, baking powder and cardamom. Stir in melted butter mixture using a whisk or hand mixer. Bake on waffle iron.

If time is short- you can find many of these food items already prepared at Ikea or the International aisle of many grocery stores.

\*\*This program was co-authored by Commissioner Nancy Moretz



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## Education Programs

# November 2019 – A Home Filled with Gratitude

Español

November 1, 2019   By [Captain Lori Brown](#)   0 comments



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Biblical gratitude is at the core of what it means to faithfully walk with Christ.

**Decorations**

Place a colorful fall runner or a placemat in the center of the table. Use a small basket with various colored apples as a centerpiece and scatter artificial fall leaves around it.

### **Refreshments**

Serve pumpkin bread, apple cider and apple slices with caramel sauce.

### **Gratitude Activity**

Give each woman a piece of paper and ask her write something about herself for which she is grateful. For example: I am grateful that my family immigrated to America. Encourage the women to answer honestly with information unique to them. Collect the papers, number them and place in a small basket. Read the statements and ask the group to write the name of the woman they think wrote the information. Discuss what they learned about the other women. Give a small prize to the one with the most correct answers.

### **Craft - Gratitude Journals**

Prior to the meeting, purchase plain composition notebooks at the dollar store for each woman. You will also need materials to cover the books. Options might be colored duct tape, fabric (cut and measured in advance), heavy wrapping paper, sharpie markers, mailing labels with Scripture verses about gratitude. Invite each woman to cover and decorate her notebook. Instruct the women to record in the notebook something each day for which they are thankful. An alternate idea is to make a journal rather than covering composition notebooks. You can find instruction on making a journal at the following website:

<http://www.instructables.com/id/Journal-cardboard-duct-tape/>

### **Gratitude Jars**

Provide each woman with a quart size jar, sharpie markers, burlap, ribbon or twine, scrapbook paper, and labels with appropriate Scripture verses. The idea is to decorate their jars, take them home, and place in a prominent place for the entire family to record gratitude thoughts all year long. Their responses can be shared weekly or monthly. The following website has a video describing the jars: [YouTube](#)

### **Gratitude Banner**

The following is an option for a family activity. Make colorful pennants or strips of paper with the beginning words "I'm thankful for ...". Each family member should be encouraged to write on the pennants something for which they are thankful. Attach the pennants to a length of rope, string or ribbon as a reminder to be grateful. For video instructions check the following site:

<http://www.somewhatsimple.com/simple-thanksgiving-craft-gratitude-garland-free-download/>

## Grateful for Family and Friends

Often we take family and friends for granted. Ask everyone to think of a person not present for whom they are thankful. Have small cards, envelopes and stamps available. Invite the women to write a note of thanks to that person and send it in the mail. Encourage them to include a scripture verse. Example scriptures: 1 Thessalonians 5:18; Ephesians 5:19–20; Psalm 136:26; Philippians 4:6-7; Psalm 28:7; 2 Corinthians 9:15; 1 Corinthians 15:57.

## Sharing our Thanks

Invite the women to share reports of kindness others have done for them that made them grateful—fixed a meal for their family when they were sick, got their mail while they were on vacation, asked how they were feeling, smiled at them when they were feeling down. Challenge the women to do something helpful for someone each day this week.

## Learning Gratitude

When my children were younger, they went through a time when they expected to get everything they saw. Sometimes they received what they asked for, but often we would say “no.” One time, my daughter cried and said, “But Mommy, if you love me you will give me what I want!” She needed to be reminded to be grateful for what she already had. For a small child this can be a challenge.

It can be a challenge in our Christian walk as well. We may be tempted to pray, “But God, if you love me, you will give me what I am asking for.” We think we know what we need and when we need it, whether it’s an answer to prayer, something for our children, a financial need to be met, or a relationship issue. We are often quick to forget how God has always provided for us in the past and that He knows what’s best for us. When He says no, it’s because the requested thing was not good for us or in line with His will for our lives.

If I had caved in when my daughter threw her temper tantrum because she didn’t get what she wanted when she wanted it, she would never learn to be grateful for all she did have. She learned to have an attitude of gratitude, and our home was happier as a result. How much more do we need to express our gratitude to our Father in heaven who provides all that we need just when we need it.

Psalm 100 is a Psalm of thanksgiving. *(Print and read this text in unison or as a litany, which can be found at ([https://www.jubilate.co.uk/liturgy/psalm\\_100\\_call\\_to\\_worship](https://www.jubilate.co.uk/liturgy/psalm_100_call_to_worship).)* We are reminded that there must be both a reason and an attitude behind our gratitude. It’s not just to get what we want or think we need, and it’s not just saying “thank you.” The reason behind our gratitude must always center on God. He is the creator of everything good, including us and because He loves us. Our attitude should be one of gladness and joy, not obligation and doom. If we make it a daily practice to give thanks, we will see how God constantly provides for our needs and we will become women of gratitude whose homes reflect that right attitude.

**Education Programs**

December 2019 – Christmas Customs Around the World

Español

December 1, 2019   By [Major Constance Higgins](#)   0 comments



**Decorations**

Display a Christmas tree decorated with flags from different countries.

**Refreshments – Christmas Cookie Recipes from Around the World**

Invite the women to bring a sample of their favorite Christmas cookie or dessert and share the recipe. The website [www.Christmas-Cookies.com](http://www.Christmas-Cookies.com) offers recipes of cookies from around the world. Once on the site, click on the gingerbread man at the top and scroll to the bottom. [Click](#) on “around the world.” If time allows, break the women into groups and have them try some of the recipes as part of your gathering.

### **Craft – Cookie-Cutter Ornaments & Cookies**

Cookie-cutter ornaments make great sentimental gifts. Use inexpensive aluminum cookie cutters and patterned papers or photos copied onto card stock. Trace around the cutter and cut out. Dab white craft glue along cutter’s edge. Press paper in place and let dry. Thread a narrow ribbon through a hole poked between the paper and cutter. Slip a bead over the ribbon’s ends and knot. Check Pinterest for images and further instructions.

### [Food Network](#)

### [Sugar Cookie Recipe](#)

### **Traditions and Customs Around the World**

Invite the women to share their Christmas traditions and customs.

The following are some traditions and customs from around the world:

- For the past 40 years, the town of Gävle in Sweden has erected a giant goat made of straw to mark the beginning of the holiday season.
- In Caracas, Venezuela roads are closed to motor traffic by 8 am from December 16 to December 24. People go to early morning mass on roller skates.
- Christmas crackers (cardboard tubes wrapped in decorative paper twisted at the end) are popular in the United Kingdom and Commonwealth countries. When two people pull on an end, it splits with a bang, and whoever holds the larger end wins a party favor.
- In the Czech Republic, on Christmas Day, single people throw a shoe over their shoulder. If the shoe lands with the toe pointing to the door, they will be married soon.
- Families in Finland usually visit the graves of their ancestors and relatives on Christmas Eve and light candles in memory of the deceased. Also, it is customary to enjoy a sauna on Christmas Eve before Santa’s visit. According to the ancient custom, this ritual cleanses the body and mind.
- In the Spanish culture, the holiday season begins in November at Thanksgiving and keeps going through January 6<sup>th</sup>—Three Kings Day or Epiphany. Epiphany is a Christian Holy Day celebrating the Magi’s visit to the Christ child.
- Jamaicans dress in elaborate costumes and celebrate Christmas with parades and “*Junkanoo*” *Junkanoo* is an African dance. The festival, which occurs on Boxing Day (the day



after Christmas) may have begun as early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

- Children in Holland receive presents from Sinterklaas on December 5, not Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. If they leave carrots for *Sinterklaas's* horse, he'll leave sweets for the children.
- Children in Japan receive their Christmas presents on their pillow during Christmas night. A traditional Christmas meal in Japan is fried chicken.
- In Russia, Christmas is celebrated on January 7<sup>th</sup> and *Babouschka* brings gifts to children. *Babouschka*, meaning old woman or grandmother in Russian, is based on the story of the woman who didn't give a gift to the baby Jesus. So, to repent, she gives gifts to children.
- In Germany, it is traditional for children to decorate their Christmas lists with pictures and leave them on the windowsill overnight. The *Christkind* ("Christ-child") delivers gifts at Christmas. It is also a tradition to leave a shoe or boot outside the front door on December 5<sup>th</sup> so that *Sinterklaas* will put small presents in their shoes for the following morning (Saint Nicholas Day).
- Italian families celebrate Christmas Eve with the Feast of the Seven Fishes and eat lentils during the holiday season to ensure luck and wealth for the following year. Children in Italy receive gifts from *La Befana*, an old woman who delivers gifts to children in a similar way to St. Nicholas or Santa Claus.

### **Christmas Traditions in Our Homes**

It has become the tradition in our house to decorate our house for Christmas on Thanksgiving weekend. All the totes are brought down from the storage closet and so begins the unpacking of our treasures. After the tree is decorated and other symbols of the season are scattered around the house, we open up the tote that contains our collection of nativity sets. Our Willow Tree set remains on the mantel all through the year. The small nativities are displayed around the living room with the largest one on the fireplace hearth. This one has sentimental value because it was given to us by my mother-in-law, who had it made for us 30 years ago. My husband is in charge of unwrapping each piece and placing it just right with the baby Jesus as the focal point. Although each nativity set is unique, it reminds us of the same amazing story: a Baby was born into the world who brought salvation to us all.



We read in Isaiah 9:6, "For a child is born to us, a Son is given to us. The government will rest on His shoulders. And He will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

What a great reminder for us. This was a Child born to ordinary people but He was destined for greatness. Our traditions and customs are an important part of us because they keep us

grounded and connected to our family and our culture. But most important among these traditions is our celebration of this newborn King!

About author



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## **Education Programs**

# January 2020 – Human Trafficking Awareness Month

Español

January 1, 2020 By [Major Kellie Peabody](#) 0 comments



## **January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month.**

*Photo Credit: Jennifer Diaz, Bangladesh*

### **Scripture**

Mark 12:30, 31

## Decorations

Print stories and photos from the Others—Trade for Hope Facebook and Website pages. Others Trade for Hope: <https://www.tradeforhope.com>.

[Others Facebook Page](#)

## Activities

Host an Others Party in a Box (contact information: [April.foster@use.salvationarmy.org](mailto:April.foster@use.salvationarmy.org)) Included in this kit are: decoration tips, items to be purchased to support the women and men who are working for a better life, stories of hope and details on how to run an Others Party.

## Refreshments

Serve Fair Trade chocolates, fruit and nut bar, cookie mixes, oat and grain bars, coffee and tea. Explain why you are serving these items. Fair Trade is a social movement whose goal is to help producers in developing countries achieve better trading conditions and to promote sustainable farming. Additional information about Fair Trade food can be found on the Internet.

## Human Trafficking Awareness Month

What is Human Trafficking? It is modern-day slavery that involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to obtain some type of labor or commercial sex act. Human trafficking is a hidden crime as victims rarely come forward to seek help because of language barriers, fear of the traffickers and/or fear of law enforcement.

Traffickers look for people who are susceptible for a variety of reasons, including psychological or emotional vulnerability, economic hardship, lack of a social safety net, natural disasters, or political instability. The trauma caused by the traffickers can be so great that many may not identify themselves as victims or ask for help, even in highly public settings.

## Warning Signs

Signs of physical abuse • Deprived of food, water or medical care • Restricted communication • Too many occupants in one residence • Individuals are rarely seen outside of the residence • Unable to communicate • Shows evidence of intimidation or fear • Not allowed to socialize or attend religious services • Always accompanied when outside the residence • Outside locks on doors and windows to keep people in • Lacks ID/documentation

## Questions to Ask

If you suspect that someone is a victim of human trafficking the following questions are helpful in making that determination:

Can you leave your job if you want to • Can you come and go as you please? • Have you or your family been threatened? • What are your working and living conditions like? • Where do you sleep and eat? • Do you have to ask permission to eat, sleep, go to the bathroom? • Are there locks on your doors or windows so you cannot get out? • Has your identification been taken away from you? • Does someone prohibit you from socializing?

## **What Can We Do?**

If you suspect someone is the victim of human trafficking, call the National Human Trafficking Resource Center: 1-888-373-7888 (a 24-hour, toll free crisis line). As this can be so overwhelming, remember to bring it to God.

## **Prayer for Victims**

Check the following prayer for Victims of Human Trafficking 2016 by Samson Nangole (Kenya East)

[https://s3.amazonaws.com/cache.salvationarmy.org/d0c6c9f5-50bb-48c6-91d4-2931cd6fb13d\\_AHT2016-Prayer.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/cache.salvationarmy.org/d0c6c9f5-50bb-48c6-91d4-2931cd6fb13d_AHT2016-Prayer.pdf)

## **Resources:**

To find posters, detailed information, statistics and stories please check out these sites:

- <http://www.salvationarmy.org/ihq/antitrafficking>
- <http://faastinternational.org/#/toolkits>
- <https://polarisproject.org/resources>
- <https://sajustice.us/>
- <https://traffickfree.com>
- <https://enditmovement.com>
- <https://fightnewdrug.com>
- <https://www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign>
- <https://humantraffickinghotline.org>

## **Who Is My Neighbor?**

“And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.’ The second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ No other commandment is greater than these” (Mark 12:30–32).

It is important to have a close, deep, personal relationship with the Lord. The verse from Mark says to give all that we are—heart, soul, mind and strength—to our relationship with Him. This is the greatest commandment. As we consider our relationship with the Lord we are challenged with the second portion of this commandment, “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

When we look at human trafficking, we need to ask, “who then is our neighbor?” It is easy to think that it concerns someone far away on the other side of the world. We understand human trafficking happens in third world countries or faraway places. However, human trafficking is happening right under our noses. It is the college girl next door, the person at the nail salon, the gas attendant at the local gas station, the workers at the massage parlor, the women caught in pornography or at the local peep shows, the men and women cleaning houses next door, the girls on the streets, the foster child or runaway looking for a safe place.

In the story of Hagar in the Bible we hear of a maidservant who has been used to bring a child into the world for Abraham and Sarah. Hagar runs away while she is pregnant because of mistreatment by Sarah. As Hagar is leaving the only home she knows she has an encounter with God. “Thereafter, Hagar used another name to refer to the Lord, who had spoken to her. She said, “You are the God who sees me.” She also said, “Have I truly seen the One who sees me?” (Gen. 16:13). Hagar recognizes that God sees her. This is what love looks like.

I had an opportunity to go to Bangladesh and to visit Human Trafficking projects and brothels with Others—Trade for Hope. I found women who no longer wanted to be defined by their past. Instead they wanted to share how their lives were restored and renewed with pride and dignity. They wanted to be seen for who they were becoming. My heart was stirred with hope and joy.

We have an opportunity to show love by “seeing” others. I pray that we will ask the Lord to open our eyes to our neighbor. That God will show us how to love as He loves. We are called to see, to bring hope, to bring presence, and to bring Jesus. Help us Lord today.

*Photo Credit: Jennifer Diaz, Bangladesh*

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## **Education Programs**

# February 2020 – Turn Your Heart Lights On

Español

February 1, 2020 By [Major Candy Fritsch](#) 0 comments



Read Psalm 51:10 in the *New Living Translation* and *The Message*.

## **Introduction**

No one can survive without a working heart, so taking care of it is essential. Heart disease is one of the leading causes of death among women. Everyone is at risk, but everyone has the ability to prevent heart disease, which is also known as Coronary Heart Disease (CAD). Your

coronary arteries take the blood flow to your heart. When there is a blockage or narrowing of the arteries with plaque buildup, it makes it difficult to get the blood flow to your heart.

## True or False

- 1 If I'm thin, I don't need to worry about my heart. **(False)** There are many risk factors that cause heart disease. Weight is just one risk. There are many thin women who suffer from CAD.
- 2 If you are having a heart attack, you will always have chest pain. **(False)** Women often don't have chest pain symptoms. Some women have reported shortness of breath, nausea and vomiting, jaw pain, back pain, arm pain, indigestion, heartburn, lightheadedness and breaking out in a cold sweat. Know your body and don't ignore the signs.
- 3 Heart Attack and Cardiac Arrest are the same thing. **(False)** A heart attack is when there is a blockage in the arteries but the heart continues to beat. Cardiac arrest happens when there is an electrical malfunction in the rhythms of the heartbeat. This malfunction can make the heart beat too slowly, too fast or stop beating altogether.
- 4 Heart disease can be reversed. **(True)** You cannot go back and change the damage already done, but in most cases, you can prevent any further damage by removing the risk factors from your life. While you cannot change your genetics or eliminate congenital heart defects, these factors may be treated so they do not progress any further.
- 5 Children can be at risk for Heart Disease. **(True)** There are heart diseases that can affect a child such as: congenital heart disease, atherosclerosis, arrhythmias, Kawasaki disease, heart murmurs, pericarditis, rheumatic heart disease and viral infections.

## Some Risk Factors for Heart Disease

- Smoking
- Genetics
- High Cholesterol
- Age
- High Blood Pressure
- Poor Diet
- Inactivity
- Obesity
- Stress
- Diabetes



- Poor Hygiene

## **Take Control of Your Heart**

- Talk with your physician first
- Meet with a dietitian
- Change to a heart healthy diet
- Start an exercise regimen
- Join a smoking cessation program
- Learn how to control diabetes
- Improve cholesterol levels
- Control high blood pressure
- Manage stress

## **Decorations**

Cover tables with white cloths. Add pink and red cut-out hearts. Hang various sized hearts around the room. Give each woman a stuffed heart as they enter. Heart decorations can be purchased at most dollar stores.

## **Snacks**

Invite the women to bring a heart healthy snack to share with the group. Some suggestions are:

- Watermelon—cut into heart shapes
- Heart yogurt bites—place yogurt in heart ice trays, add cut up strawberry pieces and freeze overnight
- Cheese and fruit platter—cut into heart shapes
- Cookie stick—make sugar free heart cookies. Insert a lollypop stick in the center while baking

## **My Heart Matters Craft**

Supplies needed: small rocks, thin paintbrushes, metallic acrylic paint or sharpie markers, glue-gun, red card stock paper.

Invite the women to write the words of Psalm 51:10 on a red heart cut from cardstock. They can then glue their decorated rock in the middle of the heart. This is remind them that their heart, both physically and spiritually, matters to God.

## Possible Speakers

- Local Dietitian
- Visiting nurse
- Healthcare motivational speaker
- Personal fitness trainer
- A survivor of heart surgery

## Resources

- [American Heart Association gives away free educational material](#)
- [Nutrition.gov](#)
- [Nutrition Tools](#)

## Additional Scriptures

- Ezekiel 36:26
- 2 Corinthians 4:6
- 1 John 5:21
- Jeremiah 4:14
- Mark 7:15
- Ephesians 3:17

## Are You Making the Right Choice?

*Re-read Psalm 51:10 in the New Living Translation and The Message.*

The heart is an amazing organ. It keeps us alive physically and spiritually. In Psalms 51:10 the psalmist asks the Lord to create a pure heart in him and for it to remain clean. When I ask Him, God will give me a clean heart, but I choose how my heart will look at the end of the day.

About six months ago, I was diagnosed with uncontrolled diabetes. My doctor advised that the next step in treatment was insulin shots. As a nurse, I knew the right things to do and

what not to do. How in the world did I find myself in this situation? I knew all the dangers surrounding diabetes and how it affects all organs, including my heart. I could understand if I didn't have the education and resources. There was no excuse for my laxness other than that I became lazy, and ignored my health and the warning signs. I was living carelessly. I could see the numbers on my blood work creeping up, but I just went on as if I was okay. It didn't all happen at once. First, I stopped watching what I ate, then I quit walking, and before I knew it, I was indulging in all the wrong things. I knew I needed to take control, so I went back to the basics. I started on a journey to good health again. The doctor was amazed at the changes in my blood work. I am not where I need to be, but I'm not where I was. Every day I wake up and make a choice about my health.

Our spiritual lives are much like this. When we choose to allow Him, God gives us a clean heart. *The Message* version of Psalm 51:10 says "Soak me in your laundry, scrub me, give me a clean bill of health, a fresh start." I don't know about you, but sometimes my heart gets judgmental, tainted, broken or hard. All the things I have done to dirty up my clean heart eventually comes into the light. I can't hide them forever. I need to say, "Okay Lord I messed up, please help me try this over again." I need my heart renewed and purified by the fire of His Spirit. He washes me with the blood of Jesus and I am forgiven. He cleans my heart, but that doesn't mean I have permission to dirty it up again. Every day I need to make a choice to keep my heart clean.

**Prayer:** Father God, it amazes me how gracious and patient you are with us. Today Lord, we think about our heart and its condition. Beautiful things come from Your heart, and we desire these things. We know that our body is a temple and so we pray that our hearts physically and spiritually will be a reflection of who You are. May we wake up each day and make the right choices in our lives.

About author



Major Candy Fritsch

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## **Education Programs**

### March 2020 – Susan B. Anthony

[Español](#)

March 1, 2020   By [Major Kathleen Knickerbocker](#)   0 comments



## **Introduction**

Susan B. Anthony spent her life fighting for the rights of women. She refused to let women be known only as housewives and child bearers. She fought against men who said that women did not belong in the business world nor should they have a voice in politics. During the era in which Anthony lived and campaigned, women were looked down upon for speaking up. She fought to give them a voice.

Some areas of the world today continue to view women as inferior and treat them poorly. Even in the USA, some women are told when they can speak or eat, how to dress and what to do. That is why battered women shelters are necessary.

Susan B. Anthony succeeded in making sure that we as women have the right not only to vote but to be viewed as equals. *Ask one of the women to share further information about Anthony with the group. For information on her life, visit the local library or the following websites:*

<https://www.history.com/topics/womens-history/susan-b-anthony>.

<https://www.biography.com> (Search under her name for videos.)

<https://susanb.org/>

## Trivia Questions

- 1 Susan B. Anthony's parents didn't want her to play with toys or games because \_\_\_\_\_ ***They didn't want her distracted by unimportant things.***
- 2 How old was Susan when she learned to read and write? ***3 years old***
- 3 The Temperance movement wanted to help people with \_\_\_\_\_ ***Drinking problems***
- 4 What was the name of Susan's weekly newspaper? ***"The Revolution"***
- 5 How was Susan B. Anthony honored in 1979? ***They put her picture on one-dollar coin.***
- 6 Susan was born on February 15, \_\_\_\_\_. ***1820***
- 7 Susan's first occupation was a \_\_\_\_\_. ***Teacher***
- 8 Susan B. Anthony and Fredrick Douglass were \_\_\_\_\_. ***Abolitionists***
- 9 She joined the teacher's union to fight for \_\_\_\_\_. ***Equal pay for men and women***
- 10 Susan was arrested in 1872 for \_\_\_\_\_. ***Voting***

## Activities

Invite the director of the local battered women's shelter to talk to the women about how their program works. Invite the women to put together some baskets containing basic items that can be presented to the shelter. Inquire if there are any classes that the women could hold at the shelter to assist the residents. This could be cooking, sewing, reading or financial educational classes.

## Memento

Ask the women to bring a memento of a woman who has impacted them or helped them to be who they are today. Invite them to share the memento and tell about that woman.

## Refreshments

Serve “women and girls” deserts such as Little Debbie’s<sup>®</sup>, Sara Lee<sup>®</sup>, Marie Callendar’s<sup>®</sup>, Mrs. Smith’s pies<sup>®</sup>.



## Speak Up

We read in Proverbs 31:8-9, “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; ensure justice for those being crushed. Yes, speak up for the poor and helpless and see that they get justice.” King Lemuel, who wrote Proverbs 31, indicates that this is a message his mother taught him. His mother was like all other mothers. She wanted to give her son some good advice that would help him throughout his life. My mother loves to give advice, and I find myself giving my own daughters advice that I believe will help them.

The words of Proverbs 31:8–9 applies to us all today. It’s easy to sit back and say that we don’t want to get involved. However, God tells us to get involved and to help when needed. We read in 1 John 3:18, “Dear children, let’s not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions.” We are asked to share with others the talents and gifts that God has given us.

Susan B. Anthony lived out the verses of Proverbs 31:8–9 throughout her life. She did everything she could to be heard and to change things. She gave countless speeches, traveled to many cities and was even arrested, but she never strayed from her mission. Even after all that Susan had gone through for her cause, she said, “I have given my life and all I am to it, and now I want my last act to be to give it all I have.”

We all have the ability to help others and change the world around us. Susan B. Anthony said it this way: “The older I get, the greater power I seem to have to help the world; I am like a snowball—the further I am rolled the more I gain.” Our faith and experience helps us to grow and become a resource to help others through trials we may have gone through ourselves. Are we willing to commit our lives to the mission God has planned for us and never be deterred? Are we willing to do whatever we need to do to help those in need and to give a voice to those who feel lost and alone? Psalm 22 talks about how we might be surrounded on all sides, but God will be right there beside us in everything we go through if we are willing to trust Him.

Susan said, “Oh, if I could but live another century and see the fruition of all the work for women! There is so much yet to be done.” Even now, there is so much to be done for God’s Kingdom. Are we willing to be used by God to help get it done?

Article co-written by Major Kathleen Knickerbocker and Major Martha R. Wheeler

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## **Education Programs**

### April 2020 – National Stress Awareness month

[Español](#)

April 1, 2020   By [Lt. Allison Bethel](#)   0 comments



## **Introduction**

April is [National Stress Awareness month](#), which began in 1992 to draw attention to the health risks associated with stress and strategies for coping with it. Think of all the roles that women play in an average day. We are mothers, daughters, wives, friends, cooks, maids, chauffeurs, doctors and negotiators. No matter where we turn—home, the job, church—there is work to be done. As busy, multi-tasking women, our lives can be filled with stress.



## Program Ideas

- Have the women take a stress test and consider their main stressors. The Holmes–Rahe Life Stress Inventory can be found at: <https://www.stress.org/holmes-rahe-stress-inventory/>
- Talk about the physical, emotional and behavioral effects of stress. Invite a physician or nurse to share their knowledge and experience on this topic. Some effects of stress are listed below. More information is available at [mayoclinic.org](http://mayoclinic.org) or [stress.org](http://stress.org).
- Stress affects one’s body, emotions and behavior.
- Physical signs of stress include headache, muscle tension, chest pain, tiredness, digestive issues and insomnia. If stress continues for a long period of time, it can lead to high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes.
- Emotional signs of stress include anxiety, irritability, feeling overwhelmed, a lack of motivation and depression.
- Behavioral signs of stress include over or under-eating, responding to situations rashly, withdrawing from friends and family and a decrease in activity level.
- Share with the women these common strategies for reducing and relieving stress. A reinforcing verse of Scripture is listed beside each strategy.
- Get healthy: A healthy diet, regular exercise and a good night’s sleep prepare your body for stress and help reduce it. 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20.
- Live in the present: Don’t dwell on the past or fret about the future. Focus on the present. Matthew 6:34.
- Stay connected to God: Throughout the day, whether you’re doing dishes, folding laundry, handling a crisis at work, or leading children’s church, keep your heart and mind focused on God. Colossians 3:17.
- Take some time out: Take a few minutes each day to meditate on the Lord and listen to Him. Take some time each week to do something you enjoy. Psalm 46:10.
- Have women brainstorm ways to reduce or relieve stress in their own lives. What works for them? Make sure to keep it practical and fun. For example: a coffee date with Jesus, dinner with friends, hiking, journaling, painting, or playing music. Challenge the women to make time this week to do at least one of the stress-relievers they listed.

## Reinforcement Activity: Create a prayer or quiet time journal

- Supplies Needed: 1 sketchpad for each woman, 1 piece of cardstock, glue sticks, markers, colored pencils.
- Directions: 1. Select a sketchpad. 2. Glue a piece of cardstock onto the cover of the sketchpad. 3. Design your cover, using the colored pencils and markers. 4. Decorate the inside pages as desired. 5. After your journal is finished, spend a few minutes with the Lord and make your first entry.

## Be Still



“Be still and know that I am God!” (Psalm 46:10)

Women are the ultimate marathoners. From the time we wake up in the morning until the time we go to sleep, we are running. We are constantly concerned with not just our own needs, but also those of our spouses, children, grandchildren, parents and even friends. We may feel as if we carry the weight of the world on our shoulders. Amid the busyness and stress of our lives, how can we possibly find time to be still before God?

I used to imagine a perfect time and place where I could have my perfect quiet time with God. I found myself frustrated because that fantasy was not reality; my perfect time and place were interrupted by work obligations, other people’s personal crises and my own family’s needs. I found myself again asking, “How can I be still amid the chaos of my everyday life?”

We can learn a lot from the familiar story of Martha and Mary. When Jesus came to their house Martha was busy with all the preparations and work to do for the visit. Mary, on the other hand, sat at Jesus feet, listening intently. Martha, frustrated with her sister said, “Lord, tell her to help me.” Jesus said to her, “There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her” (Luke 10:42).

There is no perfect time or perfect place for our perfect quiet time with God. The work will never end, but we can choose what is best. Despite the chaos, we can choose to sit at Jesus’ feet. We can choose to spend time with the Lord first. Then the dinner will get cooked, the bills will get paid and the house will get cleaned. The perfect time is now. The perfect place is here. Be still and know that He is God!

About author

Lt. Allison Bethel



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## **Education Programs**

# May 2020 – National Skin Cancer Awareness Month

Español

May 1, 2020   By [Captain Wanessa Moore](#)   0 comments



**Scripture:** Proverbs 3:8 “Then you will have healing for your body and strength for your bones.”

## **Introduction**

May is [National Skin Cancer Awareness month](#), a great time for us to learn some preventative habits to protect our skin. According to the Skin Cancer Foundation, “1 in 5 Americans will develop skin cancer in the course of a lifetime” and “1 person dies of melanoma every hour.”

(<https://www.skincancer.org/skin-cancer-information/skin-cancer-facts>) Those numbers sound pretty scary, but fear not, today we will learn some of the many ways that you can save your own skin.

## Decoration Ideas

### A Day at the Beach

Use an assortment of “sun-blocking” items as a centerpiece, such as sunhats, sunglasses and sunblock, placed atop a beach towel. Set up beach umbrellas, towels and chairs, along with a beach ball and some seashells. Most of these items are probably available at local dollar stores.

## Refreshment Suggestion

### Eating Your Sunscreen

Plan on serving broccoli and dip as the main refreshment, with watermelon as the dessert and green tea as a drink. This may sound like an unusual refreshment, so explain the benefits of these food items:

**Broccoli** contains *sulforaphene*, an anti-cancer compound that can help not only to prevent, but also repair sun damage. Other options include Brussels sprouts, cabbage and cauliflower.

**Watermelon** contains *Lycopene*, a carotinoid pigment that will protect your skin as it protects certain fruits that grow in direct sun light. Other options include tomatoes, papaya and red carrots.

**Green Tea** contains *polyphenols*. These are micronutrients that are packed with antioxidants that fight free radicals that age your skin prematurely. Use honey instead of sugar to sweeten the tea, as sugar and processed foods undo all the hard work of these super foods.

## Activity/Game

### I Have Your Back

This is a twist on the old “make up” game. Have one woman stand behind the other, both facing the audience. Blindfold the woman standing in the back. Have her put her arms through the arms of the woman in front and apply sunscreen on the face of the women in the front. Set a timer and have the audience vote on who did a better job.

### You’re Toast

Provide several items that can be used as protection from the harmful effects of the sun. They may include hats, sunglasses, shawls, scarfs, sweaters, umbrellas, towels and of course,

sunblock. Using a timer, give the women one minute to cover themselves as best (and fast) as they can. Have the audience vote if the women are “covered” or “toast.”

## **Be on the Know**

We all remember to be concerned about the sun when we out on a special occasion such as a picnic, a day at the beach or pool or a visit to the park or zoo. But are we doing everything we should in our day-to-lives?

Here are a few things you can do to keep your skin safe:

Sunscreen: daily use of SPF 15 or higher can reduce your chances of melanoma by 50%. The CDC recommends reapplying sunscreen every two hours and the Skin Cancer Foundation recommends using 1 ounce (2 tablespoons) for the whole body.

Shade: If at all possible, try to stay in the shade, especially between 10 am and 4 pm.

Cover up: Clothing, hats and sunglasses are a great way to protect your skin. Hats with a wide brim work best.

Don't forget your lips: Consider using a SPF lip balm.

Do NOT burn: Don't take chances. The risk of melanoma doubles if you have had more than five sunburns.

See your doctor: see your physician for a skin exam once a year and examine your own skin every month, being careful to note any changes, such as new moles or stains.

## **The Skin You Are In**

Being “at home in your own skin” is much more than feeling pretty. We take care of our homes by keeping them clean and in good working condition. The same should be true of our skin. Let's look at our skin, not from a point of view of vanity, but as a home. A home ready for a very special visitor, the Holy Spirit.

Taking care for our skin may seem like a lot of work. And you may question why we should be so careful. The obvious goal is to prevent skin cancer. But, as the apostle Paul reminds us, we have another reason for protecting our skins. He tells us “Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body” (1 Cor. 6:19, 20).

It has been said that the eyes are the windows into the soul, but our skin is just as efficient at revealing what is going on with us. A few years ago, I started seeing a dermatologist regularly when, after a lifetime of treating what I thought was eczema, I received a diagnosis of

psoriasis, an autoimmune disease. What it basically means is that whenever something is going on with my body, like stress, allergies or simply fighting a virus, my skin produces more skin cells than it needs. It is not a pretty sight, and it very hard to hide. Nonetheless, it is a visual reminder to care for my overall health. When the psoriasis flairs up, it is a reminder for me to slow down, to take a step back and evaluate what my body is trying to tell me. In doing that, I sometimes see small signs of the beginning of a cold or flu, but more often than not, I see built up stress that is causing the problem. In those moments, I turn to the scripture we just read and pray that the Lord will help me remember that I belong to Him. As a result, scripture comes alive: “Then you will have healing for your body and strength for your bones” (Prov. 3:8).

We don't need to be “girly girls” in order to care for our skin and our bodies. As Christian women we need to learn to love the skin we are in and to care for it accordingly. After all, it did not come cheaply! Christ has paid the ultimate price for us and it is our responsibility to give it the value it deserves.

### ***Let us pray***

Lord we ask You to make us ever aware of Your love and sacrifice that paid the price for our sin. Teach us to love the skin we are in and to care for it in a way that will bring glory to Your name. Help us to care for the body You have given us, to the best of our abilities, so that we can serve You and others for as long as possible, for Your Kingdom's sake. We love You and pray this in Jesus name, Amen.

About author



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## **Education Programs**

### June 2020 – Maintaining A Home

Español

June 1, 2020   By [Captain Sally Warren](#)   0 comments



## **Introduction**

Caring for wooden furniture and other wooden items is not a modern idea. Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus, was a carpenter. He made and repaired wooden tables and chairs and other items for the home. Jesus was most likely an excellent carpenter too, learning much from Joseph. Today we will learn about caring for our wooden furniture. These simple steps will revive our furniture and help us maintain our homes.

## Program Ideas

Old cabinets, tables or chairs can be dressed up with a fresh coat of wood polish or scratch repair. This will help restore damaged wood, hide any nicks or scratches and prolong the life of your wood furniture. Demonstrate this process on a piece of furniture in need of attention. Wearing gloves, dab a little liquid Old English Scratch Cover and Polish on a rag or paper towel and rub evenly onto the wooden item. Repeat for a deeper, richer color. For regular cleaning, wipe your wooden furniture with a damp cloth followed by a dry one to remove any remaining water.

When deciding where to place your furniture, keep in mind things that may be harmful to the wood. These include over-exposure to strong light, the room's humidity level and heat from vents, fireplaces, or space heaters. All these elements may be harmful over time and undo all your hard work of trying to maintain and keep your furniture looking its best.

## Tips for Caring for Wood

Check the following website for tips on caring for wood furniture.

<http://www.thefurnitureconnoisseur.com/furniture-care-tips/>

## Craft-Popsicle Coasters

Check out a step-by-step video on YouTube on how to make coasters using Popsicle sticks. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=08hzGxZrdeA>. You will need rubber gloves, Old English Scratch Cover and Polish, a dozen Popsicle sticks and a hot glue gun.

## Service Project

Spruce up the corps by cleaning the wood items: holiness table, altars, and pulpit. Pour some scratch repair or polish on a rag or paper towel and rub onto the wood. If there is fabric on the wooden piece, use painters tape to line and protect the fabric.

## Decorations

Place wooden doll furniture on a glass circle or doily for the centerpieces.

## Just One Simple Step

***Read Joshua 24:15***

The phrase, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord," can be found on wooden plaques in Christian bookstores or on Amazon.com. Many Christians hang these in their homes so visitors will know that their family has chosen to serve and follow the Lord



In the scripture reference above, Joshua urges God's chosen people to make a final choice about whom they are going to serve. These are the same people that Moses, with God's guidance, led out of the harsh grasp of slavery in Egypt. They are the ones who built and worshiped a golden calf while Moses was receiving the 10 commandments from God. In his old age Joshua makes a final plea to God's chosen people to put away the idols that their previous relatives bowed down to and to serve the one "true God" who had saved them and has remained true to His promises. The final decision that Joshua was trying to get each of them to make is the same decision we need to make. Whom will I serve? What or whom we choose to follow and serve is a choice no one can make for us. It is a choice each of us must make in our own hearts. Whom have you chosen to follow?

God has made it easy for us to choose Him. He asks you to take one simple step and believe in His Son Jesus. This path is not the easiest choice or the most popular in the world we live in. It requires us to live set apart from the world and by a different standard. Sometimes the things the world says are okay, the Bible and the Holy Spirit declare wrong.

Along the way you may get a little worn with a few scratches just like the wood we repaired today. Sometimes we feel that we are "too damaged" for God to "fix us." We need to have faith and not underestimate the power of God's deep love for us. What some consider "damaged goods," God considers priceless. Jesus' love is so great, that His blood was shed to cover all those imperfections, nicks and scratches. He not only will revive us but will make us new. All He asks from us is that we choose to serve and follow Him. Whom have you chosen? You may believe that Jesus exists, but have you chosen to serve Him and follow in His ways? Does your life and actions reflect Jesus or are you allowing yourself to be influenced by something or someone else? It's not too late to be restored, revived and to shine for Him.

**Prayer:** Lord, we pray today that the blood of Your Son Jesus will wash over us and repair our damaged souls. May Your cleansing power not only revive us, but make us into new creations. May we answer Joshua's plea and choose to serve and follow You alone, always and forever. Amen.

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## **Education Programs**

### July 2020 – Delight In The Lord

[Español](#)

July 1, 2020   By [Captain Holly Johnson](#)   0 comments



#### **Game – Ice Cream Quiz**

- Which Italian explorer returned to Italy with a recipe that resembled sherbet and is believed by historians to be the recipe that led to ice cream?

**Answer—Marco Polo. While in the Far East, Marco Polo received a recipe that resembled sherbet. He brought back this new treat to Italy. It is believed that this recipe is what evolved into ice cream.**

- How many licks does it take to finish an average ice cream cone?

**Answer—50**

- We've all experienced that feeling when we eat too much ice cream or eat it too fast and get a brain freeze, but what causes the splitting pain?

**Answers—When something cold touches the roof of your mouth on a hot day, it triggers a cold headache. The cause is a dilation of blood vessels in your head. The dilation may be caused by a nerve center located above the roof of your mouth. When this nerve center gets cold, it seems to overreact and tries to heat your brain.**

- What is the most popular topping to put on your ice cream?

**Answer—Chocolate syrup**

- What is an alternative, yet traditional name, for ice cream?

**Answer—Hokey Pokey. I bet you didn't guess that one! The name hokey pokey originated from early ice cream vendors who peddled their product shouting "ecco un poco," which translates to try a sample.**

## **Activities**

Invite the women to make ice cream in a Ziploc® freezer bag. You will need the following items:

½ cup milk (whole works best)

½ cup cream

½ tsp vanilla (artificial extract is fine)

2 tbs. honey or sugar or sugar substitute

1-quart size Ziploc® Bag

1-gallon size Ziploc® Bag

Ice cubes and salt or Ice Cream Rock Salt (4-6 TBS)

Check the Internet for directions or videos are available on YouTube®.

## Refreshment

Once the women have made their ice cream in a Ziploc bag, provide toppings to add to the ice cream. Provide sugar free options of fruit and nuts so there's something for everyone.

## Ice Cream Themed Bingo

Make ice cream flavor Bingo cards. Go to [www.myfreebingocards.com](http://www.myfreebingocards.com). This site allows you to print 30 free bingo cards and does all the work for you. Select as many ice cream flavors as will fit on the bingo card. Once you customize the cards, print and cut them out. You can use pennies or buttons to cover the spaces. The dollar store is a good place to purchase prizes.

## Decorations

Check the website: [www.Orientaltrading.com](http://www.Orientaltrading.com) for ice cream themed decorations.

## Delight In the Lord

Psalm 37:4 is my favorite Scripture verse in the Bible. "Take delight in the Lord, and He will give you your heart's desire." I have loved this verse since I was a child, long before I fully came to understand the true beauty behind it.

My dad used to take my sisters and me to a local ice cream stand called "Dairy Delight." When I first read and attempted to understand what delighting oneself in the Lord meant, I thought that it had to do with yummy treats and endless ice cream. I thought that if I prayed hard enough Jesus would give me goodies, treats, or whatever my little heart desired at that given moment. Oh, the silly things we think of when we are children.

The word "delight" is defined as "great pleasure," "happiness," "joy," "glee," or "excitement." Taking delight in the Lord challenges us to discover complete happiness, pleasure and our fulfillment in Him. There are so many empty things in today's society that fool us into thinking we are full or satisfied. Only true pleasure and fulfillment can be achieved when we delight and devote ourselves to Christ.

The second part of the verse says "... And He will give you your heart's desire." If we aren't careful, we can misinterpret this portion of the verse. Yes, we can find happiness and satisfaction by following Christ, but that doesn't mean we will get everything we want or expect, and it doesn't mean that we will be happy all the time. The journey with Christ, though rewarding, is not always easy.

Your heart's desire might be to get a new car or the newest or latest "*fill in the blank.*" Delighting ourselves in the Lord and receiving our hearts' desire does not guarantee earthly

possessions. If we truly delight ourselves in the Lord, our desires will begin to parallel the very desires that Christ has for our lives. Once we begin to do this, we can begin to experience contentment in whatever situation we may find ourselves.

The question to ponder is, "Are your deepest desires of this world, or are they what Christ desires for us?" May you delight yourself in the Lord and obtain fulfillment in the desires and plans that He has for you.

About author



Captain Holly Johnson

USA Eastern Territory



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## **Education Programs**

### August 2020 – Supporting our Caregivers

[Español](#)

August 1, 2020 By [Captain Laura DeMichael](#) 0 comments



### **Scripture:**

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“Jesus repeated the question: ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me?’ ‘Yes, Lord,’ Peter said, ‘You know I love You.’ ‘Then take care of my sheep,’ Jesus said.” (John 21:16)

## Introduction

In America there are approximately 44 million caregivers who care for a family member, friends or neighbor. Caregiving is a full-time job. This month, celebrate and honor a family caregiver who has devoted their time and energy to helping a loved one by conducting a Caregiver Awareness Day. It is a perfect opportunity to say thank you and to show appreciation for the difficult work they do. More information about National Family Caregivers Month can be found from the links below;

- [caregiveraction.org](http://caregiveraction.org)
- [alz.org](http://alz.org) National Alzheimer's Association
- <https://www.nhpco.org/about/hospice-care>
- [michaeljfox.org](http://michaeljfox.org) Parkinson's Support Network
- <https://www.strokeassociation.org/en/help-and-support/for-family-caregivers>

## Activities

One of the biggest challenges for a full time caregiver is carving out time for themselves. All patients and caregivers have differing levels of need and ability/mobility. The best thing is to connect with both the caregiver and their loved one. Ask what you can do to help and let them know by both word and deed that you support them.

## Visit with caregiver to find out their needs

Some need help with bills, insurance issues, denial and appeal paperwork for therapy and treatment, legal issues around guardianship and many other financial and recordkeeping issues. These needs are specialized and involve private and personal information that require the assistance of a close family member. However, someone with a financial or legal background who can help sort out the practical side of all the paperwork and records can be a big help.

## Offer to Read

Offer to read to, or otherwise assist, the disabled or elderly person with simple needs or tasks while the caregiver attends to the paperwork.

## Offer to do yard work, housework, or run errands for the caregiver

Make a coupon book of redeemable small jobs: Vacuum upstairs or power-wash patio, trim hedges. Again, ask the caregiver what would be helpful.

## Bring a Meal

Bringing a meal is a great expression of love and concern. An alternate idea is to prepare and package all the ingredients necessary for a meal in Ziploc bags along with the instructions on how to cook them.

## **Visit**

Being a caregiver can be isolating and lonely for both the patient and the caregiver. You can bring a small gift such as a book, baked goods, fruit, or flowers. A visit and conversation with a friend does wonders.

## **Make Your Own Books on Tape**

If you can't visit often, ask for suggestions of authors, poets or short stories they like and record them onto CDs. It is nice to hear a friend or family member's voice on tape, especially if they are far away.

## **Hold a Fundraiser**

Raise funds to employ a home health aide who can on occasion provide respite for the caregiver to enable them to run errands or get a haircut or go to a movie.

## **Card Making**

Invite the women to make and deliver handmade cards with prayers and encouraging words for caregivers.

## **Emergency Bulletin Board**

Create a list of phone numbers, emergency contacts and local helping agencies for the caregivers. Leave some blank spaces so that it can be personalized.

## **Service Projects**

The Women's Ministries group could use one of the above suggestions for a service project.

## **Refreshment**

Dip Oreo cookies in white chocolate then toss on tiny marshmallows and a candy lamb head. Directions for making these can be found at: <https://kitchenfunwithmy3sons.com/oreo-sheep>

## **Decorations**

Decorations should be simple, calming and refreshing. Place framed pictures of Psalms 23 on the tables.



## The Lord Is My Shepherd

Shepherding is one of the oldest occupations in the world. Shepherds were responsible to lead the sheep to pasture, keep the flock together and protect it from predators. The role of shepherd is a caring one but never an easy one. Because of the need to keep the sheep moving to find food, they often live alone and devote themselves to the sheep under their care. In Bible times, they were considered to be on the fringes of society.

The shepherd has to be continually on guard, protecting their sheep from danger. Jesus gives us wonderful examples of what it means to be a shepherd, seeking out the lost sheep and even saying that He lays down His life for His sheep. What a beautiful picture of care and devotion for us to consider.

As we stop and think about caregivers, we see that their devotion to those under their care is truly amazing. They work hard to ensure that their loved one is kept safe and their needs met. Many put their own lives and desires on hold to care for those who can't care for themselves.

David, who was a shepherd, penned a beautiful Psalm about God's care for His people. The passage is a familiar one for many of us—Psalm 23 (*Read Passage*). We have the encouraging words of the Great Shepherd—God, who cares for each one of us. He leads us to places of quiet and refreshment. He guides us. He gives us the promise of His presence. We need fear no evil, because of His provision and protection.

For those who care for others, the burden can be very draining. But rest in the Lord provides the strength that is needed.

About author



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## Education Programs

# September 2020 – The Sounds of Home

Español

September 1, 2020   By [Major Arlene DiCaterina](#)   0 comments



## Introduction

The deaf are part of our communities and live their lives in full abundance. This program will explore their culture and life and help us to understand their challenges.

## Program ideas

Invite a speaker who is deaf to share their life story and experience. Research where ASL is taught in your community and invite a speaker to share about sign language.

## Activities

There are many webpages that teach Sign Language (ASL). Share with the women the basic alphabet. Teach some basic words and have them practice with each other. Check the video found on YouTube for additional help: <https://youtu.be/IYhAAMDQI-Q>

## Games for learning American Sign Language

The website: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YWWhnsYRXGU> has some suggestions for games that can promote learning sign language.

## Learn Together

The website: <https://www.startasl.com/printable-sign-language-alphabet.html> has a sign language alphabet chart that can be printed and shared with the women.

## Bible Scripture in American Sign Language

Beth Moore demonstrates “The fruit of the Spirit” in sign language. Play this short teaching link during the program and join in the learning. It’s easy to pick up.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FiBMSHcu4ZQ>

## The Sounds of Home

“In that day the deaf will hear words read from a book and the blind will see through the gloom and darkness.” (Isaiah 29:18).

When you hear the title ***“The sounds of home,”*** what comes to your mind and how does it make you feel? Maybe some of us can go back to when we were young and came home after school to your mother greeted you asking about your day. Possibly before you even opened the door, you could smell dinner cooking. Maybe the sweet aroma of a delicious dessert filled the air.

Our imagination tunes our ears to the memories of our childhood. We can remember listening to mother remind us to wash our hands and call everyone together for the family dinner. Some of us had to do homework; others helped in the kitchen and the younger ones watched television. All that formed the sweet homelike atmosphere that we remember. Perhaps in the background you could hear grandma’s sewing machine and the radio sharing the latest news from around the world.

Some of us were surrounded by generations of our family while others grew up with only one parent. Perhaps your family moved a lot and your family was scattered. No matter the situation of your growing up years, when someone suggests thinking of your childhood home and all the memories, what comes to mind? Take a moment and reflect on the pleasant memories. *Invite the women to share with each other.*

Some people in our community have a different perspective because they are deaf, or they lost their hearing sometime after birth. When we conjured up our memories, much of what we remembered is memories of sights and sounds. The valued community of deaf people received the “sounds of home” through sign language or lip reading. Their listening memories are visual as they remember what was signed to them.

You and I found out about the world around us without much effort. We instantly heard sounds as they occurred and we took in the information. Even now, walking down the street we hear people talking or a car passing by with loud music, and all that information enters our brain. For the deaf community this information is limited. They have to rely on their other senses. Very few in our midst are able to speak in sign language, and this can be very difficult and lonely for those who are deaf. I have known what it is like to be surrounded by others who speak a language I do not know. For me this was a very lonely feeling. To a deaf person it can be the same. They want to be a part of all that takes place around them, but we exclude them when we do not try to learn their language.

Romans 10:14 says: “But how can they call on Him to save them unless they believe in Him? And how can they believe in Him if they have never heard about Him? And how can they hear about Him unless someone tells them?” We realize that the deaf community has been marginalized by the lack of interpreters who know the sign language and are willing or share the gospel.

We as Christians tell the Lord that we are willing to serve Him doing whatever He asks us. Could it be that few of us have considered the idea of learning a new language to get out of the comfort zone and share God’s love with those who do not know Him? Today we are talking about the deaf, but like them there are many other communities that have been marginalized, such as the blind, those who have an impediment, or the elderly who no longer live at home.

Isaiah 29:18 says: “In that day the deaf will hear words read from a book, and the blind will see through the gloom and darkness.” For this word to take place, we have to do our part and get out of our comfort zone and communicate with the blind and the deaf and the marginalized.

Maybe you think, I don’t share the gospel because I do not speak English. Or I do not know Spanish. Public and private schools offer free courses in Spanish, English and sign language. If you take a language course, it will open doors for you to evangelize. There are so many that may die today without knowing Jesus because the saved around them have not found a way to reach them and communicate God’s love through language.

Just before leaving His disciples to go to the cross, Jesus shared the following: “Don’t let your heart be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in Me. There is more than enough room in My Father’s home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with Me where I am” (John 14:2–3).

When Jesus calls us home, He will take us to that great mansion. There we will hear the sounds of a new home, a home of peace, love and eternal blessing. There we will worship the Lord for all eternity and together with the angels we will sing “Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord.” It is our desire that the deaf, the blind, the handicapped, may come with us to be in the presence of the Lord. To reach that mansion and hear that beautiful song, they must recognize the Lord as their personal Savior. We are here today because we have had the opportunity to listen to His word and accept it. I think of all those who have not had the opportunity to hear about Christ and I ask the Lord to guide us and awaken in us the desire to prepare ourselves to be useful in His hands.

## Closing Activity

Play the video “We Believe” (Newsboys) presented by The Salvation Army that can be found at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8s12TVQB-Ig>

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# Fellowship Programs



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## Fellowship Programs

### October 2019 – Open Heart, Open Home

[Español](#)

October 1, 2019   By [Major Joy Robbins](#)   0 comments



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Always be eager to practice hospitality

**Introduction**

Tuesday evening was my favorite night of the week. As I worked around the kitchen, I loved hearing the first knock on the door. Lauren came into the kitchen to sit at the counter and fill me in on her week. Time after time the door opened as the kitchen filled with more voices and laughter. This routine was the same no matter how many came, from two to ten. Someone would pitch in with dinner and another would set out the dishes. We took turns providing dinner and enjoyed everything from waffles to homemade scones, grilled cheese or delivery pizza. We came together to do life with each other and study God's Word. We celebrated all of life's victories and cried together over the hard times. These days brought my home to life and created a family for us that marked each of our lives. This group came together out of a need for a place to call home and a hunger for God's Word. "When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality" (Romans 12:13).

The dictionary defines hospitality as "generous and friendly treatment of visitors and guests." Many of us would be quick to say we do not possess the gift of hospitality because of a misconceived notion that it requires a lot of time spent in the kitchen to entertain, but the reality of hospitality is far from "entertaining." Having an open house and an open heart is all it requires. It is being willing to simply share moments in life together, to open our home to provide a special place to meet and share in moments of encouragement, support, prayer, laughter and study of God's Word. It's realizing that we are all human. Our house does not have to be a picture of perfection, but a picture of love. It is providing a welcome and inviting space to share life generously.

### **Decorations**

Examples:

- Tea party table—china, cups and saucers and a teapot
- Casual table—paper plates and plastic silverware
- Dollar store table—everything on table from table setting to decorations is from the dollar store

The idea is to show that there are a variety of ways the women can create a place of hospitality. It could be a fully decorated tea table, to a table with little jars or candle holders from the dollar store filled with favorite candies or ingredients for a hot chocolate or sundae bar.

### **Hospitality Starters**

Talk about different hospitality ideas:

- Bible Study—Invite a group over for a Bible study.



- Play Date—As a busy mother, we know the need for a few moments with other adults. Invite a friend to bring her children over for tea. Let the kids play outside or watch a movie together so the grown-ups can visit.
- Pantry Surprise—Company is coming and you don't have time to go to the store. What can you do with what you have? Water infused with a slice of fruit? Crackers and cheese? Cookies on a plate?
- Movie and Popcorn—Pop some popcorn and set out items that can be added to it, such as pretzels, M&Ms or cereal. Kick back and watch a movie.
- Meal Preparation—Invite some friends to your home with the purpose of preparing a meal that they will take home for their family. Assign the women to bring various ingredients for the dish. Serve an easy-to-prepare lunch for the women—a salad, frozen quiche or pizza.
- Tea Party—Invite some friends over for a tea party. A cup of tea and a few treats can lead to lots of fun and fellowship.

## Hospitality

I love to watch HGTV and see transformations of old houses into beautiful homes with everything perfectly placed. They look like pictures in a magazine. But think about it. When the TV crew leaves and the family starts living life, it's hard to keep that perfection. The kids play and leave toys around, dad's shoes are on the floor by his favorite chair, and the family rushes out in the morning leaving breakfast dishes in the sink. The house will look loved and lived in. Hospitality is not about having the perfect looking house, but inviting someone into your loved and lived in home.

Hospitality is about loving someone and welcoming them into your home to live life with you for a few hours. It's about opening your heart. It is as simple as inviting someone who needs a home-cooked meal to come, or having a friend over for tea to catch up on life.



“When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.” (Romans 12:13)

I know many people who are afraid to open their homes because they don't want someone to see them as they truly are. (I've had these days myself). Hospitality is about being vulnerable and sharing your home for a bit. It's about the intention to live life with someone and show them God's love ... no matter the status of your breakfast bowl in the sink. Jesus tells us, “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:34, 35).

Love is genuinely caring for someone even when the kitchen is a mess or the floor is cluttered with children's toys. Love is not worrying what others think about us. Sometimes the greatest moments of God's love come in everyday moments when we open our hearts and our homes to others. Maybe that person who never had a loving family can see what a parent's love looks like when interacting with your family. Maybe the individual who stresses over having a perfect clean house can realize that she's not the only one dealing with the mess. God uses our open hearts and our open house to reconnect with the inner conversations and struggles each of us experiences.

In showing hospitality and sharing life together, we can be a light as God tells us in Matthew 5:14:

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"Here's another way to put it: You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep opening your house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven." (*The Message*)

About author



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## Fellowship Programs

### November 2019 – Homemade Goodness

[Español](#)

November 1, 2019   By [Major Wilma Mason](#)   0 comments



#### **Introduction**

People in early civilization preserved food through drying, fermenting, salting and smoking. The act of preserving food stops the growth of microorganisms, which causes the food to spoil. Preserving food in glass jars originated when Napoleon Bonaparte requested a safe method of preserving food for his army in 1795. Later in 1810, Englishman Peter Durand

discovered a way to preserve food in tin cans. Canning as we know it today in the United States was first conceived in 1912 by Thomas Kensett.

## Decorations

Create harvest atmosphere by decorating with the following:

- Cream tablecloths with burlap table runners
- Baskets of various sizes filled with seasonal fruits and vegetables such as: bok-choy, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, peppers, potatoes, pumpkins, sweet potato, turnips, winter squash, apples, cranberries, dates, figs, pears and persimmons.
- At each seat place a half-pint (8 oz) mason jar in purple, orange or clear. Fasten a "Homemade Goodness" tag to the neck of each jar with coordinating ribbon.

## Activities

- "Beet the Clock"—Download to your cell phone or iPad the free Guess Word application from the iTunes App Store. Customize the game with the names of fruits, vegetables and canning supplies. Each team has 60 seconds to correctly guess as many as possible.
- "In a Pickle"—Follow the recipe for Refrigerator Dill Pickles from [allrecipes.com](http://allrecipes.com). Prepare the pickling mix before the program so it is completely cool when being added to the cucumbers. The women can pack the pickles in the jar at their place. At the end of the meeting they can either take their homemade pickles home or they can share them with a friend.
- "Cornfused???" – Identifying fruits, vegetables or canning supplies by touch only. Blindfold several of the women and have them identify fruits, vegetables or canning supplies by touch.

## You Can Help Stop Hunger

A service aspect of this program would be to ask the women to bring canned goods to contribute to [The Salvation Army Food Pantry](http://The Salvation Army Food Pantry) or local Food Bank.

## Refreshments

- If there are women in the group who preserve foods through canning invite them to bring samples from their home pantry to share during refreshment time.
- [Campbell's Homemade Butternut Squash Bisque Soup](#)<sup>®</sup> with toasted pumpkin seeds
- Fruit salsa with cinnamon sugar tortilla chips

- Assortment of pickled or preserved items: pickles, onions, olives, baby corn, asparagus, jalapenos or grapes
- In season fruit juice (cranberry, apple or pear) mixed with ginger ale

## Homemade

Some of my most vivid childhood memories are of spending time on my grandparents' farm. Like most farmers, they sowed a variety of seeds in their garden each year in anticipation of a large harvest. I loved going with my grandmother to the garden to select food that would become part of our family meal for the day. What we did not find in the garden would come from my grandmother's basement or root cellar, which was filled with jars of preserved foods from previous seasons. It was not until I was a teenager and was allowed to venture into the root cellar that I learned a bit about canning as a method of preserving goodness for a later time.

Matthew 5–7 contains the Sermon on the Mount in which Jesus teaches a variety of spiritual and social matters. He addressed such subjects as: the law, murder, adultery, divorce, retribution, love of enemies, caring for the needy and fasting, keeping the heart as the priority focus.



“Don't store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.” (Matthew 6:19-21)

Jesus asks us to examine our lives and evaluate honestly what we consider important. What are we taking great care to store up here on earth? The words translated “store up” (*thesaurizo*) and “treasures” (*thesaurous*) have the same root. So you could say that we are being reminded not to treasure our treasures. This idea was countercultural to the society of Jesus day as well as our own.

Our culture today affirms those who amass money or possessions, and considers them successful. However, Kingdom culture teaches that our security and satisfaction can only be found in and through a relationship with Jesus Christ. Money and treasures are temporal—for this world only, but an active relationship with Jesus Christ is eternal.

When it was time to sell the family farm, my grandmother's root cellar had to be emptied. There were many mason jars of homemade goodness that had to be discarded. Foods so carefully preserved and stored for future enjoyment were spoiled. These family-treasured jars of homemade persimmon jelly and pickled okra were useless. Had they had been

opened, they would have served their intended purpose of feeding the family, but instead they were placed on a shelf, rendering them useless.

May we seek with our heart the treasured “goodness” of a relationship with Jesus Christ that lasts forever and never spoils.

About author



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## Fellowship Programs

### December 2019 – Christmas Traditions

[Español](#)

December 1, 2019   By [Major Susan Ellis](#)   0 comments



**Home for the Holidays**

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<sup>15</sup> So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the teachings<sup>[a]</sup> we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter. ( 2 Thessalonians 2:15 NIV)

## **Decorations**

Stage a traditional Christmas backdrop for the women to pose for Christmas pictures. A fireplace scene or a cozy Christmas tree setting would be beautiful. Photo props such as boxes wrapped to look like gifts, scarfs and Christmas sweaters could be available for the women to wear. Provide quick developing photo cameras and give them their pictures to take home.

## **Refreshments**

Host a potluck meal with the corps providing the turkey or ham. Encourage the women to bring their family's favorite Christmas dish to share. For dessert, decorate prebaked Christmas cookies. Award prizes for the best-decorated cookies. Suggest that the women may want to share their cookies with a neighbor or a shut-in. Serve wassail and hot chocolate with the cookies.

## **Activities**

### **What's in My Stocking?**

Many families have a tradition of hanging Christmas stockings for each member of the household on the fireplace. The stockings are opened on Christmas morning as part of the celebration. In most families, the mother prepares the stockings. Prepare a Christmas stocking filled with items the women may enjoy. Close the top so no one can see what is inside. Play some Christmas music and pass the stocking around. Each person writes down what she thinks is inside it. You may want to help them by letting them know how many items are in the stocking. If the group is large, have several stockings prepared. The winner of the stocking is the one with the most correct guesses.

### **Oh, Christmas Tree**

The Christmas tree as we know it today goes back to the Victorian era when Queen Victoria and her husband Prince Albert began decorating fir trees as part of their Christmas celebration. The country soon followed suit and many English homes had a decorated tree as a Christmas custom. Invite the women to bring in one of their favorite Christmas ornaments. Allow time for each woman to share why it is her favorite.

### **Christmas Card Ministry**

Another familiar Christmas tradition is the exchanging of Christmas cards. Some families include newsletters and family pictures. Many families display the cards they receive and use the cards throughout the year to pray for friends and family. Pre-address Christmas cards for the women to sign that can be sent to shut-ins, military personnel, college students or missionaries. Collect the cards at the end of the meeting and mail them on behalf of the group.



## **My Favorite Christmas Movie**

Many American families enjoy the tradition of watching their favorite Christmas movie each year. Some watch the movie as they trim the tree and others reserve it as a Christmas Eve tradition. Make a list of well-known Christmas movies. Put the titles in a bowl and let the women take turns selecting one and drawing pictures that will help their team guess the title. Give the winning team microwave popcorn as a prize.

## **Christmas Pajamas**

A newer Christmas tradition in many families is giving each family member a new pair of pajamas on Christmas Eve. Many families wear matching pajamas. To help prepare the children for bed, they put on their new pajamas and read a Christmas book before going to sleep. The next morning, all family members are wearing the same pajamas and enjoy their time of gift exchanging. Some families even take family pictures while in their pajamas. As a door prize, give away a pair of Christmas pajamas and a Christmas book.

## **Treasured Christmas Traditions**

Each of us here today has holiday traditions we hold dear. It's not Christmas unless we do a certain activity or eat a certain meal on certain dinnerware. By observing these family traditions, we are reminding ourselves that family is important. Whether we celebrate together in one place or in several homes across the country, we are still connected by our shared traditions. Also, we want our future generations to know and observe the traditions that we have shared throughout our lives.

In my family each year, the youngest gets to open the first gift. Then one by one, in birth order, youngest to oldest, each person opens one gift at a time so that everyone gets to savor the moment their gift is opened. As you can imagine, it takes my family a while to go through this process each Christmas morning. We enjoy the time together and linger over the thoughtfulness of friends and family. As much as this was a part of my husband's family Christmas tradition and now ours, no one has ever explained to me how this started.

Second Thessalonians 2:15 reminds us: "Stand firm and keep a strong grip on the teaching we passed on to you." Paul wants the Thessalonians and Christians today to hold on to the sound teaching of the Gospel and to pass it on to the next generation. So as we set our nativity sets or gather for Advent readings, let's be diligent to explain to our families why we do this. Let's keep a tight hold of the true meaning of Christmas and be generous in sharing the Good News with everyone. Let's make the story of Jesus' birth the best Christmas tradition we observe each year.

About author



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## Fellowship Programs

### January 2020 – Comforts of Home

[Español](#)

January 1, 2020 By [Major Beth Sturdivant](#) 0 comments



## Welcome

Meet the women as they arrive by extending a “welcome home” greeting, which is something everyone loves to hear. Encourage the women to exchange this same greeting with each other.

## Decorations

On brightly-colored or gingham tablecloths display items that depict memories and comfort of home—aprons, rolling pins, mixing bowls, family quilts and the old family Bible. Burn candles with a homey scent like apple pie, banana bread or sugar cookie. Play music from the “olden days” as the women arrive. Display wooden signs purchased from craft stores that say “Home Sweet Home.” Or print and frame your own signs using pictures and lettering found on the Internet.

## **Favors**

Attach a scripture verse or proverb about home to small whisks or wooden spoons. Often these items can be found in multiple packs from the Dollar Tree® or Dollartree.com.

## **Refreshments**

If holding a potluck dinner, invite the women to bring a favorite food that has been passed down through the generations. During the refreshment time, invite the women to share about the dish they brought. Whose recipe is it? What memories does it bring back? Do they prepare it often, and is it one of their family’s favorites?

## **Sharing**

Invite the women to bring items connected with a memory. During the program, ask them to share the significance of what they brought. Also, invite them to share about their favorite place or room in their home. This could be in their present home or a house they grew up in. Why is it their favorite?

## **Craft**

Invite the women to decorate a plate or cereal/salad bowl. These can usually be purchased from dollar stores.

### ***Supplies Needed:***

- White ceramic bowls, plates or vases, which have been glazed and cured
- Rubbing alcohol
- Paper towels
- Permanent markers or paint pens (secure a variety of tip sizes)

### **Directions:**

- 1 Preheat oven to 350F degrees.
- 2 Clean the dish with rubbing alcohol using paper towels and let it dry.

- 3 Decorate the dish freehand or by using stencils, making sure to only decorate the edges of the plate or bowl. (*Refrain from coloring the area where food will be placed, as it is NOT safe to eat from a dish that has been colored in that area.*)
- 4 Once dishes are decorated place them in oven for 30 minutes, then turn off the oven and allow the dishes to cool.
- 5 When cool, remove the dishes.

## How Lovely Is Your Dwelling

Read Psalm 84:1-4 from the NIV.



How lovely is your dwelling place,  
Lord Almighty!  
<sup>2</sup> My soul yearns, even faints,  
for the courts of the Lord;  
my heart and my flesh cry out  
for the living God.  
<sup>3</sup> Even the sparrow has found a home,  
and the swallow a nest for herself,  
where she may have her young—  
a place near your altar,  
Lord Almighty, my King and my God.  
<sup>4</sup> Blessed are those who dwell in your house;  
they are ever praising you. [c]

It's nice to go away on a trip, but it's sure wonderful to return home. There is nothing better than donning your favorite slippers, sitting in your favorite chair or lying down to sleep in your own bed. Home brings comfort and delight. (*Ask the women to share what brings comfort and makes them feel at home.*) It's great to be surrounded by the familiar. When we are away from the things and people we love, our heart longs for them.

Psalm 84 was written by the sons of Korah who were assigned to be chief musicians in the Tabernacle. In the psalm they share what it is like to be in the house of God and to experience the blessings found there. God's house is a safe and lovely place where those who go to worship find refreshment for body and soul. The songwriter admits that his soul "yearns" to the point of fainting to be in the courts of the Lord and that his "heart and flesh cry out for the living God."

Being in the presence of our living God renews us, just like returning home after a long trip. After staying in a hotel or someone else's home, it's refreshing to return to the comfort of

familiar surroundings. This comfort is likened in the psalm to that of the swallow who makes a nest, "a resting place," for herself and her young. We too can find rest in the house of God. Our homes should be like His, places of comfort, rest, refreshment and encouragement. Places where we can sleep in safety and raise our children in a loving environment. Places where we realize how much God has blessed us.

There is a saying that has a good message for us all. "Blessings are all around you, waiting for you to see them and be grateful. No matter how little or how much you have, there are always things to be grateful for. Everything is your perception and the more you choose to see the blessings, the more abundant will you feel."

**Prayer:** Lord, as we reflect upon these verses of scripture, we thank You that by being in Your house we continually find comfort and refreshment. And Lord, may we ask that You help us to create this same atmosphere of blessing, comfort, rest and refreshment in our own homes. Amen.

## Closing

Invite the women to hold hands, creating a sense of family and unity. Sing song #660 from the old \*1987) *Salvation Army Song Book*: "Blest be the tie that binds; Our hearts in Christian love; The fellowship of kindred minds; Is like to that above."

About author



Major Beth Sturdivant

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## **Fellowship Programs**

### February 2020 – S.O.S. Shower Our Shelter with Love

Español

February 1, 2020   By [Lieutenant Teri Smith](#)   0 comments



Kid-Friendly Program

### **Introduction**

As a way of serving the Lord and sharing His love, hold a shower to provide items for a community shelter. Ahead of time contact the shelter and ask what items would be helpful.

Share these suggestions with the women. If it is decided that the gifts are to be wrapped, inquire if some of the residents or staff are willing to attend the shower and open the gifts.

## Decorations

Decorate using a nautical/cruise ship décor based on the old TV series “The Love Boat.”

- Create a Lido deck for the activity area by using a kiddie pool, beach towels, plastic beach balls and plastic lounge chairs.
- Fill glass bowls with sand, seashells and Hawaiian flowers for centerpieces.
- Purchase Lifesaver® candy for table favors.
- Use nautical signs that notate “Captain’s Table” on the gift table and “Coral Dining Room” on the refreshment table.

## Refreshments

Serve Hawaiian themed snacks along with a dessert buffet.

## Program Ideas – Photo Booth

Set up a photo booth at the entrance of the building to mimic the way cruise ships take photos of the boarding passengers. A sea or ship background with a lifesaver ring (can be made using a foam circle) lettered with the words “S.O.S” or “Love,” will add to the atmosphere. Provide clothing for the women to wear when taking their photos: sailor hats, life jackets, straw hats, 80s type jackets or typical vacation type apparel.

## Lido Deck Activities – Icebreaker Beach Ball Toss

Write “getting to know you” type questions and tape them on a plastic beach ball. Some examples: What is your favorite movie? What are three words that best describe you? How many siblings/children do you have? What would you want if you were stranded on a deserted island? Instruct the women to toss the ball to each other. When the leader yells, “stop,” the woman holding the ball is to answer the question that is located under her left thumb.

## The Love Boat Trivia Game

- 1 Fill in the blank: “Love \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, come aboard, we’re \_\_\_\_\_ you. **Exciting, new, expecting.**
- 2 What was the name of the ship’s friendly Captain? **Captain Merrill Stubing**
- 3 In what year did “The Love Boat” make its debut: 1977, 1980, 1993? **1977**

- 4 What was "The Love Boat" called? South Sea Princess, Pacific Princess, Love's Adventure. ***Pacific Princess***
- 5 What famous basketball team starred in an episode of the original show? ***The Harlem Globe Trotters***
- 6 How many years was "The Love Boat" on air—5 years, 10 years, 7 years? ***10 years***
- 7 Who made 10 guest appearances on the TV series? ***Charo***
- 8 Which member of the cast became a House Representative and ran for Governor of Iowa? Gavin MacLeod, Fred Grandy, Jack Smith. ***Fred Grandy (Goper)***
- 9 What was the name of the group of dancers on show: The Mermaids, the Lovers, the Fishermen. ***The Mermaids***

## Shuffleboard

Check the following website for instructions on how to set up a shuffleboard using painters tape and a Swifer® floor mop for the paddle. <http://deceptivelyeducational.blogspot.com/2012/04/diy-shuffleboard-showdown.html>

## We Will Serve the Lord

*Read Joshua 24:2-27.*

The distress signal S.O.S. became widely used in 1905 by the German government. The origins vary depending on the source consulted. Some think it stemmed from initials for save our souls, save our ship, or send out succor. Since it originated in Germany it is unlikely to stand for an English phrase, but its purpose is universal. It signals that someone is in distress.

If a ship were in distress, the Captain would send out an S.O.S. using Morse code in order to obtain help. Morse code is an alphabet invented by Samuel Morse in which letters are represented by a series of long and short light or sound signals. The signal for distress is: dot-dot-dot, dash-dash-dash, dot-dot-dot. In the beginning, an S.O.S was limited to nautical or radio messages. Then people began using it to communicate other urgent messages or appeals for help.

In the scripture, we read that Joshua reviewed all the S.O.S. (save our souls) messages from the Israelites to God. He reminds them of how God answered their appeals for help from the days of Abraham, from the start of their journey to current victories in recapturing the lands of Canaan. God responded to their S.O.S. with the expectation that they would continue to walk in His ways. Joshua told them that they could choose who they would worship but that he and his household would be serving the God who never failed. They would serve the God who "Saved Our Souls," the One who responded to their urgent appeals for help. The tribes of



Israel replied by proclaiming three times that they too would serve the Lord. (verses 18, 21, 24). In verses 25–27, they made a covenant as a reminder of their proclamation.

As we've shared about God's love by way of the gifts for the shelter, let's be reminded of the stand Joshua took and the response given by the people of Israel: "We will serve the Lord." Who do you choose to serve today? Don't forget how God has responded to your S.O.S. calls in the past and how He will continue to do so in the future as you continue to follow Him.

About author



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## [Fellowship Programs](#)

### March 2020 – What's In Your Kitchen?

[Español](#)

March 1, 2020   By [Captain Lorraina Crawford](#)   0 comments



### **A Kitchen Swap Party**

Host a kitchen swap party, which is a way for the women to update their kitchen without spending money. It also provides a fun way for the women to interact with each other. The concept is simple, free, and eco-friendly. Here's how it works:

- 1 Each person brings items from their kitchen that they no longer want. It can be anything as long as it is still of good quality and clean.
- 2 Ask the women to write on a card the name of the item and its purpose. (Some kitchen gadgets can be hard to figure out.)
- 3 The women register each item in exchange for a token, which will be used to buy other items. You can use anything as a token from a clothespin to a bingo chip.
- 4 Display the items and allow the women to browse what others have brought.
- 5 After the browsing time and refreshments, open the store for purchases. The women can swap the number of tokens they have for the same number of items.
- 6 If there are any items left over that no one wants, donate them to the thrift store.

## **What Is It and What Is Its Purpose?**

Before the swapping begins, choose some of the more unusual kitchen items and see if the women can identify them and what they are used for. The leader of the program could also bring some unusual items from home, but not necessary ones that would be included in the swapping, for the women to identify.

## **Swap Tips**

Keep the swapping anonymous so that no one will know if someone's items aren't taken. To avoid that awkwardness, do not label the items with the original owner's name. Another way to distribute the items is to shop in rounds. For the first round, everyone chooses two items. After one another round of two items each, let everyone take whatever they wanted that was left over.

## **Decorations/Room Set-Up**

Make signs for the swap tables by categories. Sugar and flour bags, dish towels and aprons make great décor. You can also use these items as door prizes.

## **Refreshments**

Ask women to bring a recipe from their kitchen for everyone to taste. Invite the women to vote on their favorite recipe and award the "Golden Spoon" (a mixing spoon you have painted gold) to the winner.

## **Service Idea**

Shower the corps or shelter kitchen with new items. Make a list of needed items in advance and give to the women.

## Share with Those In Need



“And don’t forget to do good and to share with those in need. These are the sacrifices that please God” (Hebrews 13:16)

In the Disney movie, “The Little Mermaid,” Ariel sings: “I’ve got gadgets and gizmos a’plenty; I’ve got whozits and whatzits galore. You want thingamabobs? I’ve got twenty! But who cares? No big deal. I want more.” Kitchens are often full of gadgets, whatzits and thingamabobs. Once you may have thought those objects would make your life easier. It could have been you never really figured out how to use them correctly and they just sat in a cabinet. Ariel had plenty of gadgets and gizmos too, but she wanted more. Not more objects, but more meaning to life. She wanted to be where the people were to share life with them, not the objects they owned. The “thingamabobs” actually made her want to be with the people even more.

We don’t need more things. We need more relationships. What if we began to look at the objects we own as tools for getting more out of life in a different way? What if we used our gadgets as tools to build relationships with other people, to use our gadgets to share with those in need? That’s how we can get more out of life and live meaningfully.

Creating in the kitchen is about the people who will share the dish and how it makes them feel. Yes, food is meant to sustain and nourish, but it is also meant to be shared over good conversation. It brings people together. It doesn’t have to cost a lot of money to share with others in this way. There are other ways we can share with those in need, too. Hebrews 13:16 doesn’t tell us how to do good and share with those in need. It just tells us not to neglect to do it.

Sometimes we forget that the Lord will give us everything we need to be able to share with others. We come up with excuses why we can’t share. We say we don’t have enough time or enough money. We tend to believe that if we had more money, then we could really help people. Sometimes we believe that we just aren’t good enough, not experienced enough, or that we are too afraid to interact with new or different people. We hold on to what we have for fear that we may go without. Remember, it is the Lord who provides for us in the first place. God is a giver and will give us what is required to sustain us, and enough to share with others. We have to trust Him as our provider. Acts 20:35 reminds us “It is more blessed to give than receive.” Sharing is pleasing to God and He will bless us for doing so.

Take an inventory of what you have in your spiritual kitchen. What tools has God specifically given you so that you may reach others for His glory? Maybe you have a testimony that needs to be shared. Maybe it’s a listening ear, an encouraging attitude, or even a sweet spirit to share with people who are experiencing crisis. It might be a talent or skill that would be helpful to your busy corps officer. You may be able to give more money or share additional time by volunteering.

Above all, pray for a heart that is closely attuned to the needs of others. Pray for eyes that see opportunities to share. Pray for hands that are willing to carry out the action.

About author



Captain Lorraina Crawford

USA Southern Territory



## Fellowship Programs

### April 2020 – Family Challenge

[Español](#)

April 1, 2020   By [Captain Michelle Lyles](#)   0 comments



## Introduction

Sometimes we get so wrapped up in life that we neglect to enjoy time with our families. “A glad heart makes a happy face” (Prov. 15:13).” This program will focus on having fun with our corps families and spreading our infectious joy to others.

## Decorations

Use game boards in the middle of the table as centerpieces, with twister mats as tablecloths. String up playing cards to form a banner. Scrabble tiles could be used to spell out the various food items on the refreshment table. Use the board game boxes to create different levels for setting up the refreshments.

## **Refreshment Suggestions**

Serve meat, cheese, and crackers on checkerboards. Transform brownies into domino pieces using white chocolate chips as the dots. Serve finger food items such as pigs in a blanket, nachos, bacon cheese fries, and a quesadillas bar where everyone gets to choose their own fillings.

## **Activities**

### Saran® Wrap Ball Game

This game involves a massive Saran wrap ball and a pair of dice. The ball consists of Saran wrap wrapped tightly with candies layered throughout. Place a grand prize in the very center of the wrap—a rolled-up t-shirt, a water bottle, gift card or a key chain.

## **Instructions**

Ask the participants to sit around a table. The first person starts unwrapping the ball while the person on their right rolls a pair of dice, attempting to roll doubles. The person with the ball unwraps it until this is achieved. Once doubles are rolled, the ball and dice are passed to the right and the sequence begins again. If any treasures fall out while the person is unwrapping the ball, they keep them. To make the unwrapping more challenging, have the person wear mittens or blindfold them. When making the ball, if using individual pieces, change directions in wrapping to make it more challenging to unravel.

## **Spoons**

Check the Internet for this easy game that involves spoons and playing cards. Google the words “game spoons.”

## **Never Have I Ever**

You need at least a dozen people to play this game. The concept is similar to musical chairs in that there is one less chair than there are people. Arrange the chairs in a circle. One person stands in the middle and announces something that they have never done. For instance, the person in the middle might announce, “Never have I ever ridden in a hot air balloon.” Anyone who has ridden in a hot air balloon would then get up, leaving their chair unoccupied, and find a new chair. The person in the middle would also find a chair. Whoever is left without a

chair is the new person in the middle and will take a turn announcing what they have never done.

## **The Burden of Competition**

One of the ways in which my family relaxes and unwinds is to play games. We order pizza and play a rousing game of Monopoly<sup>®</sup>. My daughter especially loves to play any kind of game. However, if you play a game with her, the rules only apply to you, not to her. My husband calls this “Calvin’s Ball” after the cartoon strip *Calvin and Hobbes*. When Calvin plays a game, the rules don’t apply to him. He makes them up as he goes, often changing them on a whim. When you play a game with a child, they do not want to lose. They think they are supposed to win every game. It’s up to us to teach them that in life things don’t always go our way. Life is going to be competitive and challenging. There will be moments when we feel absolutely overwhelmed. We are not going to win every game.

There are times when even a much anticipated family game night can go sour. This happens when we become increasingly competitive and our hearts begin to harden towards our competitors. We get angry and bitter until eventually ... BOOM! “You want me to trade you Boardwalk for \$10,000 and all your Green Properties? Forget-about-it!” Competition is a normal part of life, but it can very easily lead to out-of-control emotions.

As a wife, a mother, a sister and a daughter, I often find it hard to find balance between the various sides of my life. There will always be competition in the search for perfect balance in our lives. I constantly try and more often than not fail to arrange my life in such a way that each of these areas is in balance. Each is important, yet seldom do we find enough time and energy to devote ourselves equally to them.

I often find myself looking in the mirror and wondering: Did you see how amazing that woman is as a Godly wife? Am I as supportive as she seems to be? That young mother is simply sensational! Am I as attentive as a parent? Am I as uplifting to my sisters? Am I as respectful as this daughter? Am I? Am I? Am I? Once we begin comparing ourselves to others, the “Am I’s” never seem to end. We get stuck in a cycle of “AM I’s” and the competition seems unending. When this happens to me, I easily become distressed in a never-ending cycle of comparing myself to others. Consequently, all the roles I have in my life fall out of balance and I find myself circling the drain spiritually. Burnout and pessimism follow shortly thereafter.

In these moments of desperation God’s Word can come to life and speak directly to our hearts. Proverbs 15:13 states, “A glad heart makes a happy face.” Our loving God never intends for us to feel distressed or overwhelmed. God doesn’t want us to live in the valley of lowliness. He intends for us to seek Him out in these heavy moments and find peace and comfort in the fact that we are intentionally created by Him to be exactly who we are. The Psalmist wrote, “Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it” (Ps. 139:14). When we are faithful to God, we can be assured



that we are exactly who He has created us to be. Then we can have “a glad heart” and make a “happy face.” It’s in these moments that we see God’s goodness and beauty in all things and the need for competition stops. When we take in the fullness of God’s grace, competition doesn’t seem important.

Imagine that our spirit is a water bottle. Each day we fill our bottles with many different objects. When we speak with God, and live faithful, holy lives, we fill our bottles with the Living Water. When we ignore God, walk our own way, and do things to please only ourselves, we are not living according to God’s Word. We are sinning. In these moments, we are filling ourselves up with worldly things, temporary things.

If we squeeze a water bottle hard enough, its contents will eventually come pouring out from the top. As things start to press in on us from all sides and the pressures of life come crashing in, what we have poured into us will come out. If we are filling ourselves with God, when life gets stressful or unbearable, we will push out God’s spirit. If we have only lived for ourselves or for the thrill of competition, then we will stand exposed.

Do you find contentment in God? Can you put on a smile no matter the circumstance because you know that the King of the universe is in your corner and has uniquely equipped you to be you? Then smile, for you, too, are “marvelous.”

About author



Captain Michelle Lyles

USA Southern Territory



## Fellowship Programs

### May 2020 – Fixer Upper

Español

May 1, 2020   By [Major Lori Miller](#)   0 comments



## Introduction

[Fixer Upper](#) was a HGTV reality show that featured Chip and Joanna Gaines who took the worst house in the neighborhood and completely transformed it into the client's dream home. We are all "fixer uppers." Maybe we could use some reconstruction in our lives. Jesus looks at our mess and brokenness with different eyes. He is ready and willing to take the

things that are not working, or need to be revitalized and transform our hearts to make them fit to be His home.

## **Scripture**

“This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!” (2 Cor. 5:17). “A wise woman builds her home, but a foolish woman tears it down with her own hands” (Prov. 14:1).

## **Decorations**

Decorate reflecting the simple farmhouse style of the HGTV show “Fixer Upper.” Mason jars with nuts/bolts, a variety of simple tools and hard hats can serve as the table décor. Set up a photo booth where the women can grab a prop (hammers, wrenches and hard hats) and strike a pose. Cutout houses could be used as a backdrop for the booth.

## **Refreshments**

Serve party snacks with a construction themed twist: Cheese puffs as “wrecking balls,” Chex mix as “nuts and bolts,” Veggie Straws® as “2x4s,” and Bugle Chips® as “safety cones.” Set up an ice cream cone “construction cones” station, with lots of toppings. It would be helpful to label each refreshment item. To further enhance the theme, use new paint tins and trays as serving dishes.

## **Program Ideas – Paint Sample Bookmarks**

Invite the women to make bookmarks using paint chip samples. They can add their names with alphabet stickers or paint pens. To finish off laminate, punch a hole and tie with a ribbon.

## **Demo Day**

Provide the women with safety goggles, plastic construction hard hats, hammers and small sections of drywall. Invite them to visualize something in their life that is holding them back as they demolish the drywall. Talk about the fact that sometimes it is necessary to tear down and remove things in our lives that are detrimental before we can build something new. This may be best as an outside activity

## **Fixer Upper**

Using art supplies invite the women to decorate cardboard playhouses, which are available at Oriental Trading Company®. Or print images of house floor plans and invite the women to choose their dream house. Search under “images of house floor plans.” To aid in their dreams, have available house and furniture design magazines for them to peruse as they

decorate the various rooms in their dream house. An alternate idea is to invite the women to make over one room in their home, if money were no object.

## **Nuts and Bolts Bingo**

Use nuts, bolts and screws as place markers on the traditional Bingo board.

### **Fixer Upper**

There is a house that I love. It is not mine, but I admire its structural beauty. Magnolia trees line the gentle curve of the drive and the neatly trimmed lawn and carefully curated rose bushes are warm and inviting. At first glance, you would assume that it is equally stunning on the inside, but upon further inspection, it is clear that there are secrets hidden within its walls and corridors. In reality, its interior is riddled with neglect, tenuously supported by a crumbling foundation.

Are you a fan of HGTV's Fixer Upper program? In the show Chip and Joanna Gaines, a Christian couple from Waco, Texas, run a home renovation business that has become a financial empire. The show followed the Gaines family as they take a home that is often falling apart and completely transform it into a masterpiece dwelling.

I am not much of a house fixer upper. The remodeling process seems daunting. Stripping away layer after layer of dirt, grime, stains and ugliness is not the way I would choose to spend my day. The idea of having to remove rotten kitchen cabinets from the walls and rusty appliances in order to rebuild simply does not hold any appeal for me. Why not just buy a home that is move-in ready?

However, I am grateful that God does not feel that way about me. Over the course of my life, my Heavenly Father has gently stripped away old fears and insecurities. He renovated the walls of my heart, tearing away undisciplined thoughts and rusty old dreams. Even though we cannot always see how Jesus is working in our lives, we can be confident that He is making us into a new creation every day by transforming our brokenness into lives fit for His dwelling.

The reality is that we are all "fixer-uppers." We all need work. Take a good look at your heart today and in full surrender allow the Lord to do His work. It might be a little painful, requiring structural changes and foundational reinforcements; but as we are reminded in Scripture, "This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! (2 Cor. 5:17)." The Father loves you and His great desire is to make your heart His home. He is ready and willing to work on your behalf to transform and renovate you into a new creation, a woman of God who is becoming more and more like Christ.



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## Fellowship Programs

### June 2020 – Back Yard BBQ

[Español](#)

June 1, 2020   By [Lt. Carla Raymer](#)   0 comments



#### **Introduction**

Plan a back yard BBQ that includes the entire corps family. This will emphasize the importance of gathering around the table for fellowship as suggested in Hebrews 10:24, 25, "Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of His return is drawing near."

## **Program Outline**

Prayer and Refreshments

Announcements

Scripture – Hebrews 10:24, 25

Devotional—*“Gathering Around the Table”*

*“Come, Let us all Unite to Sing, God is Love”*

*The Salvation Army Song Book #8,*

Games

Benediction

### **Location**

If possible, hold this program outdoors. Find a picnic spot, or host this in the back yard of one of the women’s homes. If this is difficult, create an outdoor experience inside.

### **Decorations**

Indoor/outdoor decorations can be as simple as covering the tables with plastic red or checkered red and white tablecloths. Other ideas:

- String lights across the ceiling to create a starry night atmosphere.
- Place plants and garden pots around the room.
- Set small flower arrangements on each table.
- Place balloons at the tables.
- Create signs identifying the refreshments.
- Decorate a chalkboard listing the games listed.
- Place homemade cookies in jars as favors for the women to take home.

### **Refreshments**

Use the grill for hot dogs or burgers, with watermelon and cake for dessert.

## **Games for Everyone**

Set up games that everyone can play. Consider having an area with games for the younger children who might find the regular games too strenuous.

- Potato sack race
- Bean bag toss
- Three-legged race
- Hula hoop contest
- Egg and spoon race
- Ring toss

For other suggestion check the Internet. Following are a couple of sites:

<https://www.bhg.com/health-family/reunions/activities/activities-games/>

<https://family.lovetoknow.com/family-games-picnics>

<https://www.livestrong.com/article/226808-outdoor-games-to-play-at-a-picnic/>

## **Awards/Medals**

Award medals or certificates for the winners of the various games. Medals can be purchased from the Oriental Trading Company for as little as \$4.99 per dozen. For the younger children certificates of participation could be awarded so that everyone is recognized.

## **Gathering Around the Table**

Gathering around the table may seem like a foreign concept these days. And yet, it is something that is incredibly important in building relationships, having open forms of communication and simply keeping the family together. When I think of this concept, I think of the many times I gathered around our family table as a child. I remember the importance of our meals together. I remember waking up and sitting around the table for breakfast as we shared in our first interactions of the day. I remember our evening tea times when at the end of a long day we gathered around the table to share conversation and participate in family devotions. The idea that gathering around the table began and ended our days was important to our family. In fact, it was sacred. I now have a family of my own and I've been given the opportunity to continue in that same tradition. This is not a new concept, as its importance is scriptural.

In the Old Testament we read of numerous accounts of God's people gathering together as a part of Israel's offerings and festivals. In the New Testament, we take our lead from Jesus who

not only gathered around the table of friends but also sinners. We read in Luke 19:1, 2, 5 the story of Zacchaeus: “Jesus entered Jericho and made His way through the town. There was a man there named **Zacchaeus**. He was the chief tax collector in the region, and he had become very rich. When Jesus came by, He looked up at **Zacchaeus** and called him by name. ‘**Zacchaeus!**’ He said. ‘Quick, come down! I must be a guest in your home today.’”

God calls us to fellowship with one another. It is an imperative aspect of our calling as Christians. We read in Hebrews 10:24, 25, “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the day approaching.”

Gathering around a table allows us to encourage each other and to share the Gospel with unbelievers. It helps us to set aside the mundane things and enter into deep conversation of importance. It encourages us to get a better perspective of others as they share their stories and concerns. Gathering allows us to see the Father who longs to be with us and to celebrate His presence. Unfortunately, sitting around the table these days can often seem trivial, as the busyness of the day tends to take over those sacred moments. And yet, I believe God is calling us to gather despite our busyness. One day we will gather with our Heavenly Father and all the saints in Glory, but until then what better way to gather than to take our place as a family around the table speaking of God’s love. So will you gather around the table?

About author



Lt. Carla Raymer

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## Fellowship Programs

### July 2020 – Staycation

[Español](#)

July 1, 2020 By [Major Bivi Guadalupe](#) 0 comments



## Vacationing In Your Home Town

We all need a vacation. Although it is not always possible to travel to some exotic location, we can all take some time to rest and relax.

## Plan It

- Select a date, possibly a long weekend.
- Finish all your household projects and chores before your staycation or put them on hold until you “come back.”
- Put yourself in vacation mode. Let others know that you will not be available for the next few days. That means no computer and limited phone calls.
- Include your family in the plans.
- Select places you want to visit: museums, zoo, aquarium, parks, swimming pools or the movies.
- Plan on eating out or preparing easy meals and freeze them the week before. Use disposable plates so no one has to wash dishes.
- The family may just want to stay at home and play family games, watch movies or go for bike rides.
- Plan on getting a babysitter for one of the evenings so you and your spouse can enjoy a date night.

## Decorations and Room Set Up

Divide the room into five stations and decorate each section as a rest or vacation area. Each section could represent different places we can go for relaxation. Use each space for a specific task. For example:

- Refreshment: Decorate this area in a Hawaiian Luau style: a tropical flowered table skirt or table top tiki-hut, beach balls, a beach chair (with a beach towel on top), sun-glasses, beach hats and floral leis spread on the table.
- DIY Spa Lotions: *Sugar Scrub*—In a small mason jar mix 3 tablespoons of olive oil, a half cup of sugar, 2 tablespoons of honey. Honey can be substituted with 5 drops of essential oil or a teaspoon of vanilla extract. *Hand lotion*—In a small mason jar put 1 cup of coconut oil. Place the jar inside hot water until the oil melts. Add 3 drops of Vitamin D and 5 drops of essential oil. Let it cool.
- DIY Craft Station: Set up a table with sample easy, inexpensive DIY projects that the women may want to get for their family to do as a project during their staycation. DIY project:
- Reading Station: Provide comfy chairs, book/magazines and soft music in this station for the women to sit and relax.
- Game Station: Have board games like scrabble, UNO cards in the game station. This station is for the women who prefer not to do a project but play board games.

- Meditation Station: Set up a small desk with chair, lamp, Bible, pens, note cards, songbook. Here the woman can spend time speaking with the Lord.
- Set up a table with pamphlets about interesting places to visit in your city for the women to take with them.

## Refreshments

- Virgin Pina Colada (Non-Alcoholic): Coco Lopez—Cream of Coconut (find it in the Hispanic section of supermarkets), pineapple juice, ice. Blend all the ingredients together.
- Flavored popcorn. Invite the women to make unique flavored popcorn. Check the website: <http://dailyburn.com/life/recipes/diy-popcorn-recipes-flavors/> for ideas.

## I Need a Vacation

“I am tired . . . broke . . . sick! I need a vacation after my vacations!” Does this sound familiar? Vacations are intended to rest and detoxify the busyness from our daily routine, a time to relax our mind and recover physical strength. Sometimes we are so anxious about a vacation that we make big plans without taking into consideration the goals of resting and relaxation.

When we were living in Michigan, my husband and I planned to take the kids to the theme parks in Florida for vacation. We were so excited and we wanted to use our time well. As we lived so far from Florida we didn’t know when we would be able to go back. We ended up visiting four parks in one day. That night, when we went back to the hotel, we were exhausted and could not even remember what we saw in which park. On that occasion I learned that it is not how much we do, but what we can learn and enjoy in what we do. The quality of your vacation is not determined by the distance traveled or the amount of money spent. There are so many places to visit and activities to engage in near us that will give the same opportunity of enjoyment at a lower cost or even for free.

Spiritually speaking, we are also in need of rest and relaxation. We are tired of the burden we carry daily—worries, concerns, disappointments and financial difficulties. We are in great need of spiritual renewal. Many times we want to achieve that spiritual renewal by our own effort and the result is that we end up frustrated and more exhausted than before. We DO, DO, and keep on DOING, trying to find spiritual rest and peace, but instead we become weary and fatigued. When that happens, we need to stop and take a spiritual staycation; stay at home, where our Father waits for us to rest in Him. We need to stay close to Him, stop doing and just rest in Him.

We read in Matthew 11:28 “Then Jesus said, ‘Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.’” Jesus is that place of rest and He is within you. Pay attention to His call to you. We do not need to go somewhere to find Him. The only thing He asks is for us to “come,” to intentionally draw closer to Him and simply rest. We need to clean

our minds of those thoughts that intoxicate our entire being and meditate on what is good and pleasant. “And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise” (Phil. 4:8).

During His ministry, Jesus often went to the beach, to the mountains, or stayed at a friend’s house, sometimes with His disciples, sometimes alone. Find a quiet place in your home, at a park or some place peaceful for you. Take your Bible with you and read it, write some thoughts or needs and present them to the Lord in prayer. You can listen to music or a preacher online or on the radio. Spend quality time with Him, listening and talking with Him, enjoying His company.

Times of quiet are needed. It is a time to receive new strength and renew our thoughts and reconnect with family and with God. Jesus is that place where we can renew body, mind and spirit and receive renewed strength. We read in Isaiah 26:3, “You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in You, all whose thoughts are fixed on You!”

Those special staycations with Jesus are worth planning. Why don’t you mark your calendar right now and plan on it?

About author



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## Fellowship Programs

# August 2020 – The Not-So-Empty Nest

[Español](#)

August 1, 2020   By [Captain Tasha Tanner](#)   0 comments



## Introduction

This program is designed for grandparents raising grandchildren. It can be presented in two ways depending on the interest and family situations of the group.

## Program Ideas

## **Not So Empty Nest**

When parents are absent or unable to raise their children, grandparents often step in. Raising a second generation comes with many rewards, but also many challenges. According to AARP, more than 2.6 million children live in homes where grandparents are responsible for them.

In other instances, an adult child and their family find it necessary to return to their parent's home. Divorce, job loss and other significant life events can make this necessary. Allowing "birds" that now have an independent way of living back into a home that has already changed since their original departure can be challenging. Often ideologies, lifestyles and personalities clash. Establishing clear boundaries regarding finances, child rearing and other household issues can help to protect the relationship between parent and child.

If there are women in the group who find themselves in either of these situations, check the Internet for possible speakers in the area. Also provide resources where they can get help to make the transition easier for the entire family. The following websites have helpful information:

<https://www.grandparents.com/grandkids>.

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/parenting-family/grandparents-raising-grandchildren.htm>

<http://extension.colostate.edu/topic-areas/family-home-consumer/grandparents-as-parents-10-241>

## **Decorations**

Decorate using birdcages, birdhouses and binoculars. Artificial nests with a small tea light candle in the center could be used as centerpieces.

## **Craft**

Small, wooden birdhouses and acrylic craft paint can easily be transformed into works of art. Check the Oriental Trading® company for birdhouses at about \$16.00 per dozen or explore local craft stores. Buy a bag of birdseed and divide it into individual bags for the women to take home with their birdhouse creations.

## **Decorating Your Nest**

If someone in the group is skilled in home decorating, invite them to share their tips with the group. Or contact a local merchant who may have someone willing to share some of the latest trends in home décor.

## **Refreshment Suggestions**

Melt a bag of white chocolate chips with a tablespoon of shortening and stir in small pretzel sticks. Shape into nests. Place small chocolate egg shaped candies inside the nests. A mixture of nuts, seeds and dried fruit resembling edible birdseed could also be served.

## **Building a Nest**

Watching a bird build a nest is fascinating. They can take anywhere from days to weeks to months to build a nest. The time and materials involved depend on the type of bird. Some birds build their nests high in a tree, some in a mound of grass and some in the curve of the metal letters of a store. In some circumstances, the female will build the nest alone. In other species, both male and female share the nest building. Spider webs, silk, mud, sticks, grass and saliva are common materials found in nests. Scientists have even found that some birds include herbs and spices in their nests to ward off bacteria. Each nest is built to protect the young birds until they mature and eventually fly from the nest. Much like our own journey through parenthood, we use the resources available to us, add a little bit of our blood, sweat and tears, and weave a nest with the purpose of protecting our children until they are ready to leave.

One day I observed a nest full of eggs near a lake that was being invaded by a predator. The mother goose was squawking and honking, obviously in distress over the situation. As I looked closer, I observed a water moccasin curled around the nest with its mouth stretched wide to swallow as many eggs as possible. Judging from the lumps lining its serpentine body it had already feasted on some eggs. Despite the danger to her own life, the goose flapped her wings, honked and squawked fiercely in an effort to save the rest of her eggs. The very place that she had worked so diligently to fashion into a safe shelter became a nightmare.

In our families it is important for us to model what it's like to lead a godly life. We try to provide a safe place for our children to grow into adulthood. We love, pray, hope and have faith that our direction, corrections and love will shape a responsible adult. When circumstances and trials assault our nests, like water moccasins feasting on goose eggs, our children rely on our quick and appropriate reactions. When we faithfully show God's love and concern, we direct our children onto the right path.

Raising children is hard work. We read in Proverbs 22:6: "Direct your children onto the right path, and when they are older, they will not leave it." This reminds us that when our children are young, we must show them the right path. It takes years of instruction, discipline, guidance, forgiveness, trial and error and love. It involves transporting children to school functions and sports games. It means sickness and trips to the doctor and sometimes the hospital. It's supporting them through that first date, broken hearts, college applications and life's disappointments. All these things are woven in and out as we create our nest, our home. We build the home with the hope that if we've done it correctly, someday it will be empty. But when this is not the case, we should not feel that we have failed. We must continue to rely on

God to help us no matter our circumstances. He is faithful whether your nest/home is empty or not so empty.

About author



Captain Tasha Tanner

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## Fellowship Programs

# September 2020 – Back to School Blessings

[Español](#)

September 1, 2020 By [Lt. Odessa Smith](#) 0 comments



## Introduction

God's Word provides us with all we need to know about living a godly, Christ-like life in today's ever-changing world. This program reminds the women of some of their first days of school and teaches some of the basic but vital rules of living necessary for Christian women.

## Decorations

Set up the room to resemble a classroom. Cover the tables in yellow or black cloths to match pencils and chalkboards. Use a small stack of notebooks, pencils and school supplies, topped with an apple, as centerpieces. Hang small paper airplanes made from notebook paper from the ceiling. Prepare place cards with the words “back to school blessings” and place on the tables. There are examples of these on Pinterest.

## **Refreshments**

Set out small bowls or pails filled with child friendly snacks, such as gummy worms (bookworms), Smarties (smarty pants), cookies (one smart cookie), apple slices (apple for the teacher). Make signs with the names of the goodies written in chalk on small blackboards.

## **Program Ideas**

### **Craft – Back to School Blessings**

Invite the women to create a theme Scripture verse to give to their children or grandchildren as they return to school. Print the verses on cardstock, which the women can embellish with colored pens, jewels and stickers. The verses can be placed in small inexpensive frames. Some suggested verses are: Philippians 4:13, Ephesians 5:1, 2 Timothy 2:24, Proverbs 13:20, Psalms 121:1, 2.

## **Games**

### **What’s for Breakfast?**

Cut the front of cereal boxes into 12 to 15 pieces each and place in small baggies. The women must match up the pieces to recreate the cover.

### **History Lesson**

Print pictures of historical figures on cardstock—presidents, civil rights figures, war heroes. On separate sheets list a time or place in history associated with the figures. For example: Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War. Working in teams, invite the women to match the figure and event.

### **The Librarian**

In this game, the women compete in teams to stack 30 books in alphabetical order. They must work quietly because the librarian will disqualify them if she hears any noise.

### **Paper Plane Pileup**

Divide the women into 3 or 4 teams and give them a small stack of notebook paper. They must work as a team to make paper airplanes and fly them into a basket. The team with the

most airplanes in the basket wins.

## Talking Old School

This game will give the women a chance to reminisce and share stories of their school days. Prepare a list of school related questions. For example: Who was your favorite teacher? Share a favorite first day of school memory. What were your favorite subjects and least favorite subjects? What did you want to be when you grew up? As in musical chairs, pass the basket and when the music stops, the woman holding it selects a question. After answering, questions should be returned to the basket. If desired, she can drop out of the game.

## Vital Rules for a Godly Life

*Read Proverbs 4*

The Bible gives us all the rules we need to follow to live a Christian life. In Proverbs 4 we see a list of these rules that guide us in the right direction. Just like on the first day of school when we are given new rules to follow, it can be a bit overwhelming to remember them and understand exactly how these rules apply to our lives. However, it can be beneficial to consider these verses as helpful guidance tools instead of a list of do's and don'ts.

The writer of Proverbs 4 begins the passage by saying that he too was once a young boy in his father's house. He is speaking from experience. So often we like to tell the younger generation the way things were and how they should be today. These wise words become much more useful when we can say that we've been there, that we have experienced the same firsts, hardships and victories that children today still face in school. This passage can be seen as a parent's encouraging speech before they send their child off for the first day of school, but it can also apply to our lives today.

Some of the instructions given in Proverbs 4 are: pay attention (v.1), follow the rules (v. 4), be smart and make wise decisions (v. 5), do what is right (v. 14), listen carefully (v. 20), guard your heart (v. 23) and stay focused (v. 25). From these verses we can create our own list of rules to live by daily, ensuring that we are walking a straight path towards God's will for our lives. As children are heading back to school and adjusting to new people and environments, may we remember the simple instructions that God has given us in His word. Let's apply these words of encouragement to our own lives and share with others who may be facing challenges.

Pray together as a group for children who are going back to school. Challenge the women to find ways to encourage them over the next couple weeks.

About author

Lt. Odessa Smith

# Service Programs



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**Service Programs**

## October 2019 – Home Away From Home

Español

October 1, 2019   By [Lieutenant Carolina Lopez](#)   0 comments



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“In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you” John 14:2 (KJV).

Cold weather in Oregon begins in October. This is when Oregonians declare that fall has officially begun. The month begins with mostly sunny days and comfortable temperatures. But gradually the daytime temperatures drop from the 70 to 60 degrees. Nights cool down into the 50s. The leaves of Portland's trees change from green to bright red, orange and yellow. But along with the beautiful colors, the temperatures keep dropping. This calls for a good book, hot tea and a cozy blanket by the fire. When venturing out, a knitted hat and warm coat are in order. Unfortunately, for some people these things are luxuries and home is a homeless shelter. This program features ways to help them be more comfortable.

Use knitting needles, yard goods and patterns as the table centerpieces.

Ask the women to make knitted or crocheted hats that can be distributed in homeless shelters. Invite someone from the women's ministries group to demonstrate these skills. If no one is available, tutorial videos are on the Internet giving step-by-step instructions. Hats can also be made using knitting looms. One tutorial site is: [YouTube](#).

[Loomahat.com](#) also has videos and resources. Check the Internet for the looms, hooks and patterns as prices vary. Thrift stores sometimes have a variety of supplies for working on this project.

"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you" John 14:2 (KJV). When Jesus spoke these words, He was at the end of His earthly ministry. He was on His way back home to heaven. He was going to His home to prepare a place, not just for His disciples, but also for you and me. Jesus came to earth to heal the lame and broken-hearted. He came to break chains and set captives free and to make the blind to see. Jesus came to comfort those who suffer and calm those who are grieving and confused. Jesus came to be our Savior, our foundation, and our home.

In my current appointment here in rainy Portland, Oregon there are more rainy days than sunny ones. I find myself missing the place I called home, the always sunny, Los Angeles, California. There the weather is usually a cool 75 degrees, and umbrellas are used to shield you from the sun while you are at the beach humming along to the Albert Hammond's song, "It Never Rains in Southern California!" As an officer at the Moore Street Corps I have the unique and God-ordained opportunity to minister, not just at my corps, but also to women at [The Salvation Army Female Emergency Shelter](#) (SAFES) where I offer rides to women's ministries programs and Sunday morning services. Many of the women I encounter at SAFES are longing for their own home. I'm brokenhearted when I hear some of their stories of never having a home and not knowing what it is to be loved and cared for. They don't know what it

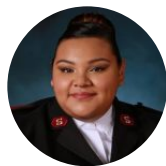
feels like to come home to a warm place where there is food on the table, a place to lay your head at night, or what it is like to take a warm bath after a long day. Many of them come to church looking for that love and family they don't have elsewhere. Having never experienced homelessness, I can only sympathize, point them to Jesus and give reassurance that He loves them. I can give them the same reassurance Jesus gave the disciples: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2). Jesus was leaving His disciples and was going "home" to prepare a place for them and for us. Just as the disciples trusted in the words Jesus spoke, we have to do the same. When the time is right, and our home is ready, Christ promises to return and take us to our heavenly home. "Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind" (Isaiah 65:17).

When we accept Jesus as our Savior, we have that assurance that He has prepared a place for us and that one day we will be with Him. The buildings that we call our homes aren't permanent; they are our temporary home away from home. Singer [Chris Tomlin](#) sings a song called "Home." It includes these words: "This world is not what it was meant to be, all this pain, all this suffering. There's a better place waiting for me in Heaven." Another song puts it this way: "This world is not my home; I'm just a-passing through ... The angels beckon me from heaven's open door. And I can't feel at home in this world anymore."

We have the assurance that Christ has prepared a home for us and is waiting for us to join Him there. One of the greatest blessings for us is not just getting to heaven, but more importantly being with the Lord for all eternity.

*The Salvation Army Songbook* song #415 "Do Not Go Home Without Jesus"

About author



Lieutenant Carolina Lopez

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## Service Programs

# November 2019 – Give Thanks with a Grateful Heart

Español

November 1, 2019   By [Captain Rutendo Masango](#)   0 comments



### Introduction

Service is not always a popular concept. In John 13, Jesus demonstrated the importance of serving others. "Jesus knew that the Father had given Him authority over everything and that He had come from God and would return to God. So He got up from the table, took off His robe, wrapped a towel around His waist, and poured water into a basin. Then He began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel He had around Him" (verses 3 – 5). This



act of service was usually reserved for low-class servants. It was a job no one else wanted to perform; but Jesus showed us the importance of service by undertaking it.

### **Ice Breaker**

Invite the women to take turns answering the following questions:

- 1 What has brought you joy in the last day, week, month or year?
- 2 Name three things that make you thankful.
- 3 For what are you currently trusting God?
- 4 What are your fears at this moment?

### **Opening Song and Prayer**

Sing song #364, *The Salvation Army Song Book*, "Give Thanks with a Grateful Heart" and open in prayer.

### **Service Ideas**

Do we need to go on a mission trip to see God at work? Absolutely not! My mom used to say: "Charity begins at home." If we can't talk to our neighbor, why do we think it necessary to cross the ocean to serve Him? God has created us to live in community. We must get outside of our comfort zones and talk with our neighbor. If we don't, we won't know what they are going through or have the opportunity to introduce them to God.

**The following could be done as a group or individually.**

- 1 Make peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and to give to the homeless.
- 2 Buy socks and give to the homeless.
- 3 Invite a corps member who is alone to your house for dinner.
- 4 Take an ARC beneficiary to lunch after the morning service.
- 5 Volunteer in the corps social service office.
- 6 Collect gently used shoes and donate to the social services office.
- 7 Support missionaries.
- 8 If money permits, plan to go on a mission trip.

### **Give Thanks to Him and Praise His Name**

Growing up in Zimbabwe, Africa was an experience I wouldn't trade for anything. Although life was tough due to abject poverty, my experience worshiping there was always a great blessing.

Though facing untold suffering, Zimbabweans have seen God provide for their basic needs and are grateful to Him for His provisions.

Over recent years, my husband and I have been privileged to organize and lead numerous mission trips back to our homeland. Some of the goals were to provide clothing, brass instruments and on one trip 80 goats for the home league at the Mungate Corps. On another trip, the main project was to renovate the Highfield Temple Corps. Their building now accommodates over 3000 Salvationists.

Mission trips have helped me truly understand the importance of service. Webster's dictionary defines service as "the action of helping or doing work for someone." That "someone" is God's child. We should not serve to feel good about ourselves, but to help our brothers and sisters who face daily hardships. The world teaches that to be someone you have to be served. However, Jesus taught the exact opposite. He became a human, humbled Himself and died a horrible death on the cross so that we might be saved. Jesus is an amazing teacher who taught us about humility.

When I think about our mission trips, I must give thanks to God every day for what I have, because there are many people who are struggling just to exist. We take for granted clean water, food, access to medical assistance, clean hospitals and good schools.

At the end of November, we celebrate Thanksgiving. It is my favorite time of the year. I love the fall colors, the reds, oranges, yellows and purples. Most importantly, it is time to reflect on what the Lord has done for me. At our Thanksgiving meal, my husband asks us to name three things for which we are thankful. Yet giving thanks should not happen only at the Thanksgiving holiday. This should be our daily practice.

Sometimes it is easy to thank God when everything is going well, but not in tough situations. The Bible says: "Give thanks in all circumstances." One of my favorite songs is: "This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." What a powerful message, that even in sickness, happy times or tough, God is still in charge. We are to enter His courts with thanksgiving and praise, for He alone deserves all the honor, glory and power.

Prayer

Lord give us a heart full of thanksgiving. Give us a heart for service and help us not to complain or only expect good things from You. We pray for the missionaries, the homeless and those who are broken. Lord give us the strength to reach out to our neighbors. Help us to reflect the love of Jesus with our words, actions and attitudes. We pray all this in Jesus' holy name, Amen.



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## **Service Programs**

### December 2019 – Deck the Halls

Español

December 1, 2019   By [Major Lynn Stewart](#)   0 comments



#### **Introduction**

The idea of this program is to decorate the homes of those individuals who are confined to their homes and can no longer decorate for Christmas.

#### **Program Outline**

Welcome

Opening Prayer

Devotional – “Dwell in My House”

Pot Luck Lunch

Blessing Stations

Depart for Operation Blessing

### **Blessing Stations**

Activity—Set up three blessing stations throughout the meeting room.

**Station #1**—Invite the women to send Christmas cards with encouraging notes to individuals who are shut in. Have available a list of those who would appreciate a card. The women may also be aware of additional individuals to whom the cards could be sent.

**Station#2**—Operation Blessing Boxes

Ask the women to assemble blessing boxes consisting of bottled water, candy canes, hot chocolate mixes, The War Cry, socks, small tabletop trees, garland and lights to decorate the tree.

**Station #3**—Ribbon Christmas Trees

Invite the women to make Christmas trees using scrap ribbon.

### **Supplies Needed:**

- Straight sticks (6" in length) or [cinnamon sticks](#)
- Ribbons(cut into 9-inch strips)
- Hot glue gun
- Twine
- Scissors

For directions and photos of this project check the website:

<https://www.firefliesandmudpies.com/scrap-ribbon-tree-ornaments>. The Internet also has instructions for other types of ribbon Christmas trees.



### **Dwell in My House**

I love this time of year. It's Christmas and there is a lot to do in my house to get ready for the celebration. There are presents to buy, menus to put together and decorations to display. We love to open our home to family and friends so that they can enjoy the holiday season with us. How many of you love having people over to your home? How do you get ready for the holidays? For some of you it may seem overwhelming and for others it's a labor of joy. I love

the quote, “Don’t just count your blessings. Be the blessing other people count on.” We receive a blessing when you can be a blessing to someone else.

In Psalm 27:4 we see David’s great desire to simply worship God. He declares, “The one thing I seek the most is to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.” Some commentators think that David may be referencing the tabernacle in Gibeon, which he had put up to house the Ark of the Covenant. Others think that David may have used the word to mean the presence of the Lord—being with him every day. Either way, he was expressing that his greatest desire was to live in God’s presence each day of his life. He longed to be close to the Lord and by dwelling in His house he truly felt at home. When we worship on a Sunday we are in the house of the Lord. Here we can find comfort and contentment, like being at home. In God’s house all are loved and welcomed. But we can also live in His presence every day even when we are not in a physical place of worship. God desires that we live in His presence no matter where we are or what we are doing. David wanted to experience every good and perfect thing that came from God the Father, all of the beauty and joy that comes when he was in relationship with the King. As we prepare for the coming of the newborn King, more than ever the Lord wants us to enter in, to worship, to lift Him up and share the good news of His love.

### **Let’s Pray**

God we thank you for Your Son Jesus. We thank You that no matter where we are, we can dwell with You and worship at Your feet. I pray that during this season we would not forget to spend time with You. I pray that as You have showered Your love on us, we would share that love with our family, friends and the less fortunate. Be with us as we go and visit hurting people today. May they feel Your love and care through our actions. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

About author



Major Lynn Stewart

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## January 2020 – A Clean Closet

[Español](#)

January 1, 2020 By [Major Pamela Markham](#) 0 comments



The New Year is a time to start over and get organized. The holiday season has come and gone and now it is time to clean up all the stuff that has been stashed in a closet. It is also a good time to look at the closets of our life and clean them out, to let God take away the old and keep what is useful for His service.

Display a variety of hangers, storage containers and baskets around the room.

Invite the women to take pictures of their closets at home and display them around the room. At the end of the meeting ask them to guess whose closet appears in the pictures.

Invite a professional organizer or closet designer to share tips with the women. Check the Internet for companies in your area.

The following are websites with great ideas for closet organization:

[www.housebeautiful.com/lifestyle/organizing-tips/tips/g911/closet-organization-ideas/](http://www.housebeautiful.com/lifestyle/organizing-tips/tips/g911/closet-organization-ideas/)

<http://www.hgtv.com/remodel/interior-remodel/5-steps-to-organizing-your-closet>

Invite the women to share any organizational tips that have worked well for them in their home.

Clean and organize closets or storage rooms around the corps building. Be sure to have the supplies and storage containers needed to accomplish this project.

Check with a local shelter to find out some of their needs. Compile a list of these items and distribute it to the women. Ask them to check at home to see if they have any items they could donate. Emphasize that the items should be clean, gently used and in good working order. Set up a date when the group could deliver the donated items to the shelter and hold a joint program with their clients.



When I was a child, Saturday was always our cleaning day. My sisters and I would have to clean our rooms before we could go out and have fun. Of course, we always made the project much harder and longer than it had to be. One particular Saturday my sister and I decided we were going to outsmart our mother. We took everything that was scattered about the room and stacked it all in our closet and shut the door. Well, needless to say, mom was not fooled. She opened that closet and everything fell out. Now not only did we have to clean it all up the correct way, we were grounded for the day.

How often do we try the same thing in our spiritual lives? We stack and shove the messy things of our lives away into our mental closets, hoping that they will be forgotten or better yet, just completely disappear. We try to hide away little white lies, gossiping, hurt feelings, unforgiveness, all the sins that can come into our everyday living, which we don't want others to see. We skip our prayer and devotional times and allow the world to show us how to handle these sins.

When my mother came to inspect our room that Saturday, she reminded us that the closet was also a part of our room. Psalm 84:1 begins, "How lovely is your dwelling place." It doesn't add "except for the closets." Our entire dwelling place needs to be lovely. Our lives need to be clean and neat in all areas. When we make a mess of our dwelling place, when we sin and we become unlovely, we need to stop and do what is necessary to make it right. We need to clean the entire room. Perhaps we need to start with the closets, the hidden areas of our life, the parts we hope no one will ever see. But God sees everything and knows everything about us. He wants us to be able to show every aspect of our lives to others and in so doing help others to grow spiritually.

First John 1:9 states, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." This means even the sins we shove into the closet and hope no one will find out about. He wants us to confess our sins to Him so that He can cleanse us.

Hand out slips of paper and invite the women to write down some of the things that they need to work on in their lives, those areas that they need God to take control of. Invite those who feel led to share what they wrote. After a time of prayer for guidance and forgiveness, invite the women to throw their papers into a trash can to symbolize cleansing of their lives.

As a united closing prayer, have everyone read together Psalm 84:1-4.

About author

Major Pamela Markham



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## **Service Programs**

### February 2020 – Home Is Where the Heart Is

[Español](#)

February 1, 2020   By [Major Claudia Ruiz](#)   0 comments



## **Introduction**

February 14 is the date we celebrate love. Love is about giving. God gave us the greatest gift of all. "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). This program has a dual purpose: to remember those who may not normally be remembered on Valentine's Day and to raise funds for World Service.

## **Service Project – Valentine Grams**

This project will be done in two meetings. The first phase is to put together the paper grams and can be held weeks ahead of the delivery date. The second is to assemble the flowers or chocolates that will be distributed with the Valentine Grams.

### **First Meeting**

Invite the women to assemble the Valentine grams. They should include information of when they will be delivered, (try to make this close to Valentine's Day), what will be included (flower or candy), the deadline date for the grams to be returned and the cost. Try to keep the cost low so that all can participate. There are many ideas for suitable designs on the Internet and on Pinterest. Encourage the women to purchase the Valentine grams to give to their loved ones and others that many not be remembered on Valentine's Day. The group may also want to sell the Valentine grams to their neighbors and friends to spread the love. If this is the case, be sure to consider how the grams will be delivered.

### **Second Meeting**

Ahead of time, purchase the flowers or chocolates depending on what is included with the Valentine gram. Red and white carnations are usually fairly inexpensive and make nice bouquets. Wrap each bouquet in red and white tissue paper and top with clear cellophane. This will extend the number of flowers necessary, but still makes an attractive bouquet. Finish each bouquet with a bow.

### **Helpful Hints**

Collect the money at the time of sale of the Valentine's Day grams. The Sunday morning closest to Valentine's Day is a good time for distribution. If possible, assemble the bouquets on Sunday morning so that they are as fresh as possible. Distribution is also easier on a Sunday morning as many of the recipients will attend the morning meeting.

## **Love the Lord Your God**

"You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt. 22:37–39. These are the words of Jesus. He is calling us to not only love, but to show it as well. To love is our greatest command. It starts first by loving God with all our heart because has given His only Son for us. Then our love for God extends to our neighbors, whom we are to love as we love ourselves.

I remember when I was first married. I believed the saying, "And they lived happily ever after." But marriage wasn't quite the fairy tale I believed it was going to be. There was so much I had

to learn and discover. But through perseverance I have seen the beautiful fruit of this relationship that only God can bring.

Our relationship with God can sometimes be difficult. We often want to go our own way thinking that we know what is best; we don't consult Him about what He wants us to do. We make our own plans, which are often not in keeping with His plans. But God is faithful to His word. He wants the best for us even in those circumstances where it is difficult for us to see. "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart" (Jer. 29:11-13).

Let God teach you to love. This is not love as the world expresses it but a real and rewarding love that is straight from the Father to us. Spend some time in prayer and ask the Lord to teach you about His amazing love.

About author



Major Claudia Ruiz

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## March 2020 – Restore This House

Español

March 1, 2020

By [Captain Regina Verdugo](#)

0 comments



There are a lot of simple fixes we can do ourselves in our homes. Rather than spending money, or putting chores on a very long “Honey-Do” list, this program features small repairs that the women can tackle themselves and advises when it is time to call an expert.

For centerpieces use plastic toolboxes from the Dollar Store filled with tissue paper, a hammer, measuring tape, screw driver and nails. Display home improvement books and magazines.

Invite someone from the local hardware store to share with the women how to do simple repairs on toilets, sinks, walls and other areas around the house. Ask them to discuss which larger projects need the attention of a professional.

Check Pinterest for common home repairs. Print some of the best helps and share the best videos. If possible, have someone demonstrate a couple of the easy repairs.

Some things can't be repaired, but can be repurposed. Invite the women to bring their favorite broken or chipped dishes and china, which can be turned into stepping-stones for their gardens. All that is needed is an aluminum cake pan, Quikrete® (available from the local hardware store), water and broken pieces of china. There are several tutorials on the Internet, but the following is a simple one that includes pictures.

<https://overthebigmoon.com/from-oops-to-ahhh/>

Spend time gathering the names and information of corps and community members who are elderly or disabled and need help with simple home repairs. Set a day to go out in teams and tackle as many as possible.

There are many shows on television that highlight the house flipping industry. These shows look for homes with a potential high resale value after the new owner makes an investment. These homes are often run down and in disrepair. Since the purchaser often doesn't fully know what is wrong with the house until after they've purchased it, the show takes us through a variety of situations. Some of the most challenging flips include situations where the roof or foundation is severely damaged or where the electrical system is deficient. Such repairs become costly and can eat away at their potential profit very quickly.

We might ask when watching these shows and seeing the damage, "How could anyone let it get that way?" It's interesting to note that our human nature adapts easily to new situations allowing us often to become blind to what is right in front of us. Perhaps it is a noisy faucet that drips all night. When it first started dripping, it drove you crazy, even keeping you up at

night; however, eventually it became just another household sound you no longer noticed. Or what about that stain in the carpet by the kitchen? You remember when you first saw it and how annoyed you were by it. Now you pass it every day and barely seem to notice it. Perhaps you just add a rug on top of the carpet to cover the stain.

In the book of Amos, the prophet leaves the house of Israel a promise. After spending nearly nine chapters of doing a full house inspection, he lets them know not to worry because there is still hope. He tells the people of God's future promise for the nation of Israel and for those of us who would be grafted into His great plan through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. "In that day I will restore the fallen house of David. I will repair its damaged walls. From the ruins I will rebuild it and restore its former glory. And Israel will possess what is left of Edom" (Amos 9:11,12).

In our relationship with Christ we can become complacent, often overlooking seemingly small sins that accumulate just like a noisy faucet or a carpet stain. Perhaps we noticed them at first, but then they just became part of our everyday existence. This promise reminds us that God is in the repairing, rebuilding and restoring business. In 1 Corinthians 3:16 we are reminded, "Don't you realize that all of you together are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God lives in you?" When this temple (the house of God) becomes stained and dirty with sin, it needs to be restored. God's temple is to be holy. Do you have a stained carpet hidden under a decorative rug? Are you hiding sins hoping that they won't be noticed? Where does God need to bring restoration in your life today? Thankfully, He is waiting for us to confess our sins to Him. We read in 1 John 1:9, "But if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness." Aren't you glad that God is in the restoration business?

About author



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## April 2020 – Come to the Garden

[Español](#)

April 1, 2020 By [Captain Sherry Czanderna](#) 0 comments



This program outlines the steps for the women's ministries group to coordinate a gardening project for the corps and community. The Salvation Army motto, "Heart to God and Hand to Man," appropriately illustrates that garden experience. God's living Word germinates within our hearts, reflecting His love to others as we meet their needs.



Before following all the steps listed, be sure to pray, asking God's for His guidance.

- Establish a date and time for the first meeting. Plan a weekend meeting in the Fall with the intent to plant in the Spring.
- Reserve a medium-size space for the public meeting. Check with the local library for availability if The Salvation Army building is not equipped for the meeting.
- Advertise your intentions in the local newspaper and by local radio. Community attendance will determine the level of interest for a community garden.
- Organize a garden committee and select a chairman. Ask for a commitment from the group to meet on a regular basis.
- Establish a mission statement. Keep in mind that the objective of the service project is to lend a hand to underprivileged community residents.
- Seek sponsors. Approach local nurseries and garden center stores for seed or tool donations.
- Inquire at local universities and community colleges for instructors who might donate their time to teach a workshop. If not, maybe they or their students would regularly visit the garden to offer advice to the gardeners.
- Establish gardening guidelines. Create a schedule listing dates and times that the garden will be open. Organize, assign, and post a schedule of volunteers to regularly water the garden. Coordinate a list of knowledgeable volunteers who will be available within the garden for questions and assistance.
- Determine a plot within the garden that will be cultivated for the purpose of tithing. All harvested produce from that piece of ground will be distributed to those who are currently unable to garden for themselves. Ask some of the women's ministry women to cultivate this plot.
- Define the desired outcome goals. Possible recipients of the harvest might be Salvation Army Silvercrest residents, afterschool program families, or clients of The Salvation Army food bank. Another option is to donate harvested produce to local food banks in the community.
- Offer and assign plots to interested lower-income community residents. Enlist the help of women's ministry members to contact these possible gardeners. When they come to garden, invite them to Sunday morning worship services, or to the weekly women's, men's and youth corps programs. Pray that the gardeners will receive all the benefits God has intended for their bodies, minds, souls and spirits.
- Offer an afterschool program providing a plot for the students to learn various topics such as seed germination, transplanting seedlings, warm and cool season vegetables,

photosynthesis, healthy eating options, insect metamorphosis and beneficial insect identification. Hands-on learning about gardening will connect well with devotionals about coming to the garden with God. Pray for salvation among the students.

At creation God fashioned a glorious dwelling place in the Garden of Eden. This haven of peace was equipped with all the necessary elements needed for each seed-bearing plant to reproduce a harvest. The realm of God's power and glory flourished there because He was that peace and glory in the garden.

God created man in this marvelous habitation and established a relationship between Himself and Adam. Then as a companion for Adam, God fashioned Eve from Adam rib. Both individually enjoyed a personal relationship with God and with each other. Loneliness did not exist in the garden.

That same relationship invitation is available to us today. God, who created this invitation, is the same today as He was yesterday and as He will be forever. He is unchanging. He reveals Himself through His Word. In prayer and Bible study, we can experience His home in our hearts. In His presence is a harvest of peace, joy and love. As He did with Adam and Eve, God reveals Himself as Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer and Governor of all that exists.

From our garden experience with God, we can learn three lessons. The first is that God's Word is our source of faith. The second is that community living necessitates Christlikeness. The third is that seed bears seed in its own likeness.

The first lesson teaches that God is our perpetual source for life sustenance (2 Peter 1:3). Like a branch that draws nourishment from the vine planted by the streams of water, so we receive faith and spiritual maturity from God's Word (John 15:1 and 5). Equally so, we wither and perish under trials without deep roots in His Word (Psalm 1:1-3).

The Word of God directs our thoughts, words and actions out of temptation's way and empowers us to overcome difficulties. By reading, memorizing, talking about and applying His Word, the Holy Spirit has an opportunity to work in our inner being like no other power. He imparts wisdom, convicting us of personal sin, His righteousness and the judgment to come.

The second lesson teaches about Christ on the cross. The vertical piece of wood on the cross depicts God's original relationship in the garden with Adam and Eve. The horizontal piece of wood symbolizes our relationship with others. Before Adam and Eve fell prey to temptation, fellowship with God in the Garden of Eden was divine. After their disobedience, they were barred from the garden. In response, Christ intervened for the sin of mankind. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Christ accepted blame for the sins of the world. His obedience unto death nailed Him to the cross (Romans 5:6). Galatians 3:13 (NIV) describes it this way: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: 'Cursed is

everyone who is hung on a pole.” Christ experienced the wrath of God. He felt abandonment when He took the place of sinful mankind. His selfless choice exchanged eternal death with eternal life, renewing the broken covenant between God and man that had been spoiled by selfish disobedience (Heb. 5:8, 9).

Now out of our renewed vertical relationship with God, overflows His unconditional love that influences our horizontal relationships with others (1 John 4:19–21). An example of this is when we hurt others by our greed, pride or lustful nature. If we have been in prayer, fellowship and Bible study, we will more readily recognize that we have carelessly hurt others with our words or actions. Our spirit will more likely submit to the Holy Spirit’s nudge to seek God’s forgiveness. A desire to intercede and apologize will rise within our heart.

If we choose to hold on to grudges and remember the details of offenses, bitterness will cause us to disregard our lifeline. If we allow the Holy Spirit to convict us of our sin nature and convince us of His forgiveness, He will enable us with a right spirit to forgive and to live God-pleasing lives. Through His work in us, we will bear the fruits of righteousness and peace (Eph. 4:32). Keep in mind, however, that sometimes our apologies may not be met with acceptance. In those times, we can yet intercede for the healing of the one we’ve hurt.

The third lesson teaches that seed bears seed. In the Bible, the Gospel is referred to as seed that is scattered on the soil of a hearer’s heart and springs up as faith (John 5:24, 25). Personal testimony is one meaningful way to introduce others to Christ. Sharing about our faith experiences often inspires others to seek God. This is not always the result, however, as it is the hearer’s choice to receive or reject.

Those who do receive the seed of faith further root their faith in Christ by studying the Bible, memorizing Scripture, journaling, praying, fellowshiping and sharing their testimony with others (1 Tim. 4:16). Such discipleship strengthens and matures their faith until it becomes their soul’s conviction. This is fruit that remains from a seedling.

Martyrs are one example of Christians who have such conviction. They refuse to deny their faith in Christ often resulting in torture and death. A theologian from the early church once said, “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.” He explained that they were willing to sacrifice their life rather than deny their identity with Christ (John 12:24). God abides in the garden of their hearts. Believers live in expectation of a glorious future with Christ at His return (Romans 8:22). They are confident that, where He is, they will also be (John 14:2). Faith roots, grows and bears fruit in God’s Word. In His presence abides the fullness of life. It is home sweet home for the soul. So, why not come to the garden?



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## May 2020 – Protect the Home Front

[Español](#)

May 1, 2020 By [Major Elizabeth Welch](#) 0 comments



“Thank you for your service” is a phrase often used to greet active duty military and veterans as well as law enforcement personnel and first responders. These words roll off the tongue so easily these days with a mixture of sincerity, obligation and political correctness. But how can we show appreciation for these unique groups of people and the dedication, sacrifice, and hardships associated with their jobs?

Recruiters serve all over the nation, many in communities that lack a local military installation and support services accessible to active-duty members and their families. Contact the area recruiting offices, stop by for a visit and gather information about any needs they might have. Invite a recruiter to help educate the women about local recruiting activities prior to this service project. Ideas for projects could include: prepare home baked goods and encouraging cards, celebrate birthdays with a special delivery (small cake, balloons, or birthday cards) or host an annual birthday party for recruiters and their families with the women's ministries group serving lunch or dinner.

Our medical ministries focus on patients and residents of nursing homes and rehabilitation centers. The focus could be changed to show appreciation for medical professionals/caregivers and other first responders. Expand your reach by considering service to the emergency room staff of the local hospital, EMTs, physical therapists, doctors, or medical lab workers. Assemble giveaways of individually wrapped candies or cookies in sandwich bags tied with ribbon. Use a simple tag to identify the project such as "Candy (or Cookies) for the Caring."

We can easily praise those who protect and serve. Write letters of congratulation or send thank you cards for specific acts of heroism highlighted in the news. Set up a booth at a community event. Make or purchase a simple banner and encourage the community to write words of encouragement to an identified group—Police, Fire, SWAT. Present the "gratitude" banner at another community function like National Day of Prayer, or plan your very own prayer event and invite honorary representatives.

Look for fun, light-hearted ways to show you care. Deliver pudding cups with labels that read, "Thanks for pudding your life on the line!" Give Lifesaver candy pouches with the message, "Thank you for being a Lifesaver." Distribute "Emergency S'mores Kits" including a graham cracker, large marshmallow and three squares of chocolate, with a label stating, "The world needs s'more heroes just like you."

"He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress, My God, in whom I trust!" (Psalm 91:1.2). In more modern times, most of America's war involvement has been on foreign soil, away from home. The home front was a place where we supported the war effort by purchasing bonds, rolling bandages, building planes and assembling ammunition.

Today, whether at home or abroad, we are all in need of protection. Our world is filled with uncertainty. Often we cannot identify our enemy. Those who wish to do us harm have visited our shores. Dangers abound, and the home front is under attack. Yet imagine this: the Most High God has made Himself available to us as a shelter. His presence is so great that it casts a shadow over all who need safety and security. What an awesome acknowledgement of God's protection.

The psalmist reminds us that real protection doesn't come solely from obligation. Police officers are supposed to keep the peace. Firemen put out fires. The military is sworn to defend our country. Each has a mission they are obligated to uphold. We should show our appreciation for all they do for us out of obligation, but God protects us because He loves us. When we belong to Him, our faith binds us to His spiritual presence. Our physical location and the things of this world lose their significance compared to what He offers. He is our home, our refuge and fortress. We recognize His great power and place our faith in Him and His promises. He is all we need.

About author



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## June 2020 – Yard Sale for Youth

Español

June 1, 2020   By [Captain Heather Pope](#)   0 comments



Plan a yard sale to raise scholarship funds to send children to summer camp. Participation in a camping program makes a lasting impression on those who attend. Children today face many difficulties. Camp gives them the chance to escape for a few days, make new friends, build their self-esteem and learn about the love of the Savior. What an amazing opportunity to serve and show children the love of Christ



In advance of the yard sale, ask the women to make a set up list of what will be needed—tables, chairs, sun shades, cash box, pricing stickers, newspaper to wrap breakable items and bags to hold purchases. Recruit volunteers to cover the hours of the sale, utilizing not only the women but also kids from the youth programs. Go over yard sale tips to maximize your profits. You can find many helpful sites on the Internet: [Wholefully.com/yard-sale-tips](http://Wholefully.com/yard-sale-tips) and [cheatsheet.com](http://cheatsheet.com), and [happinessishomemade.net](http://happinessishomemade.net). Set up a day for collecting and pricing items for sale. Remember to keep your prices low. Advertise the event to draw in customers.

Sell snacks such as cookies, fresh fruit cups and lemonade.

Plan to set up various stations at the yard sale that will generate other income.

Offer simple crafts that the children can make at minimal cost.

Fill paper lunch bags with little treasures for kids such as games, stickers, candy and pencils that have been purchased from a dollar store. Sell the bags for \$1.00 each.

Ask the women to donate gently used stuffed animals that their children no longer want. Also the thrift store may be another source for suitable animals. Create a pet coral using four pieces of white garden railing.

Build a lemonade stand out of four wooden crates and invite the women to paint and decorate it. Use triangle shaped flags made from cardstock to advertise the price and hang them with string across the front of the stand. Check the website: <https://www.socialdad.ca> for pictures.

Display various items that have been repurposed: picture frames, mason jars, t-shirts. There are many examples on Pinterest. Invite some of the women who enjoy crafts to make some of these items that can then be offered for sale.

## Beauty Is In the Eye of the Beholder

Assemble a supply of women's clothes along with fun accessories: necklaces, hats, sun glasses. These could be donated from the women and after the game could be included in the yard sale.

Put together teams of two—a runner and a dresser. The runner picks out the most fabulous outfit and then helps their partner to put them on over their clothes. Have the women vote for the best outfit. Have different winning categories such as most fashionable, most unique and most likely to never be worn in public.

“Teach them [God's Word] to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up” (Deut. 11:19).

After tucking my little girl into bed I listen as she begins her prayers. “Now I lay me down to sleep,” she says and continues to offer prayers for many things. She tries to remember people who are hurting, sick, or in need and then goes on to thank God for her Mommy, Daddy and every other member of her family including our brood of animal's, name by name. Occasionally I catch myself wanting to rush her so she will just go to sleep. But in these moments, the Lord speaks to me. My heart is full and grateful for the love and trust she has for her Lord at such a young age.

I think back to my own childhood and the many missed opportunities when someone could have shown me this pure, innocent love that I so needed. Sometimes all it takes is the kind gesture or an invitation to make a difference in a child's life. And then an invitation came to me. I was going to summer camp. I didn't know what to expect, but I was filled with such joy. Who was this Jesus that my friend was talking about? I didn't know, but I was ready to find out. That week at camp is forever imbedded in my heart and my memories as some of the best days of my life. The lessons I learned about Jesus, the songs we sang around the campfire, and the friendships made were life changing. Camp has a way of doing that for a child. It doesn't offer them just a week to get away, but rather a week that can change their life completely.

My children know the Lord today because someone showed me a kindness and love that I had never experienced. I was shown the love of Jesus Christ and was taught to live for Him. And as my little girl says her prayers, I am thankful for this gift that may have started off small but will last for generations to come.

We have an opportunity to shine God's light in the lives of the children in our community today. Deuteronomy 11 reminds us that our children should learn the disciplines of the Lord, His majesty, His mighty hand and outstretched arm. They should see Him daily in the way we love, the way we serve, and the way we share His good news.

As women of God, we have the chance to make a difference in a child's life, like my friend did for me so many years ago. Let us not see this as a hardship, or burden, but as a blessing, an opportunity that the Lord has entrusted to us. We can help these beautiful children to become all God intended them to be and to make an eternal difference in the world.

Let our joy in the Lord be contagious to those around us. May our voices sing praises for all to hear and our actions be pleasing to Him. Let's teach our children not only in word but by example day by day.

About author



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## Service Programs

### July 2020 – Love Your Neighbor

[Español](#)

July 1, 2020   By [Major Keilah Toy](#)   0 comments



## Program Ideas

Play the video “No Way Out: Sex-Trafficked at 16 Years Old” from the website: [www.helpsharechange.org](http://www.helpsharechange.org). This is about how a survivor escaped human trafficking.

Coordinate a time of prayer and then share the opportunity for the women’s ministry members to sponsor a Salvation Army Justice Gift ([www.SAjustice.us](http://www.SAjustice.us)). These are small Salvation Army mission projects, such as buying meals for a child living in the Red Light District in India, literacy materials for WORTH Women’s Program in Kenya, purchasing medical supplies or vocational training for “Survivors of Prostitution Program” in Kenya.

Share with the women the gifts available from the website “Others/Trade for Hope” ([www.tradeforhope.com](http://www.tradeforhope.com).) “Others” is a Salvation Army initiative, assisting vulnerable victims in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Kenya and Moldova to produce goods, giving these people a means of livelihood and independence.

Follow on Instagram – <https://www.instagram.com/othersusa/>

Coordinate a “Support Team” to connect with and care for women in your community working in the sex industry. There are many resources available on [www.SAjustice.us](http://www.SAjustice.us): Support Team Basics (English), Contact Card and Flyer (Both available in English, Spanish, Thai, Vietnamese, Korean and Chinese).

A Southern California Division corps launched such a group, a weekly “Support Team” to women working in clubs and parlors in their neighborhood. Named “Sweet Prayers” to identify the means and purpose of their ministry, the team visits locations each week, bearing sweet gifts, offering friendships, resources and prayer. Men from the corps serve as drivers and pray as the team talks to the workers inside the parlors. One particular parlor manager, uncomfortable with the visits, told the team their treats were “too sweet” and not to come back. Undeterred, the team learned the Asian cultural palate did not indulge regularly in American sweets, and instead came the following week bringing gifts of fruit. The parlor manager now welcomes and looks forward to “Sweet Prayers” weekly visit.

Make contact with community liaison (Policeman or local Anti-Trafficking Task Force) to identify needs in your community. A recommended resource is: [www.polarisproject.org](http://www.polarisproject.org), a nonprofit, non-governmental organization that works to combat and prevent modern-day slavery and human trafficking. The organization works directly with victims, hosts tip and crisis hotlines, and offers solutions to those victimized by human trafficking.



**Quiz: True Or False?**

- The Salvation Army once owned a Match Factory.

**True:** To fight the unsafe conditions and poor wages of match factory workers in 1891, The Salvation bought a match factory, which led to significant work reforms in the industry.

- The Salvation Army helped raise the age of consent in England.

**True:** Through the Army's continual pressure and petition of over 300,000 names, Parliament was pressured to raise the age of consent from 13 to 16 years old in 1881.

- The Salvation Army was pivotal in thousands of women being freed from brothels in Japan.

**True:** The Army campaigned actively in the 1900s against the brothels to the point of being beaten and injured. The press joined in the coverage resulting in an imperial edict to declare women and girls would be given protection if they wished to go free. Within one year, 12,000 secured their freedom.

- What do these three facts given above have in common?

Since our founding, fighting for Social Justice is in the DNA of The Salvation Army.



## Salvation Army's Fighting Human Trafficking Action Plan

from SA Justice

01:15 |



I have a confession. I am very selfish. I don't like to feel bad. I even avoid books and movies that are tearjerkers or have a bad ending because I don't want to feel bad or hurt for others, nor feel any pain or sorrow. How does this translate into my everyday life? Sometimes I talk myself into being too busy to care. If I see a disheveled, greasy-looking homeless man lying motionless in a building entrance, I take great pains to stay far away as I pass by. If I see a toothless, middle-aged woman panhandling for money at the intersection, I convince myself she would just use any money toward her addictions.

But I first learned compassion on December 14, 1983. My first baby, Christopher, was born extremely jaundiced and was whisked into Intensive Care for newborns for intravenous liquids. An IV needle is usually inserted into the arm of an adult, but with a newborn's risk of knocking the needle out, the medical staff inserted the needle into the soft spot at the top of my baby's head. To further prevent the needle from displacing, they taped a Styrofoam cup, cut in half, onto his head. There my baby lay, looking like the little monkey from Aladdin with that cup on his head, in an incubator where I couldn't touch him. For eight straight days, I cried as we visited him in the hospital. "It's not supposed to be like this! My baby is supposed to come home with me!" This is when I learned compassion, truly hurting and caring for another person, my baby, and doing whatever I could to ease his pain and discomfort.

I realize from the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30–35), that love and compassion through God's eyes spurs one to action. It's not enough to merely recognize and feel another's pain. Today, outside our very doorsteps, millions of victims around the world are suffering with injustice, imprisoned in real and virtual shackles of poverty, hunger and abuse. And it is in the DNA of every soldier and member of The Salvation Army to be a voice for the voiceless, to bring awareness, healing and hope to those who are suffering.

As the Good Samaritan's compassion spurred him to action, how is God calling you to love these victims of social injustice? Isaiah 1:17 says, "Learn to do good. Seek justice. Help the oppressed." Solomon writes: "Never walk away from someone who deserves help, your hand is God's hand for that person" (Proverbs 3:27, *The Message*.) God's love in us spurs us to action. How can you help your neighbor today?



About author



Major Keilah Toy

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## August 2020 – Home Alone

[Español](#)

August 1, 2020 By [Cathie McCulley](#) 0 comments



Materials Needed:

- Note cards/stationary/envelopes

- Pens (mix it up and provide a variety of colors)
- Bibles, songbooks, poetry books, inspirational sayings
- Large mailing envelopes
- Stamps

Ask the women to choose three to five people who have not been able to make it to the corps for a while. They may be shut-ins, in retirement homes, recovering from medical issues, or moved away from the corps. The goal is to have each woman write a note of encouragement to these individuals. They can use Bible verses, songs from the songbook, poetry or even inspirational sayings. Encourage the women to pray for each recipient. When the recipient receives their package, they will be showered with many blessings.

For those individuals confined to their home, one of the frustrating difficulties is the inability to purchase groceries, medical supplies and other needed items. Ask the women to identify one or two individuals whom they would be willing to contact on a weekly basis with the idea that they would pick up these needed items for them. To find people who need shopping help contact those organizations that provide in-home meals such as Meals on Wheels.

“For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink” (Matt. 25:35).

Invite the women to participate in a picnic potluck with various finger sandwiches, chips/crackers with dips, as well as different types of salads.

Use picnic tablecloths on each of the tables along with matching napkins and plates. The materials needed for the service project could serve as centerpieces at each table.

Read Matthew 25:34–40.

When I think of “Home Alone,” I think of the 1990 movie of the same title. The story involves an eight-year-old boy, Kevin McAllister (played by Macaulay Culkin) who accidentally gets left home alone while the rest of the family sets off on a Christmas vacation. In almost every scene, I find myself laughing hysterically. No matter how much I laughed throughout this movie, young Kevin would tear at my heartstrings. His family didn’t only leave without him; they didn’t even notice that he was missing. He felt alone. He felt forgotten. He felt unloved.

The feeling of being unloved is no laughing matter. It can bring on other feelings such as unworthiness and depression. According to an article in *Medical News Today*:

- Depression seems to be more common among women than men
- The symptoms include lack of joy and reduced interest in things that used to bring a person happiness
- Life events, such as bereavement, produce mood changes that can usually be distinguished from the features of depression
- The causes of depression are not fully understood but are likely to be a complex combination of genetic, biological, environmental and psychosocial factors

Nothing is worse than feeling that no one cares or that you have been forgotten. Within our own corps, there are many who feel this kind of loneliness or depression. Something as simple as receiving a personalized note or card can lift someone's spirits more than we know. Letting them know that they are thought of, loved and cared for is so important.

In Matthew, chapter 25, Jesus explains that we need to step up and do something. We can show mercy, which *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines as "compassionate treatment of those in distress." Within these verses of scripture, Jesus talks about six important acts of mercy: food, drink, hospitality, clothing, nursing care and visitation. Verse 34 declares, "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed by My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world.'" Everyone can show mercy. You don't need to be rich to offer a bottle of water to someone standing on the street corner. You don't need to have a special medical degree to hand someone a scarf or hat during the cold winter. You don't have to be abundantly articulate to send someone a simple note of encouragement. You just need to step up and do it.

Jesus explains in verse 40, "I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these My brothers and sisters, you were doing it to Me!" In other words, everyone is important because we are all His children. Everyone is worthy. Everyone is loved—so loved that He died for every one. It is our responsibility to help pass along that love.

### **Prayer**

Dear Lord:

Thank you for loving me unconditionally. Thank you for putting people in my path who helped me and showed Your love to me. Help me to remember those who are less fortunate, those who may be shut-in, those who may feel forgotten. Help me to show Your mercy. Allow me to shine Your light and show them Your abundant love. I pray this in your precious name, Jesus.



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## **Service Programs**

# September 2020 – Homework, How Can I Help?

[Español](#)

September 1, 2020 By [Lt. Colonel Judith Smith](#) 0 comments



## **Program Description**

When we were young most of us just accepted the fact that we would have homework. How are kids today dealing with the educational demands placed upon them, and how can we help? (Share the devotional before discussing the possible service projects.)

## **Refreshments**

As we focus on young students, prepare and serve the refreshments lunch box style.

- PBJ finger sandwiches
- Celery stuffed with cream cheese
- Apple slices with peanut butter dip
- Fresh baked chocolate cookies
- Juice boxes

## It's Just Homework

What's all the fuss about? It's just homework. When we were young, most of us just accepted the fact that we would have homework. It was not a question of do or not do. We were told to do it and we accepted the teacher's request to work on the homework assignment. We also accepted the consequences of not completing our homework, either a drop in our grade or some other form of discipline. We were also strongly encouraged to complete it properly and on time.

Currently there is a lot of debate about the importance of homework. Is there a true purpose to the assigning of homework? Is there such a thing as too much? Does homework have adverse effects on students? How are parents supposed to do respond to it? Is there a balance between time spent doing homework and the loss of playtime? Does homework cause undue stress on students? Do teachers assign too much? How much is too much? Should parents participate in their child's homework?

Studies on this subject show that homework improves a child's thinking and memory. It helps young students develop positive study skills and habits that will serve them well throughout life. Homework encourages students to use time wisely.

The website [blog.eskool.ca](http://blog.eskool.ca) has listed 14 reasons why homework is important:

- 1 It improves your child's thinking and memory
- 2 It helps your child develop positive study skills and habits that will serve him/her well throughout life
- 3 Homework encourages your child to use time wisely
- 4 It teaches your child to work independently
- 5 Homework teaches your child to take responsibility for their work
- 6 It allows your child to review and practice what has been covered in class
- 7 It helps your child to get ready for the next day's class

- 8 Homework helps your child learn to use resources, such as libraries, reference materials and computer websites to find information
- 9 It encourages your child to explore subjects more fully than classroom time permits
- 10 It allows your child to extend learning by applying skills to new situations
- 11 It helps your child integrate learning by applying many different skills to a single task, such as book reports or science projects
- 12 Homework helps parents learn more about what your child is learning in school
- 13 It allows parents to communicate about what your child is learning
- 14 It encourages parents to spark your child's enthusiasm

Are you are wondering what this has to do with me? I was intrigued by the list and felt that the Lord was calling us to share our life experiences by gifting our communities with our time, talents and energies. Are we are being called to give our time, encouragement and possibly actual instruction for the benefit of others. Giving pleases God.

Scripture reminds us that we are to help others, regardless of whether they are family, friends or just neighbors living in our communities. Romans 12: 7 tells us, "If someone has the gift of helping others, then he should help. If someone has the gift of teaching, he should teach." And

Hebrews 13 says, "Remember to do good and help each other. Gifts like this please God." The Romans passage tells us to use our spiritual gifts of teaching and helping. But the Hebrew passage expands that thought by reminding us that doing good and helping others pleases God.

Our personal homework may not be sitting down and completing a specific lesson, but it is to help others through the gift of teaching. Our homework may not follow a specific lesson plan, but it is to remember others and do good to those who need us most. We are blessed that God has not totally defined our service of helps, but He allows us to determine our best course of action.

How will you respond to God's call to help others today? I pray that each of you will find an avenue of service, a place of teaching, a way to give your time, skills and energies to others and know that God is pleased by your concern for others and by doing your homework by helping others.

## **Service Projects**

Discuss the following suggestions with the group and decide how they would like to be involved. Some of these ideas can be undertaken as a group, others as individuals.

- 1 Help out a local teacher with book supplies.
- 2 Send appreciation cards to teachers in a local school.
- 3 See if volunteers are needed at your local public school.
- 4 Offer to tutor a child in your neighborhood or corps.
- 5 Look into the corps sponsoring a homework club for kids.
- 6 Invite a teacher or principal to speak about homework and how to get involved in education.
- 7 Request a speaker from the Big Brother/Big Sister Program who can share how the group could get involved.
- 8 Get to know the children/teens in the corps and how the women can help them with homework
- 9 Check out opportunities for involvement in an intergenerational activity program. (Check the Internet for suggestions.)

About author



Lt. Colonel Judith Smith

USA Western Territory

# Worship Programs





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## October 2019 – At Home in the Temple

[Español](#)

October 1, 2019   By [Major Donna Miller](#)   0 comments



What have I done with Jesus? Have I made Him a home in my heart or is He just a visitor?

Make the meeting space comfortable and homey. Use tablecloths, centerpieces and accents around the room to make it feel like a home.

If you are having a meal, serve it family style around the table. If you are having light refreshments, serve homemade cookies, cakes or loaf breads, along with coffee and tea, much as you would serve guests in your home.

Invite the women to bring something from their home that is special to them, possibly a picture, a lamp or an ornament. If they have moved frequently, what item is it that says, “this is now our home.”

Nothing says welcome like a beautiful wreath on your front door. Check Pinterest and decide what will work best for the interest and skill level of the women in the group. Eyelash yarn wreaths are fairly simple and can be personalized by adding a variety of items.

Give the women the tract “My Heart Christ’s Home,” This can be purchased [here](#).

“I Would Be Thy Holy Temple” The Salvation Army Song Book, #591

“Have You Any Room for Jesus?” The Salvation Army Song Book, #420

“Home” by Chris Tomlin – [YouTube Video](#)



*The Boy Jesus at the Temple*

<sup>41</sup> Every year Jesus’ parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. <sup>42</sup> When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom. <sup>43</sup> After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. <sup>44</sup> Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. <sup>45</sup> When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. <sup>46</sup> After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. <sup>47</sup> Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. <sup>48</sup> When his parents saw

him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, “Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.”

<sup>49</sup> “Why were you searching for me?” he asked. “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?”<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>50</sup> But they did not understand what he was saying to them.

<sup>51</sup> Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. <sup>52</sup> And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

In 2017 the movie *Wonder* took the theater world by storm. People could not get enough of the story of a boy and his family who overcame physical challenges. Wonder is a boy who, though different, persisted in finding his place in middle school.

It made me wonder what Jesus’ childhood would have been like. We know that from the start Jesus was no ordinary boy. An angel visited His mother, Mary, and told her that she was going to give birth to the Son of God. When Jesus was just an infant, His family fled for their lives to Egypt. We know they moved back to Nazareth after the death of Herod Archelaus. From that time until He was twelve the Bible is silent; we can only speculate what His childhood was like.

Did Jesus have chores to do? We know He had siblings. Did He get special privileges because He was the Son of God? I’m sure all of us with siblings can relate to one who seemed to have special privileges. Though I was my dad’s little princess with two brothers and two sisters, I still had chores and responsibilities that came with being one of the Miller Five.

We know Jesus grew up in the home of Joseph, a skilled carpenter. Did He take after His earthly father and learn the carpenter trade? Did He run through the streets of Nazareth with His brothers and friends? Did He deal with sibling rivalry? We just do not know. I like to assume that for the most part He was just a boy growing up—hanging upside down in trees, running with His friends, teasing His sisters and waiting for the day He would be “old enough” to fulfill His destiny.

What we do know is that when He was twelve, Jesus traveled with His parents and the rest of His village to Jerusalem for the Passover festival. His parents went every year, but this was probably the first time that Jesus went with them. Assuming that Jesus was in the group somewhere, His parents started back to Nazareth. When their Son did not show up that evening, they realized He was not among the group, and they went back to Jerusalem to look for Him. Can you imagine their feelings of concern as they searched? Three days later, they found Him in the Temple, sitting among the religious leaders, listening and questioning them. The Bible says, “All who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers” (Luke 2:47). Can you imagine the relief His parents felt when they found Him? Can you imagine the confusion? Can you imagine how you would feel if you had been looking for your son for three long days? “Son, why have You done this to us?” His mother asked. “Your father and I

have been frantic searching for you everywhere” (Luke 2:48). Can you hear the panic in her voice? His answer was simply, “But, why did you need to search? Didn’t you know that I must be in My Father’s house?” Jesus felt at home in the Temple. He knew where He belonged. But He also understood that He had earthly parents who were responsible for Him until it was time for His ministry to begin. This passage ends with the words; “Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and all the people” (verse 52).

Jesus had a home with His earthly parents, but He was also at home in the Temple. Here is a question for each of us to ask ourselves. What have I done with Jesus? Have I made Him a home in my heart or is He just a visitor?

About author



Major Donna Miller

USA Central Territory

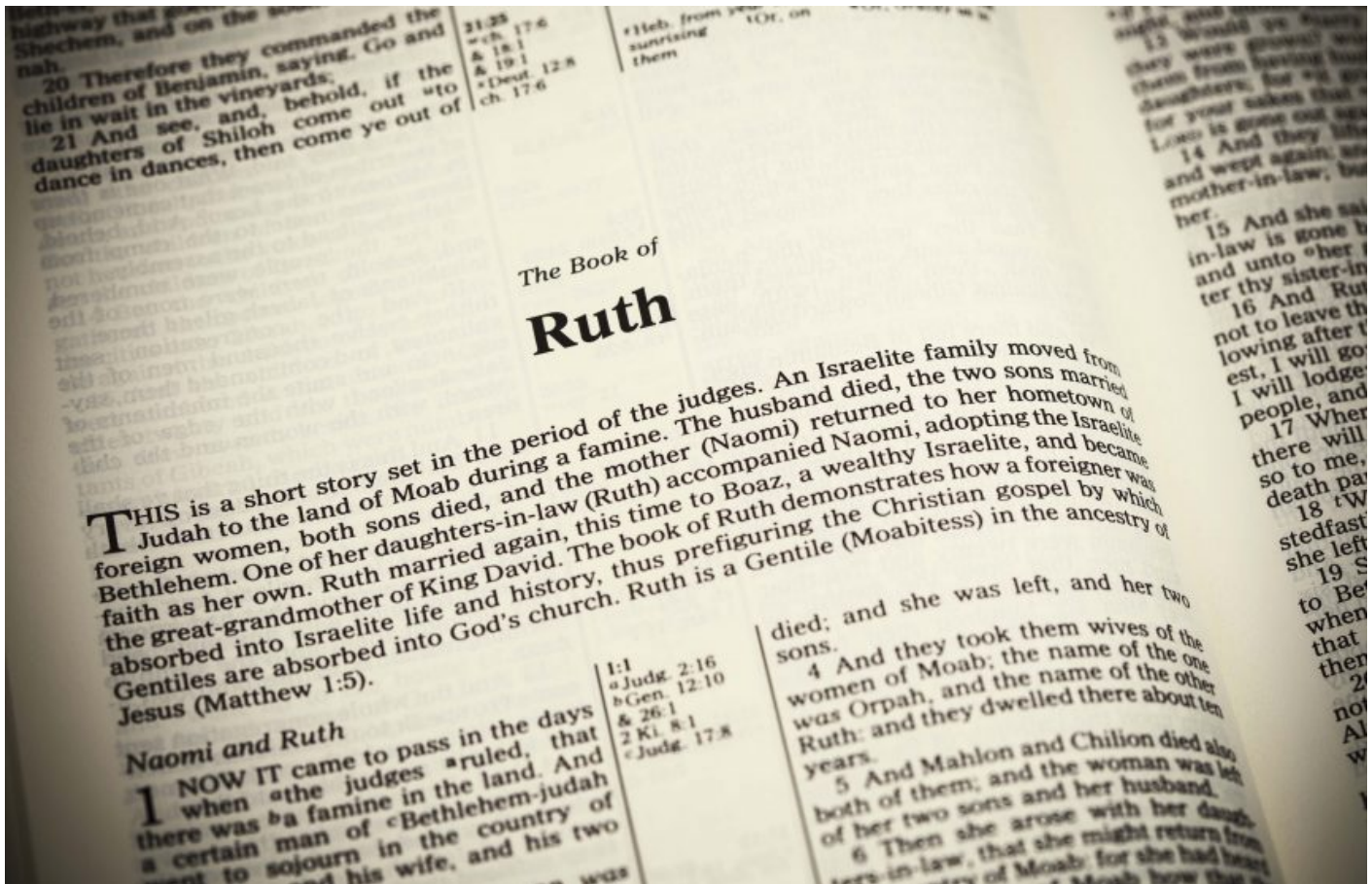


## Worship Programs

# November 2019 – At Home in a Foreign Country

Español

November 1, 2019   By [Major Jolene Hull](#)   0 comments



**Scripture:** Ruth 16: 16—18

**Subject:** Home is where you are loved. Ruth loved Naomi and promised to stay with her where-ever she went.

**Plan**

Six weeks before this event have the women's ministries group decide if they would like to have a shared experience with a United Gratitude Banquet (a meal done at the corps) or a unique experience with Giving Thanks at My House (a meal done at individual homes). Discuss your target audience and consider how to invite a newcomer to the group.

Four weeks before the event send out invitations. Include date, time and place. Include a RSVP date (about 7—10 days before the event) so that you know how many women plan to attend. Invitation can be via mail, Facebook, texting a group of friends, a flyer to be handed out through social services or an announcement slide on a Sunday morning.

One week before the event gather the decorations, finish shopping for the refreshments, prepare conversation cards and review the worship program. If possible, use "real" plates, bowls, glasses, cups and utensils to give each place setting a homey and loving feel. It is okay to mix and match the table settings. Focus on the people and conversation. Choose an easy-to-prepare menu that will have variety and color.

Day before the event set up the space to host your guests, set the tables, put up the room decorations and make the final food preparations. Pray over each space and the woman who will occupy it.

Day of event, finish final food preparations, be ready to greet guests and enjoy your time together.

### **Worship Program**

Welcome

Gathering

Conversation Cards

Gathering Music

Time of Sharing

Scripture Reading

Devotional

Time of Reflection

Reflection Song

Benediction

### **Welcome and Gathering**

As people arrive, greet and invite them to choose a beverage and enjoy hors d'oeuvres. After most guests have arrived, ask them to find their table. Assign a hostess for each table to give the introductions, direction and open in a word of prayer. In order to prepare hearts and minds for the worship time, encourage conversation with the conversation cards.

**Conversation Cards** – make a set for each table

#1 Do you like to take short vacations or long vacations? Why?

#2 Have you ever felt out of place on a visit?

What made you feel this way?

#3 What is the difference between the words “house” and “home”?

#4 Share a time when you felt you were loved.

**Gathering Music** – Grateful | Live | Elevation Worship <https://youtu.be/oh2goMABFPc>

Once everyone has finished their meal, encourage them to refresh their beverage, chose a dessert and move into a time of worship. The worship time can be around the tables, in a living room, or in the chapel. Choose a place where people can be comfortable.

**Time of Sharing**

Ask a few people to share a highlight from their conservation questions.

**Read** – Ruth 1: 16–18 (NIV)

**Devotional**

Most of us are creatures of habit. We have routines that help us get through a day successfully. We have specific holidays that bring people together and patterns in life that help us know what is next. However, what happens when something unexpected occurs? When the alarm clock fails to wake you, do you find yourself anxious for the rest of the day? When the family vacation is postponed or cancelled, do you find yourself feeling upset and wanting something more? Do you feel lost when life takes an unexpected turn? In each of these cases we can find ourselves in uncharted territory and grasping for something familiar. The biblical story of Ruth is filled with the joys and challenges that accompany unfamiliar territory. It teaches us to depend on God to provide the familiar.

Let’s look at Ruth 1 and notice the similarities and differences between Naomi (the mother-in-law) and Ruth. What do you see?

<b>Naomi</b>	<b>Ruth</b>
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Foreigner in Moab (vs. 2)	A citizen of Moab
Widow of Elimelech (vs. 3)	Widow of Mahlon (vs. 5)
Lived in Moab for 10 years (vs. 4)	Lived in Moab 10 years with Naomi (vs. 4)
Encouraged the daughters-in-law to return to their mothers' house (vs. 8)	
Shows love to her daughters-in-laws (vs. 9)	Shows love towards Naomi by declining to go (vs. 10)
Again shows love to her daughters-in-law (vs. 12)	Shows loyalty to Naomi by going with her to Bethlehem (vs. 14)
A citizen of Israel	Foreigner in Israel (vs. 19)

We see that Naomi, Orpah and Ruth have been together for 10 years. In the beginning of those years, I am sure the house they lived in was just that ... a house. However, after 10 years in one place, things changed. Those 10 years allowed them to: know each other's likes and dislikes; discover who was the best and worst cook; learn who was the best and worst story teller; and they even knew when to leave each other alone and when someone needed a hug. The end result was a home.

We see that Naomi, Orpah, and Ruth have found ways to show love and kindness to each other. When Naomi decides it is time for her to return to her homeland, she lovingly encourages Orpah and Ruth to stay in their own homeland, so that they might have a future. At first, both Orpah and Ruth refused the offer; they wanted to be with Naomi. Once again Naomi urged her daughters-in-law to return to their homeland, and this time Orpah agreed. "But Ruth replied, 'Don't ask me to leave you and turn back. Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. Wherever you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord punish me severely if I allow anything but death to separate us!' When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she said nothing more (Ruth 1:16-18)."

It is interesting to note that Naomi and Ruth found strength in knowing that their home provided not only love for one another, but love for God. Over the course of those early years together, Naomi exemplified the qualities of a Godly home, and Ruth was not ready to give that up. In fact, she wanted more and chose to go with Naomi to Bethlehem.



What is your story? Has the day caught you off guard? Has there been an unexpected change in your plans this year? Or maybe there has been a life-altering event and you don't know which way to turn.

As we read Naomi's and Ruth's story we see a deeper meaning to the words "love" and "home" as they face an uncertain future, but with a very present God. Where is God in your life? Where is God in your home? Where is God in the way that you love? He wants to be a part of your story.

Share the poem "Home and Love" by Robert William Service. You can find this on PoemHunter.com or at <https://youtu.be/StMpuKiZfXw>.

### **Time of Reflection**

Have thank you cards available, so that each person can write a thank you note to someone expressing gratitude.

### **Reflection Song**

**"Love Will Be Our Home" by Sandi Patty** <https://youtu.be/FeFleWw4pEs>

### **Benediction**

About author



Major Jolene Hull

USA Central Territory



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## Worship Programs

### December 2019 – The Christmas Story

Español

December 1, 2019   By [Major Charlotte Hall](#)   0 comments



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“And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped Him snugly in strips of cloth and laid Him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them” (Luke 2:6, 7)

**Decorations**

On black tablecloths place a manger scene in the center of each table as a centerpiece. Place an empty stable from a larger nativity on the head table. This will be used to re-create the Christmas story. Put the figurines and a battery-operated tea light candle aside for use during the program.

### **Refreshment**

Serve Christmas cookies, coffee, tea and hot chocolate.

### **Program Idea**

## **The Nativity Scene**

The leader of the program will share the story of the birth of Christ using pieces of a nativity set.

### **Suggested Leaders Dialog**

The nativity scene brings together each piece of this story into one perfect visual proclamation of the birth of Christ. Each year families bring their nativity scene out of storage and put it in a place of honor to remind them that as Christians we have a wonderful story to tell. It is the story of divine love, mercy and grace. Today as we tell the story of Jesus, I want to encourage you to embrace anew the glories of His righteousness and wonders of His love.

**Sing:** "Joy to the World," *The Salvation Army Song Book*, #113

***(Place the figures of Mary and Joseph in the crèche.)***

Mary and Joseph were engaged to be married when their world was suddenly turned upside down. It began when Mary encountered a divine visitor. The angel Gabriel gave Mary a very disturbing and unexpected message. She was pregnant and would give birth to a son—God's own Son. Joseph was not left out from this celestial communication. He experienced his own encounter with the divine. As you might imagine, Joseph was not pleased to find out that his fiancé was pregnant. His encounter with an angel in a dream, however, changed his mind and he embraced his part in God's plan to send His Son to be Emmanuel—God with us.

**Sing:** "Emmanuel," *Hallelujah Choruses*, #72 (HC6-T12)

***(Turn on the tea light candle and place it in the crèche.)***

The next events can be found in Luke 2:1–5. *(Read this portion of scripture.)* The city of Bethlehem was bustling and crowded when Joseph and Mary arrived. People from all over had made their way to their ancestral home to be counted in the census. By the time Mary reached Bethlehem she was in active labor. Can you picture Joseph frantically searching for a warm and safe place for Mary to give birth, only to find that there were no rooms available? At the city's edge, an innkeeper offered them shelter in his stable.

***(Place the animal figurines in the crèche.)***

It was crowded with the animals belonging to the pilgrims who were residing at the inn. It was not the perfect place to give birth but imperfection faded away into sheer pleasure as Mary held the Christ child in her arms.

**Sing:** "O Little Town of Bethlehem," *The Salvation Army Song Book*, #118

***Place the figurine of Jesus in the manger in the stable scene.*** (Read Luke 2:6,7)

Mary placed Jesus, wrapped in strips of cloth, in what is thought to be an animal feed trough. In that sacred moment the world was changed forever. Leap forward in time 33 years: Jesus' crucified body would be wrapped in cloth and placed in a borrowed grave. Again the world was changed forever. The manger and the cross—one was an imperfect place for a birth and one was an imperfect place for death. Both, however, were part of God's plan to redeem creation and reconcile all things to Himself (Colossians 1:15–20).

**Sing:** "I Love to Hear the Story," *The Salvation Army Song Book*, Song #142

***Place the shepherd and angel figurines in the crèche.***

The rest of the events of the Christmas story can be found in Luke 2:8–19. (Read this portion.)

One of my favorite parts of the Christmas story is found in verse 19: "But Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often." Do you find yourself reminiscing about days gone by? Especially during the Christmas season, it is easy to find ourselves wrapped up in memories of home. If our parents are still living, we feel a certain call to make our way home for Christmas. There's nothing quite like waking up on Christmas morning surrounded by family and friends. If your parents have passed, the haunting lyrics, "I'll be home for Christmas ... if only in my dreams," causes you to stop and reflect upon memories of happy times spent together.

Sometimes officers jokingly say, "Home is where The Army sends us!" I think a better sentiment would be, "Home is where the heart is." Joseph and Mary found themselves in a very precarious predicament when they entered the town of Bethlehem so many years ago. They had fled the town of Nazareth under a blanket of gossip and judgement and now Mary was about to give birth with no home to call her own.

However, God always has a plan. His plan included (***reference each figurine of the crèche as you mention it***) a stable and an angel. It included animals and shepherds on a hillside; it involved a man and a woman; and God's plan included Himself becoming flesh and blood and entering our world. "The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son" (John 1:14, *The Message*).

Do you ever feel like you don't have a home? Maybe you find yourself truly homeless—no home to call your own—or maybe you find yourself figuratively in the uncomfortable spot of not feeling at home no matter where you are. Take comfort in the story we just retold.

It is when we are most vulnerable, most confused, most out-of-place and mixed up, that God intervenes. There are times in our lives when our circumstances are not perfect. But it is in and through these circumstances that the Christ-child shines forth His light and pierces the darkness.

**Sing:** "In the Manger," (*Hallelujah Chorus* #120 (HCD10-T10))

**Close with prayer**

About author



Major Charlotte Hall

USA Central Territory



**Worship Programs**

January 2020 – The Names of Jesus

January 1, 2020 By [Captain Joanna Rose](#) 0 comments



**Decorations (Optional)**

Cover the tables with a purple cloth or table runner. Check Pinterest for pictures of Jesus that illustrate His attributes. Frame and place them on the tables.

**Program Outline**

Opening Prayer – (Emphasize our dependency on Christ.)

Song #73, "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name," *The Salvation Army Song Book*

The Names of Jesus

Devotional— Keep Your Eyes on the Goal

Song #707, "I Need Thee Every Hour"

*The Salvation Army Song Book*, or

"Awakening" by Sara Groves (Both songs are available on [YouTube](#))

Closing Prayer—Hebrews 12:2

## The Names of Jesus

Invite some of the women to read the names of Jesus and the referenced scripture. Ask them to share a time where they witnessed an attribute associated with that name. For example: *Creator—when viewing the ocean created by Him, I am reminded of the God who made it.* Prepare a list of these names and hand it out at the conclusion of the devotional.

- 1 Almighty One:** "I am the one who is, and who was, and who is still to come, the Almighty One." Rev. 1:8
- 2 Advocate:** "I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an Advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One." 1 John 2:1
- 3 Bread of Life:** "Then Jesus replied, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to Me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in Me will never be thirsty.'" John 6:35
- 4 Beloved Son of God:** "And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my dearly loved Son, who brings Me great joy.'" Matt. 3:17
- 5 Chief Cornerstone:** "The stone that the builders rejected has now become the cornerstone." Ps. 118:22
- 6 Creator:** "The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of all the earth." [Isaiah 40:28](#)
- 7 Deliverer:** "And they speak of how you are looking forward to the coming of God's Son from heaven—Jesus, whom God raised from the dead. He is the one who has rescued us from the terrors of the coming judgment." 1 Thess. 1: 10
- 8 Good Shepherd:** "I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd sacrifices His life for the sheep." John 10:11

- 9 Great High Priest:** "So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe." Heb. 4:14
- 10 Head of the Church:** "God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made Him head over all things for the benefit of the church." Eph. 1:22
- 11 I Am:** "Jesus answered, 'I tell you the truth, before Abraham was even born, I Am.'"
- 12 Immanuel:** "The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son and will call Him Immanuel, which means 'God is with us.'" Isa. 7:14
- 13 King of Kings:** "Together they will go to war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will defeat them because He is Lord of all lords and King of all kings. And His called and chosen and faithful ones will be with Him." Rev. 17:14
- 14 Lamb of God:** "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, 'Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'" John 1:29
- 15 Light of the World:** "I am the light of the world. If you follow Me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life." John 8:12
- 16 Mediator:** "There is one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and humanity—the man Christ Jesus." 1 Tim. 2:5
- 17 Messiah:** "'We have found the Messiah' (which means 'Christ')." John 1:41
- 18 One Who Sets Free:** "So if the Son sets you free, you are truly free." John 8:36
- 19 Peace:** "For Christ Himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in His own body on the cross, He broke down the wall of hostility that separated us." Eph. 2:14
- 20 Redeemer:** "But as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and He will stand upon the earth at last." Job 19:25
- 21 Risen Lord:** "Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and He was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said." 1 Cor. 15:3, 4
- 22 Rock:** "For they drank from the spiritual rock that traveled with them, and that Rock was Christ." 1 Cor. 10:4
- 23 Sacrifice for Our Sins:** "This is real love—not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins." 1 John 4:10
- 24 Savior:** "The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!" Luke 2:11
- 25 Son of Man:** "For the Son of Man<sup>La</sup> came to seek and save those who are lost." Luke 19:10
- 26 Son of the Most High:** "He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of his ancestor David." Luke 1:32



- 27 Resurrection and the Life:** "Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in Me will live, even after dying." John 11:25
- 28 The Door:** "I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." John 10:9 (KJV)
- 29 The Way:** "Jesus told him. 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through Me.'" John 14:6
- 30 The Word:** "In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God." John 1:1
- 31 True Vine:** "I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener." John 15:1
- 32 Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace:** "For a child is born to us, a Son is given to us. The government will rest on His shoulders. And He will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Isa. 9:6

For additional names of Jesus check the website: [Crosswalk.com](http://Crosswalk.com).

## Keep Your Eyes on the Goal

Each New Year celebration many of us set goals for the coming year. Some are to stop negative habits; others are to start new good ones. We vow to eat healthier, exercise, lose weight, limit our time on social media and read more educational books. We promise to be kinder, more generous and to be patient with others. We promise God that we will pray more and read our Bible. How successful were you in meeting your goals last year? Most of us would probably fall under the category of "try-ers." We have good intentions and try to meet the goals set, but have mixed results. We can often say that we "took one step forward and two back." No amount of determination has seemed to work to meet the goals.

So here we are at the beginning of another New Year, facing some of the same good intentions and again fearing that we won't be able to keep them. Is there another way to become what we should be without setting more impossible goals? The apostle Paul was like us. He too struggled with accomplishing those things that he wanted to do, but instead he ended up doing what he didn't want to do. *Read Romans 7:15-20*. I think we can all relate to Paul's confession. As hard as he tried, he couldn't do the right thing through the law alone, but when he considered Him who was raised from the dead [Jesus], he could bear fruit.

Fortunately Paul didn't leave us believing that all is hopeless and that we are doomed to lead a life of sin. He states in Romans 8: 1-3, "So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. And because you belong to Him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death. The Law of Moses was unable to save us because of the weakness of our sinful nature. So God did what the law could not do. He sent His own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body God declared an end to sin's control over us by giving His Son as a sacrifice for our sins."

In Hebrews 12:1-2, we read, “Let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us (verse 2). We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith.” When we put our focus on Him the good behaviors we desire in our lives will come to fruition.

Today we looked at the many names of Jesus. During the coming year, review the list and ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand what they reveal about Jesus’ attributes. The more you understand who Christ is, the better you’ll understand how to be a person whose life pleases Him.

About author



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## **Worship Programs**

### February 2020 – Love In Action

[Español](#)

February 1, 2020   By [Major Heather Holman](#)   0 comments



## **Introduction**

February is the month when we celebrate Valentine's Day and love. But what is real love? This program is designed to help the women look at more than just romantic love and see how we can love God and our neighbors.

## **Decorations**

Decorate the meeting room for Valentine's Day. Use Hershey Kisses/Hugs® on the tables Place a cross on the main table as the centerpiece to illustrate Christ's love for us.

## Questions for Discussion

In your opinion, what is real love?

Scripture – Read John 3:16, 1 John 3:16–18, John 15:13.

- 1 What differences do you see in these scriptures?
- 2 In looking at John 15:13, can you think of any circumstance when you would be willing to lay down your life for a friend?
- 3 Are you aware of any time when someone has laid down their life for (a) a family member, (b) a friend, (c) a stranger (*police officer, firemen*)?
- 4 How does 1 John 3:16 challenge us in a practical way in regards to the way we treat others?
- 5 Could this be described as love in action?
- 6 Pause and invite the women to pray asking the Holy Spirit to reveal practical ways that they could show God's love to others the following week.
- 7 Discuss what the Holy Spirit revealed. What are some practical ways to put these ideas into practice?
- 8 Considering John 3:16, how is God's love towards us different than the love we often exhibit? (*God loved us so much He gave His Son whose death provided the way of salvation for us.*)

## Future Service Project

Invite the women to discuss possible community projects for the homeless, the police or the fire department. Once a project has been decided upon, set a date and time to carry out the plan. For example: Collect individual size toiletry items, mints, gum, fast food gift cards and put in gallon Ziplock® bags. Add contact information cards giving the corps address, telephone numbers and the times for Sunday services. These can be given out at the corps social service office, or the women could hand them out to needy individuals they encounter on the street.

## Activity

For a variety of simple crafts, check Pinterest. Search under "crafts John 3:16." Or create a word search using the words from 1 John 3:16, John 3:16 and John 15:13. There are a number of these programs on the Internet. One site is: <https://mywordsearch.com>.

## Real Love

During our discussion time we explored the meaning of real love. Looking at the three scriptures, we now have a better understanding of that term. In John 3:16 we read that God loved us so much that He sent His Son to die for us, thus providing our salvation. In 1 John 3:16, 17, 18 we are told that since Jesus gave His life for us, we also ought to give up our lives for others. This doesn't mean to literally die, but to go out of our comfort zones to help someone. It goes on to tell us that when we show compassion for others, we show that we love God. In just three verses we see a true model, definition, application and test of true love. Our model is Jesus Christ Himself, more specifically, Jesus Christ crucified.

In John 15:13 we read. "There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends." It is one thing to lay down your life for your family or friends, but to lay it down for your enemies takes love a step further. According to Romans 5:8, "But God showed His great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners." We are told that we are to be like Jesus; therefore, we are also to love our enemies.

Love is self-sacrifice. The model Christ demonstrates leads to love's *definition*. The act of laying down our lives for others can be understood literally, and certainly Jesus understood this with regard to His own life. Self-sacrifice can also be understood metaphorically, as a belief or mindset that places the welfare of others before our own.

First John 3:17 states, "If someone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need but shows no compassion—how can God's love be in that person?" This verse shows the *application* of true love in terms of our use of resources. Charity toward the poor is not the only application of sacrificial love. Every time we use our time, talent, and treasure for others, and put their interests before our own, we are applying sacrificial love.

The *test* of true love is whether we are actually self-sacrificing. If we choose not to use our time, talent, and treasure for others—more importantly the poor—John asks, "How can the love of God be in us?" The love of God may refer to God's love, or our love for God. If we fail to love others, especially those in need, then God's love has not taken over our being and our love for God is lacking.

These scriptures set out the model, definition, application and test of true love. One final word from 1 John 3:18: "Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth." More than ever before, our society needs Christians to step up and love intentionally and self-sacrificially.

About author

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## Worship Programs

### March 2020 – Create In Me a Clean Heart

[Español](#)

March 1, 2020   By [Major Judy Tekautz](#)   0 comments



## Scripture

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“Don’t you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

## Meeting Outline

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Song #421, "Are You Washed In the Blood?"\* *The Salvation Army Song Book*

Instructions for the Four Prayer Stations

Closing Thoughts "A Clean Temple" (*Share when the women have reassembled.*)

Closing Song, "Create in Me a Clean Heart" (*Video with Words available on [YouTube](#)*)

Time of Decision and Closing Prayer

### Set-Up and Instructions

Set up the following prayer stations in the chapel or meeting room. Invite the women in small groups to visit the stations, allowing 20 to 25 minutes for each station. Place a facilitator at each station to lead the women through the various steps of worship. The suggested dialog is in **bold** text. Some groups may finish sooner than others. If so, ask them to return to the meeting room and sit quietly until all have returned.

#### Station One—Disinfect My Mind

Make a sign that says, "Disinfect my Mind ... A Mind Full of Worry Can Leave You Tied Up In Knots." Place a bottle of disinfectant on the table and 6-inch strands of yarn, twine or ribbon with a loose knot tied in the end. You will need enough strands for one per attendee. Make an additional sign with the following: "God's Word has quite a bit to say about worry. Read the following verses and allow God to disinfect your mind from the things that worry you." Have the following scriptures listed on cards that the women can take with them: Philippians 4:6-7; Proverbs 3:5-6; John 14:27; Psalm 55:22. Dialog: **"Take one strand of yarn and untie the knot in it. As you untie the knot, ask God to take a major worry from your mind and heart. Ask Him to help you with it and trust that He will do so. Untying the knot is the symbol of letting go."**

#### Station Two—Purify My Heart

Make a sign that says "Purify My Heart." Draw a heart on a large glass container with permanent marker or tape a paper heart to it. It should be small enough that you can still see the liquid when placed inside. Fill the container with water and bleach. (*Experiment with the water/bleach solution, as the size of your container will determine how much bleach is necessary for the demonstration to be successful.*) Fill a smaller glass container with water and dark food

coloring. Make a sign with the following: "Confessing our sins is the first step in allowing God to purify our hearts." Dialog: **"If we have unconfessed sin, our hearts are divided and our relationship with God is hindered. Take a moment to search your heart and allow God to reveal any unconfessed sins in your life."** Take the container of dark liquid, representing sin, and pour a small amount into the water/bleach liquid, which represents God. Dialog: **"Notice how the sin is cleansed from the heart because God is faithful and wants to forgiven our sins. Take a few moments to pray silently asking God to keep you sensitive to His Spirit so that your confession of sin will be quick and constant."**

### Station Three—Cleanse My Words

Place two small bowls on the table, one containing sweet candy and the other sour candy. Identify each bowl. Make a sign for the table with the words "Cleanse My Words" at the top. Add the following text: "There are numerous verses in the Bible that talk about our speech or our tongues. We read in Ephesians 4:29: 'Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.'" Dialog: **Our words are powerful, either for good or evil. Eat a piece of bitter candy. While eating it, think over the past 24 to 48 hours and ask God to forgive you for any negative things you may have spoken. Now eat a piece of the sweet candy. Let the sweet taste overcome the sour, and ask God to help you be more encouraging in your speech.**

### Station Four—Sanitize My Hands

Have small hand sanitizer bottles in sufficient amount for each woman to have one. If this is too expensive, use a large bottle to share. Place a sign with the words, "Sanitize My Hands" at the top and underneath the following: "Our motivation for the works that we do is an important part of keeping our temple clean." Dialog: **We are good at doing many things, but sometimes we do them for the wrong reasons. In Colossians 3:23 we read, "Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people." Use the sanitizer to cleanse your hands. As you do, ask God to reveal to you any selfish motives you have for the works you do for the church and for others. Confess to Him these motives and ask Him to help you in the future to do all works just for Him. Take a bottle of sanitizer to remind you of your prayer.**

### Closing Thoughts—A Clean Temple

Many of us grew up singing "O be careful little eyes what you see. For the Father up above is looking down in love." I love that chorus and find it quite challenging to live out in my everyday life. It is a reminder that God knows all we do throughout our day. When we become children of God, we become His temple. First Corinthians 6:19-20, reminds us that we are His dwelling place. God can only dwell in a holy, clean temple. Today, as we went through our stations, we asked Him to disinfect, purify, cleanse and sanitize some important areas of our body, His temple.



As that children’s chorus said, there are even more areas we should consider: our eyes—what we watch and our feet, where we go. We should also consider our health; how we treat our bodies in the way we eat and exercise. Today may we be challenged to allow Him to deep clean our spiritual temples, just as we deep clean our homes during spring-cleaning. Cleaning our homes requires planning, persistence, power and follow through. Our spiritual spring-cleaning requires the same efforts.

Close with a decision time and prayer.

About author



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## Worship Programs

### April 2020 – An Example to Follow

Español

April 1, 2020   By [Captain Janelle Gonzalez](#)   0 comments



### **Refreshment Suggestion**

Ahead of time, ask some of the women to prepare their favorite snacks to be shared as a part of the program.

### **Introduction**

The practice of foot washing can be found in the hospitality customs of ancient civilizations, especially where sandals were the chief footwear. A typical Eastern host might bow, greet, and kiss his guest, then offer water to allow the guest to wash his feet or have servants do it or even serve the guests by washing their feet himself. This is mentioned in several places in the Old Testament—[Genesis 18:4](#); [19:2](#); [24:32](#); [43:24](#); [1 Samuel 25:41](#). It is also recorded in other religious and historical documents. Though the wearing of sandals might necessitate washing the feet, the water was also offered as a courtesy even when shoes were worn. For further information on foot washing check the following website:

[http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Foot\\_Washing](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Foot_Washing).

## Activity

Following the example of Jesus washing His disciples' feet as recorded in John 13, have available bowls and towels so that the leaders can wash the women's feet.

## Discuss the Following:

- 1 How did it make you feel to have your feet washed?
- 2 What practices do you follow to show hospitality to guests who visit your home?
- 3 Do you have any hospitality practices that were learned from your parents/grandparents?
- 4 Have you experienced any hospitality practices that are totally different from yours? Did you like or dislike them?

## Wash My Feet

Read John 13:1–17.

In some cultures, having a guest in the home is the most prestigious and happy event possible. Good hosts often spend all day cleaning and making sure the home looks and feels its best for the guest. They will offer the best seat in their home even if they don't have a place to sit themselves. Gracious hosts will even offer their own bed to guests if they are spending the night. They will go out of their way to make sure guests have the best experience in their home.

In some homes, the host shows hospitality by receiving their guests by serving fancy appetizers, by carefully storing their coats and offering new house shoes or pretty socks to wear inside the home. I have a niece who loves having guests visit her home. When she was younger she would get super excited whenever her family had guests. She would offer them drinks, sit and chat, show them her dolls and tea set. Her excitement was such that she was always finding ways to make her guests feel comfortable and at home, so that they would want to come back again.

When I was a child I loved having people over to our home as well. Having guests meant that we would use the pretty china kept in the special china cabinet. My family always tried to serve the best savory food and specials treats. I have always loved beautiful and glitzy items and being able to eat on good china that made me feel very special too. Having guests over also meant that we would have yummy desserts and sweet cakes at the end of our meal. We splurged to make sure our guests enjoyed extra special treats.

In Jesus' time on earth, the way to show hospitality was by washing the feet of guests as they entered the home. Sandals were the footwear of choice and people walked everywhere. They didn't have cars, buses, trains or airplanes to get from one place to another. The roads were dusty and dirty and feet became soiled and tired. A good foot washing was very important for people after traveling to visit friends.

The passage in John tells us that Jesus was with His disciples at what we now know as the Last Supper, the traditional Passover meal. Jesus knew that the time was near when He would be betrayed by one of His own disciples and go to the cross. But that did not stop Him from extending hospitality to His guests and making them feel loved and welcomed.

Although the washing of feet was considered to be a servant's job, Jesus, though He was the king of Kings and the Lord of Lords, showed us a great example to follow. He took off His robe and washed the feet of all the disciples. Later He asked them to do the same for others. By performing a simple kind act for His guests, Jesus provided an example for us of humility in action and taught us how to serve while showing pure love to others.

Today the leaders of this group showed love by washing your feet. Others prepared some of your favorite snacks. With these simple acts of humility, service and love they were following Jesus' example.

This month as we reflect on Jesus and the sacrifice He made on the cross, I invite you to follow His example of pure love, humility and service with others—especially to those who share your home. Our prayer is to be like Jesus in every step of our lives.

Chorus #328 in *The Salvation Army Song Book* addresses our desire to be like Jesus. Sing this chorus in closing.

About author



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Central Territory



## Worship Programs

### May 2020 – Audacious Worship

Español

May 1, 2020 By [Lt. Brook Lopez](#) 0 comments



### **Audacious Worship**

What is audacious worship? Webster's Dictionary defines it as:

- 1 Intrepidly daring, adventurous, reckless bold, rash
- 2 Marked by originality and [verve](#)

When we think of worshipping the Lord, can we say that our worship is audacious? If not, how does it need to change?

## **The Chapel**

In preparation for worship dim the lights so there is a soft glow. If the lights don't dim, bring a couple of lamps in and place them toward the back of the chapel. Light candles and place them in the front of the chapel. If you are meeting during the day, light candles anyway or use the natural light. Place images of Jesus throughout the chapel. Many can be found on the Internet. Have soft worship music playing in the background.

## **Activity**

Invite the women to walk around the room and pick a picture of Jesus that speaks to their heart and bring it back to their seat. After a few minutes, invite the women to share the reason for their choices.

## **Refreshments**

Serve resurrection biscuits. Check the Internet for the recipe and accompanying application to the empty tomb. The following are a couple of sites:

<http://www.meemaweats.com/2017/04/easter-resurrection-empty-tomb-biscuits/>

[http://www.celebratingholidays.com/?page\\_id=3282](http://www.celebratingholidays.com/?page_id=3282)

## **I Would See Jesus**

Each one of us sees Jesus differently in our heart. Matthew 28 records Mary Magdalene and the other Mary as they went to visit Jesus' tomb. I want you to imagine what it would be like to walk with them on that early Sunday morning. What were their thoughts and fears? Close your eyes and listen as I read the portion of scripture:

"Early on Sunday morning, as the new day was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went out to visit the tomb. *(pause) Do you smell the crisp morning air? Do you feel the stillness of the earth as you travel down the dirt road in the dim light of morning? Hearts sinking into the pit of your stomach because you know your Messiah is gone. Then...* "Suddenly there was a great earthquake. For an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled aside the stone, and sat on it. His face shone like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow. The guards shook with fear when they saw him, and they fell into a dead faint." *Your heart jumps. Being blinded by the light you reach for Mary's hand, and it is trembling just like yours. Should you run? Your legs are frozen stiff...* "Then the angel spoke to the women. 'Don't be afraid!' he said. 'I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He isn't here! He is risen from the dead, just as He said would happen. Come, see where His body was lying. And now, go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead, and He is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see Him

there. Remember what I have told you.’ The women ran quickly from the tomb. They were very frightened but also filled with great joy, and they rushed to give the disciples the angel’s message. And as they went, Jesus met them and greeted them.” *(pause) Jesus calls out to you by your name. What do you do? Do you answer Him? Would you answer Him immediately or hesitate? He says, “Don’t be afraid.” Is there something that is causing you to hesitate?*

“They (the two Mary’s) ran to Him, grasped His feet, and worshiped Him. Then Jesus said to them, ‘Don’t be afraid! Go tell my brothers to leave for Galilee, and they will see me there.’”

Open your eyes. This story isn’t only about Jesus conquering the grave; it’s about the audacious worship that both Marys emulated in this passage. There was nothing that would keep them from worshiping their Savior. No barriers, issue, or pride. Many times in our lives we forget how strong and mighty our Jesus really is. We focus on how big we think our problems are or can be. The problems we face can cause us to view worship with blinders on. When we think our problems are bigger than our Jesus, then we are limiting our faith and what Jesus’ power can do. Focusing on problems and issues from everyday situations can limit us from experiencing the joy and peace that is found in Jesus. To live out an audacious faith we must learn to fully trust Jesus and allow Him to love us boldly. When we serve Jesus, who is the creator of the universe, we should not stand in fear or limit ourselves to pray for small things.

Jesus came and died a horrible death for all of us, but that wasn’t the end. He conquered that death. If Jesus is capable not only of healing with a touch and speaking life into existence, but of conquering death, why do we think He cannot handle our daily frustrations? He is the only one who can see us through whatever we are facing.

Let’s start our audacious worship together now. On the back of your picture of Jesus list everything that might cause you not to worship and pray with your full capacity. Spend time in prayer with Jesus and allow Him to take hold of those things. Jesus wants to give you what you really need. Is there something you have been afraid to ask for? Go to Him about the desires of your heart with boldness. Don’t be afraid to spend this time of worship crying out to our Savior, no matter what that looks like.

About author



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## Worship Programs

### June 2020 – I Want To See Jesus

[Español](#)

June 1, 2020   By [Major Joyce Gauthier](#)   0 comments



### **I Can See Clearly Now**

Place a variety of eyeglasses on each table, including reading glasses, sunglasses, plastic glasses with lines across the lenses. Include some glasses with springy eyeballs that are used at Halloween. Invite the women to choose a pair and write down how the glasses affect their vision. They should then pass that pair to the person on the right and then try on glasses the



person on the left has just tried on. Ask for feedback on how the different lenses changed their view. Did any of the glasses make their vision better or worse? Why?

## **What Did You See?**

Have one of the women to come to the front of the room. Ask a few questions like, "What is your favorite color? What is your favorite season? Where do you live? Then ask that woman to leave the room. Pass out a sheet of paper with the following questions about the person who left the room.

- 1 What color are her eyes?
- 2 What color is her hair?
- 3 Was she wearing nail polish? What color?
- 4 Was she wearing earrings?
- 5 Was she wearing a ring?
- 6 Was she wearing a watch? What kind?
- 7 What kind of shoes was she wearing?
- 8 Was she wearing socks?
- 9 Was she wearing a belt?
- 10 Did she have anything in her hands?
- 11 Was she wearing a necklace?
- 12 Was she wearing glasses?

Have the woman return to the room and invite the others to tally up their correct answers. How much did you really see? What was your focus? How often do we look at someone, but not really see them because we are focused on something else?

Sing Chorus #386 *The Salvation Army Song Book*, "Open Our Eyes, Lord"

Opening Prayer

## **I Can See Clearly**

***Read Luke 19:1-10***

When we want to see something more clearly, we do whatever it takes to make that happen. We move to the front of the room; we get glasses with corrective lenses; we shade our eyes from the sun. When we want to see, we do whatever it takes.

Zacchaeus had heard about Jesus. Most likely he had heard about the miracles and he wanted to know more about this man. Upon learning that Jesus was coming to town, he had to see Him for himself.

The problem was that he was shorter than most men and he couldn't see over the people. The crowd was so thick that he couldn't push his way through to the front, so while people lined the road, he ran ahead, around them to try to get a chance to see Jesus. He spotted a sycamore tree with branches low enough for him to climb. There just happened to be a limb that he could crawl out on and sit where he could see over the crowd.

The crowd grew closer, but Zacchaeus still couldn't see Jesus. Then he heard a voice calling his name. He looked down and saw Jesus. Not only was He calling his name, He told Zacchaeus that He wanted to come to his house that day.

Zacchaeus must have thought, *"Why would Jesus want to come to my house? Does He know me, and what I do for a living? I am a tax collector, despised by most people. I don't deserve to have Him in my home."* However, the people called Him "Master." If Jesus wanted to come to his home, Zacchaeus would show Him the way. He wanted to know more about this Master. Of course, people started complaining right away because Jesus was going to the house of a tax collector. They called Zacchaeus a "sinner." Why would Jesus go to his house?

Zacchaeus saw Jesus, but Jesus saw right through Zacchaeus to his heart. He knew Zacchaeus had stolen money from people by taxing them more than they were required to pay. Immediately, Zacchaeus realized that he was in the presence of the Lord and was convicted of his sin. He offered to give half of his possessions to the poor, and to pay those whom he had cheated four times the amount he had taken from them.

Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house." In other words, Zacchaeus made his heart Christ's home. Have you allowed Jesus to be at home in your heart?

In closing play the song: "Do They See Jesus In Me" by Joy Williams. You can find a video of this song on YouTube.

Close in prayer, asking that others will see Jesus when they look at us.



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## July 2020 – Worship with Celebration!

[Español](#)

July 1, 2020 By [Major Kim Ray](#) 0 comments



“Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth!

Worship the Lord with gladness!

Come before Him, singing with joy!” (Psalm 100: 1-2)

Go around the room and ask the women to complete this sentence prayer:

"I am filled with joy because the Lord ..."

We read in Psalms 33:3, "Sing a new song of praise to Him; play skillfully on the harp, and sing with joy." Ask the women to share the names of some of their favorite hymns that express joy in the Lord. Enjoy a time of singing some of them. Some suggestions are: "Sing and Make Music to the Lord," "I've got the joy, joy, joy down in my heart," "The joy of the Lord is my strength," "I love you, Lord."

Have card stock, colored pencils, gel pens, and colored paper available for women to create a card masterpiece to send to a friend who needs a message of joy. An alternate idea would be to invite the women to make praise journals. Cover composition notebooks with cardstock or fabric and decorate the front. Instruct them to use their journals to record their praises to the Lord each day. Often we think only about our problems and not our blessings. This exercise will help the women to focus on the joy found in serving the Lord.

When my son was younger, his birthday, Christmas and Easter were times of celebrations for him. He lives life to the fullest and has always been excited for a party or festive occasion of any kind. It would make the adults smile, because after every gift (no matter what it was) he would shout, "Just what I always wanted!" It may have been the first time he had seen the toy or book, but it all filled him with joy. He would get so excited; there was no mistaking his joy during the celebration.

Each day should be a celebration for us. As we come into the Lord's presence, we should be ready to shout for joy. When we realize what He has done for us, it should fill us with joy. It is exciting to serve Him. Praise should flow out of a grateful heart.

We know that not all things we go through are exciting and joyful. My son would open some gifts that were not really exciting, but because he was in the presence of family and because his heart was entering the celebration, his response was still joyful.

I may not like all of the circumstances of my life, but I can celebrate because God loves me and because He created me. How often do we enter our worship celebrations, our Sunday worship time, or women's ministries worship, with joy? Do we enter with resignation (gotta do this) or with passive acceptance (I guess we can do this)? Wouldn't it be great if we treated every moment of worship as a time of celebration? If we could say, "Just what I always wanted!" as we sing, listen to the message God has for us and spend time in His presence? Scripture tells us this is what we should do.

Earlier we shared our prayers of joy, talked about and sang songs of joy. We've worshipped as an expression of joy. We need to share that joy with others. Earlier we created a card to share our joy with a friend. As you mail this card, remember to uphold your friend in prayer and ask the Lord to be with them.

Closing Prayer.

About author



Major Kim Ray

USA Central Territory



## August 2020 – Worship as a Community

Español

August 1, 2020   By [Major Nancy Mead](#)   0 comments



The purpose of this program is to conduct a worship service outside with the local community. This will be an opportunity for outreach and partnering with others in your faith-based community.

Choose the venue for a community worship meeting. It could be outside on the lawn or a driveway of the church. Outreach means to go where the people in the community gather. This may be a local park, the center of town, the lake, or a sports field.

Consider those in the community who might be interested in partnering with the corps for this event. They could be local businesses that sponsor food, a community group like the ministerial association, other women's groups and churches. Partnering with other groups opens up great opportunities for future relationships. These partnerships also provide extra help and resources to make the outside worship service a success.

In preparing for this event make sure you have a good sound system and any permits that would be required for your outside worship service.

After the worship service have a picnic with games, a bounce house for families, or a community informational fair. This worship service can be a time to connect with your community on a relational level.

Serve picnic food—hotdogs, hamburgers, potato chips, cookies and lemonade. Or hold an ice cream social. For an even simpler fare, serve popcorn along with something cold to drink.

Use welcoming signage and balloons so the location is easy to find.

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Praise and Worship "Come Now is the Time to Worship"

"Holy Spirit"

"Draw me Close to You"

Testimony

Offering

Scripture—James 4:8

Special Music

## Devotional – “Draw Me Close”

Closing Song

Benediction

We live in a busy world. We find ourselves involved in work, social events, hobbies, family and school. Sometimes it feels like there is barely have enough time to eat and sleep. Our life can seem like a busy cycle that will never change.

Sometimes the things you have always loved to do and were important, fall by the wayside because there is just not enough time. You used to attend a small group Bible study, Sunday services and Christian fellowship with friends. Now you go down a road where you can't feel God anymore and you find that you are just caught up in a world of busyness.

In James 4:8 we read, “Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world.” God promises that if we come close to Him, He will come close to us. It is a great promise to us as a community of believers. But we have to take the time and draw close to Him and not let the world overpower us. Satan will use anything he can to separate us from God. He will keep us so world focused that we will not even be able to feel the presence of the Holy Spirit.

In Luke 15:11–32 we find the story of the prodigal son. Many of us have had family members who were like the prodigal son. They have been so far away from God living in the world but when they lost everything they made their way back home and to God. God is like the father of the story. He opens His arms and welcomes us back in again. He draws us close.

The second part of James 4:8 says, “Wash your hands you sinners; purify your hearts.” The washing of hands comes from the priesthood in the Old Testament. Cleaning one's hands was a ceremony instructed by God at the time. The priests observed this ceremony before entering the tabernacle, signifying the cleansing of impurities. The only way we can be cleansed today is through having a relationship with Jesus Christ, which comes from submitting to Him. We must submit ourselves to draw close to Him.

James calls us to remove everything from our thoughts and actions that keeps us divided between God and the world. We must focus on God and be loyal to Him in all things. We have to keep the routine busy things that separate us from God and His word under control so that we can submit to His will for our lives on a daily basis. We want our hearts to be purified with His love. And this is what our Savior who loves us wants for us.



Let us remember to draw close and keep our loyalty to God so that we can participate in the community of believers to which He has called us.

About author



Major Nancy Mead

Central Territory



## **Worship Programs**

### September 2020 – Worship as a Family

Español

September 1, 2020 By [Major Lori Meyer](#) 0 comments



## **Introduction**

This program is written for the families of the women who attend the corps as well as those who are part of the surrounding community. Its purpose is to demonstrate that worship starts at home around the family table. The focus is on choosing to serve the Lord.

## **Program Outline**

Welcome and prayer

Fun and Games

Skit

Song #1015, *The Salvation Army Song Book*, verse 4 "Happy the Home"

Scripture (Reader)

Devotions: "It All Starts with a Decision"

Time of invitation and prayer

Closing chorus: "I have decided to follow Jesus"

(Check YouTube for a video of the chorus)

Shared Meal

## **Planning**

Put a committee together to handle the various aspects of this event: advertising, mailing of invitations, meal set up, preparation and clean up.

## **Advertising**

Send invitations to family members of the women's ministries group and also to members of the corps. Ask the women to think of a friend whose family they will personally invite. Place flyers in areas where The Salvation Army serves the public and on the corps bulletin board.

## **Set Up**

Set up family tables with seating on the outside for participation. Use fall tablecloths, napkins and silverware. Ask the women to bring framed photos of their families to be used as centerpieces.

## **Meal and Hostess**

Decide whether to serve a full meal, which need not be fancy, or a dessert bar with multiple desserts. Ask two to three families to act as hosts at the tables. Select those who reflect the different types of families represented in the women's ministries program, the corps and the community. For example: a single mother and children, a more traditional family of mother,

father, one or two children, and a family where the grandparents are the prime caregivers of the children.

## Game Suggestions

Have available word searches on families in the Bible or a match game of famous families. Check the Internet for programs to create the word searches.

## Skit "Choosing"

Adult: It's time to sit still.

Child: Aw, for how long?

Adult: You get to choose: 30 minutes? 29 minutes? Or 15? Which do you choose?

Child: Well, okay....15! Then I get to eat three of these desserts, right?

Adult: Well, no. But, you get to choose which one? And a full sized piece!

Child: Then I'm having the chocolate cake with chocolate icing! Can I have it now?

Adult: Not for a little bit. But, aren't you happy you got to choose two very important things?

Child: Yes!

Leader: Today, we are gathered as families around the tables. And in just a little while we will be enjoying a wonderful meal together. But first we are going to have a short time of family worship. You may be sitting with your family or close friends but all together we are one big family of God.

Song: Song #1015 verse 4 "Happy the Home"

**Reader:** Our scripture verse is from Joshua 24:15. "But if you refuse to serve the Lord, then choose today whom you will serve. Would you prefer the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates? Or will it be the gods of the Amorites in whose land you now live? But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord."

## It All Starts with a Decision

Being around the family table is wonderful. But, it didn't happen without a lot of decisions. For many in our group it started a month ago when we met together to plan this event. For others it started when you heard about this worship service. Right then you had a decision to make. You decided you liked the idea or you decided you were not interested. You may have chosen

to wait until later. Your decision may have been to wait to see who else was going and even to see what other people thought about the whole idea before you making up your mind.

Every single day we make decisions. Some we don't even think about; what soap to buy, what toothbrush to use or when to get up. We have a routine that we follow each day. Other decisions we may labor over. What clothes are appropriate for an event? Should we look for a new job? Should we buy a new car or a new house?

Then we have the decisions we don't really talk about. Am I going to give my attention to that teacher or read my book? Am I going to sit with that person whom I know will talk constantly or am I going to sit at another table with the "readers" and leave the talker all alone? Am I going to be kind to the cashier even though she was grumpy as she checked me out at the store? While we don't talk about these decisions, they happen every day.

There is one decision that guides all other decisions in our lives. This is referred to in the verse in Joshua read earlier. It's placed in the framework of a statement; "As for me and my family, we will serve the Lord." These powerful decisive words were stated when Joshua called for a decision among people who were living in a land where other gods were worshipped. Joshua spoke for his family and was calling out to the people of God to decide to serve the one true God. Joshua spoke for his family, stating that they would serve the Lord together. This meant all the members of his household, including extended families, would be instructed in the ways of God.

This verse makes three powerful statements for our family worship today:

- First we read, "As for me." We know that walking with Jesus Christ is a decision we make personally. Our father or mother cannot decide to ask Jesus to forgive our sins and be our Lord. We must do this ourselves.
- The second statement is "and my family." Our families all vary in size and make up. Some of us live alone, and we have good friends that have become our families. Regardless of what our family looks like, we believe something. But this last part of the statement is essential to what we choose to believe.
- The third statement is "we will serve the Lord." We all serve someone. Who are you serving as a family? Is it God? Or is everyone serving themselves, doing what pleases them, whenever they desire? This verse points us to a good decision—to choose to follow and serve the Lord.

A wonderful blessing is available when the whole household is taught the ways of the Lord and decides to serve Him. We know some of us are part of a family in which not everyone has chosen to be a follower of Christ. It's so important to remember that the decision to follow Him is ours alone. We determine to love and pray for the members of our family so they will want to follow Christ too.

If you realize tonight that you have not yet made a decision to be a follower of Christ, and you want to, we are going to pray for you right now.

About author



Major Lori Meyer

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# Community Outreach Ideas



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## **Community**

# Focus Group – Communal Worship to Build the Body of Christ Español

October 1, 2019 By [Karen Ulrich](#) 0 comments



The children are crying. The house is a mess. There are bills to pay, but not enough money to pay them. There are schedules to keep, school, work, activities and appointments. This is a small sampling of everyday existence that allows little time for meditation upon scripture and time with the Lord. When we feel depleted and alone we begin to doubt. That is when Satan steps in to whisper lies—"It is too much, there is an easier way, God is not good, He does not love you." Step away. It is during our quiet time with the Lord that He grows and strengthens



us. The power of prayer transforms us from this is impossible to “I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength” (Phil. 4:13).

Women are created for communal worship. Your corps is a perfect location to live out Colossians 3:16, 17 (NLT): “Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom He gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.”

Schedule a time for communal worship bringing together officers, staff and the community to share in a time of teaching, prayer, and counsel with one another to strengthen and refresh. Consider providing childcare. Depending on the time of the meeting the teen groups may be able to provide babysitting service while women gather.

Time together in prayer and conversation not only fuels the soul but creates important connections that each of us need in the body of Christ. Teens gain satisfaction from service and feel valued, mothers may connect to share babysitting exchange services to get that needed break when they feel overwhelmed, and friendships blossom. Corps members are able to share information about services provided to meet the needs of those attending.

God created each of us with unique gifts to serve Him. Psalm 139:14 says, “I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well.” When we are so busy and our tanks are running on empty, it is easy to become overwhelmed with our daily existence and underwhelmed by our value. Coming together points us back to what is important and shines a light on the gifts God has given us to use for His kingdom and to strengthen the body of Christ.

About author



Karen Ulrich

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## Community

# Focus Group — Encouragement

Español

October 1, 2018   By [Captain Janelle Gonzalez](#)   0 comments



This focus group idea is to encourage the women who are not part of the Corps Community Care Ministries, or who volunteer in different areas of the corps, to get involved in a program to encourage and minister to those seniors who are lonely and would appreciate a visit. This ministry might not be limited to just nursing homes, but also senior centers, adult with disabilities centers, individuals who are house bound, cancer center groups, or any location where the occupants could use some encouragement.

The leader of the group would be responsible to contact women who would be interested in being a part of this ministry. Once it is determined the number of women who wish to participate, the group will need to decide how many individuals/groups they will be able to visit. This will also determine whether one person or a small group will visit a location. Even if they decide to visit in a small group to one location, they may want to focus on one-on-one visitation with individual residents in the home.

The members would agree to meet on a regular basis (weekly, biweekly, or monthly) to plan the logistics of the visits. Their responsibilities could include contact with the center coordinator/social worker to determine the time, date and number of people that would be able to participate in any planned activities. At their meetings they could also discuss what activities they would share with the larger group of residents and what they would share with an individual client. The groups' focus would be on seniors whose families don't visit them on a regular basis because of their location, or those who have no family and few visitors.

While this focus group is primarily a ministry of visitation, an additional goal could be that the members would enjoy times of fellowship together. This could lead to activities other than planning the visitation to "fun" times that the group would enjoy (dinner, a movie or play, shopping).

Following are some suggestions of visitation activities. Some could be used with individual residents while others could be with a larger group.

Week one: Manicure and hand massage

Week two: Craft to decorate client's room (Pinterest has great, affordable ideas)

Week three: Board games

Week four: Dance party

Week five: Karaoke and talent show (Get the individual's songs choices the week before in order to prepare the Karaoke play list.)

Week six: Scrapbooking and sharing stories of the good old days.

About author



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## **Community**

# Focus Group – Explore the Community

[Español](#)

October 1, 2019   By [Major Tricia Taube](#)   0 comments



How many times have you heard someone say, “I’ve lived in this area my whole life and never been to ...”? Invite the women to explore their community. This is a six-week program to explore famous historical sites, restaurants that have been featured on the Food Network, Botanical Gardens, museums or attractions that others come from miles away to see and experience but that locals pass by thinking “someday”.

## **Budget and Planning**

Determine the cost of each stop. Develop a budget based on admission fees, transportation and refreshments. If the places are beyond some of the women's personal budgets, hold a fundraiser to help or defray the cost. If possible, the leader should visit each site before the group goes, so that they are informed and ready to point out interesting features and pitfalls. Choose a historian to take pictures, capture fun quotes for a memory book or PowerPoint® presentation that could be shown at the last meeting. Create a trivia game or use a game show format of questions about various locations visited for the last meeting.

## **Weeks 1—5**

For the first five weeks visit the locations previously decided upon. Traveling together is always fun and builds community, but meeting at the site may sometimes be more practical. Depending on the timing and venue, finish up the exploration with an appropriate treat. Good food, coffee and conversation around sharing the "best things" are memory making and relationship building.

## **Week 6**

Hold a fun and meaningful wrap-up as outlined above. Bring this time of getting to know your community and each other as an opportunity to challenge the group into a deeper understanding of God's love and presence.

## **Devotional Focus for Wrap-Up Meeting**

Psalm 46:1–11: "God is our strong refuge He is truly our helper in times of trouble" (vs 1).

The Lord is always close. He is *El Roi*—the God who sees me. In our busyness, in the midst of challenges, difficulties, hurts and distractions of life, we can miss the blessing of a daily and constant relationship with our heavenly Father. The God who sees all is always mindful of you, always aware of you. In Isaiah 65:24, God reminds Isaiah that He is so aware of His people that even in their rebellion and disobedience He anticipates their calling out to Him. Even before they whisper the prayer, while they are still talking about their situation and their needs, He hears and answers. The Psalmist reminds us that God is very present, a safe place for us to go in times of trouble. We are challenged in verse 10 of the passage to be still, and in that stillness, know that God is God, powerful, present and ready to protect and act on your behalf. In *Confessions*, Saint Augustine writes, "You have made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in You." For each of us today, Home Sweet Home is only truly found when we yield our hearts to our Father God, who knows us best and loves us most.

About author

Major Tricia Taube



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## **Community**

# Focus Group — Good Grief ... Steps in the Grief Process

Español

October 1, 2018   By [Commissioner Debi Bell](#)   0 comments



Grief is a frequent visitor to everyone because we all experience loss and change. Sometimes changes in our lives are caused by marriage, birth of a baby, or a new job or location. All change means loss of something even if it is also a gain. It is important to understand the healthy steps of grieving so that we can flourish in life.

Traumatic loss through disaster, divorce or death of a loved one is more acute. It is easily recognized and more likely to trap us in one of its stages. Here are the seven stages:

shock/disbelief, denial, bargaining, guilt, anger, depression and acceptance/hope.

Invite a speaker to cover this topic or develop a support group around a book study on this subject. You may want to offer the study on a regular basis, especially if your corps or community has experienced disaster.

About author



Commissioner Debi Bell

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## Community

### Focus Group – Moms of Toddlers

Español

October 1, 2019 By [Lt. Colonel Michele Lescano](#) 0 comments



If we don't teach our children to follow Christ, the world will teach them not to.

This focus group idea will take between eight to ten weeks. Set up a time to meet with mothers of toddlers to demonstrate how to follow a pattern to make a Bible busy book. Check [Pinterest](#) for patterns.

### Objectives



- 1 To demonstrate the importance of sharing the Scriptures with children, even when they are young.
- 2 Women learn various stitches for sewing and the use of patterns.
- 3 Children develop motor skills. The older toddlers learn about buttons, snaps, zippers as they learn their favorite Bible stories
- 4 Women experience fellowship while learning and discussing parenting their toddler.

## Resources:

<https://mothersniche.com/printable-quiet-book/>

[5 Scripture Memory Verses for Toddlers](#)

About author



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## **Community**

### Focus Group – Simplicity Sisters

October 1, 2019   By [Major Jennifer Melton](#)   0 comments



Simplicity Sisters is a small group that focuses on accountability and encouragement for following the simple adage: "Live. Laugh. Love."

Each group consists of five to seven members. The women rotate meeting in their respective homes and hold each other accountable to what's most important in life. Often, this group shares tips on simple living such as:

- Recipes with 5 ingredients or less
- 10 ways to de-clutter your home one room at a time
- Memorizing one scripture per month
- Creating a daily planner that doesn't cost a fortune
- Comfy home decorating without all the "stuff"
- Positive things to say to your children

The ultimate goal is to encourage one another in living life simply in appreciation for others and seeking God's influence in all things. Their formation was based on Bessie Anderson Stanley's 1904 poem, "Success." Many may recognize it from its marketed popularity using the words: Live. Laugh. Love. This verse is inscribed on her gravestone:

He achieved success who has lived well, laughed often, and loved much;

Who has enjoyed the trust of pure women, the respect of intelligent men and the love of little children;

Who has filled his niche and accomplished his task.

Who has never lacked appreciation of earth's beauty or failed to express it.

Who has left the world better than he found it.

Whether an improved poppy, a perfect poem, or a rescued soul;

Who has always looked for the best in others and given them the best he had.

Whose life was an inspiration;

Whose memory a benediction.

About author

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## **Community**

# Focus Idea – Bible Read-through For Small Groups

Español

October 1, 2019   By [Major Lolita Sanchez](#)   0 comments



The easiest and maybe most powerful small group you could have is a Bible read-through group. Groups can be assigned by area to meet at each other's homes. They come only with their Bible and the idea of reading through it together. As they read together, they allow the Spirit to move and share how God is speaking to them.

The Salvation Army Eastern Territory's Spiritual Life Development Department offers a free resource in English and Spanish that leads reading through the Bible in a year. This can be

downloaded for use within a group. The link is: <http://saconnects.org/the-one-year-bible-reading-plan>.

A scripture-writing plan could also be incorporated. [www.Swtblessings.com](http://www.swt blessings.com) has themed scripture writing plans (in English and Spanish) that are downloadable and printable. The premise is that Satan doesn't want us in the Word of God and will attack by any means necessary. We need to hide God's Word in our hearts. Individuals commit to writing a section of scripture each day. It will take ten minutes or less to copy a portion of scripture from the Bible.

Another scripture writing resource (with a small charge) can be found at:

<https://shop.cultivatewhatmatters.com/collections/journals/products/write-the-word-journal-cultivate-gratitude>

About author



Major Lolita Sanchez

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## Outreach — At the End of the Monthly Resources

Español

October 1, 2018   By [Major Nancy Ball](#)   0 comments



The women of our corps decided to reach out to the single women in the transitional living program on our corps campus. We collected packages of Top Ramen® and rolls of toilet paper. On the last Thursday of the month, when people are at the end of their resources, we divided into teams of two and went door to door. We gave the gift of Top Ramen® and toilet paper and asked each woman how we could pray for them. Month after month, not a single person turned us down for prayer—even the woman who declared she was an atheist.

After we finished knocking on doors, we sat down and wrote personal notes to each resident and then put them in the mail. It gave us the opportunity to invite them to church services and to reinforce our desire to make a real connection with them. It was a joy to be present in our transitional living program and to speak the name of Jesus to people.

About author



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## **Community**

# Outreach – Block-busters

[Español](#)

October 1, 2019   By [Lt. Colonel Michele Lescano](#)   0 comments



Divide the women into groups of two or three and use Google Maps on a cell phone for directions. The groups should spend time praying for God's guidance and blessing on their endeavor. Using a specially printed door hanger and a rose in a water tube, the women head to their designated areas with invitations to come to the corps. The flower tubes are available online and roses can be purchased inexpensively from big box stores.



The invitations can be for a special event, holiday, Sunday at the corps or simply a general welcome. The corps could also hold an open house with a BBQ lunch during which corps programs and times of the services could be featured.

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## Community

# Outreach — Celebrating Clean Clothes

[Español](#)

October 1, 2018   By [Colonel Janice Howard](#)   0 comments



Not every family has the luxury of clean clothes. Without access to a washer and dryer, or the funds for detergent, they cannot afford to do laundry. Reach out to these families and offer both practical and spiritual help by assuring them that they are valued and loved by God and The Salvation Army.

**Option 1**—Contact a laundromat that is in close proximity to the corps and inquire if they would be willing to donate laundry service for a pre-determined number of customers. The

women's ministries women could provide detergent and fabric sheets. This free service would be offered only during specified times. If this isn't possible, make arrangements for the women at the information table to have a supply of tokens or coins in the denomination needed to operate the machines. Make this "service ministry" available to anyone who comes to the laundry.

Ask permission to set up a small snack and informational table that would be manned by a couple of the women's ministries members. They could answer any questions the families may have concerning The Salvation Army and offer spiritual counseling by sharing the love of Jesus. Have printed information about corps and up-coming women's ministries' activities available.

**Option 2**—Ask the women's ministries group to hold a fundraiser or ask for donations to purchase gift cards for clients to use at the laundromat. Detergent and softener sheets could be given at the same time as the cards. This option allows the recipients to go to the laundromat at their convenience. Informational brochures about Sunday services, youth and women's ministries programs could be given to each person who receives a gift card.

About author



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## **Community**

# Outreach — Clouds Look Like ... A Joyful Celebration of Art and Artists

[Español](#)

October 1, 2018 By [Major Mary Satterlee](#) 0 comments



In 2015, when the Asheville, North Carolina Corps was doing fundraisers for the Boundless Congress, they held a big yard sale in which they rented spaces to the community. One of their vendors was a member of the West Asheville Arts Council with a company called Ya-Ya. She takes old clothes and accessories and recycles them into new fashions. When the West Asheville community was planning a big arts festival, they asked if The Salvation Army would

be interested in opening their corps building for artists to show their work. They agreed, making sure the items placed in their corps building would be suitable to be shown in the corps building.

On the day of the festival, a lot of people came through the corps building. Uniformed Salvationists were present to show people around. They set up tables in the foyer for copies of the *War Cry* and promotional material to educate the community regarding The Salvation Army and to extend an invitation to attend church services.

The West Asheville corps building is located in a very eclectic neighborhood containing a lot of coffee shops, quaint little boutiques and restaurants. People walk up and down the street all hours of the day and night. Ya-Ya has asked to use the sidewalk in front of the Army building for an Art Exhibit.

The friendship with Ya-Ya has grown through the months. She has come to do a women's ministry program on recycling old clothes into new and fresh apparel. She has planned another art walk utilizing the corps' back parking lot to provide additional space.

The Asheville Corps is in the beginning stages of planning another big community yard sale to raise funds for Commissioning. They are sure that Ya-Ya and many of her Art Walk friends will be a part of that also.

### [The Salvation Army Asheville](#)

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## Community

# Outreach — Gathering

[Español](#)

October 1, 2018   By [Major Lolita Sanchez](#)   0 comments



The following material is a part of a small group program designed to bring women together to encourage purposeful conversations about life and Jesus. Its aim is to build friendship and sisterhood within the body of Christ.

The intended format may include sharing a meal, refreshments or coffee together and then engaging in guided discussion with provided questions/challenges to help open the doors of sharing and vulnerability.

This is a good group activity for women to use in their homes with friends or neighbors who may not be part of the regular women's ministries groups in a corps setting.

We often hear God's Word being compared to the taste of honey. Historically, honey held multiple purposes. It was used to add flavor to everyday foods and to enhance family traditions such as wedding celebrations. Because of its antibacterial properties, it was often used medicinally. Similarly, we can apply scripture to sweeten our day-to-day living, to heal wounds, or simply to sit back and savor each word.

The topic this month is 'His Word is Sweet.' This gives participants an opportunity to discuss where they are in their regular scripture reading, to discern how God's Word has impacted them, and to encourage deeper study, incorporating what they learn into every facet of their lives. After sharing the scripture, pose at least three of the questions below with the group:

- When was the first time you heard God speak through scripture?
- Has scripture ever helped you in a difficult time? Share an example.
- Do you experience any difficulty in spending daily time reading your Bible? Why?
- How is scripture incorporated into your family, work, school, or social circle?

After a time of sharing, you may wish to discuss how as a group accountability can foster deeper exploration of scripture. A fun challenge might be memorizing a new verse each week. Be sure to hand out the Monthly Scripture Card and Take-Home Sheet.

[Image 1](#)

[Image 2](#)

[Image 3](#)

For further information check the following websites:

<http://uscwomensministries.com/embrace/>

<http://saconnects.org/gathering/>

<https://ministrytoolkit.org> (Keyword embrace)

About author

Major Lolita Sanchez



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## Community

# Outreach – Love At The Laundromat

Español

October 1, 2019   By [Captain Maureen Diffley](#)   0 comments



## Love At The Laundromat

### Evangelism In Your Neighborhood

Several years ago during the "I'll Fight" day, accepted candidate Amanda Cain was part of a Christmas outreach at a local Laundromat. The occasion stayed lodged in her heart. When her area commander received a donor donation, it spurred them on to hold a day to show love to



folks doing their laundry around Oklahoma City. Over 96 households received laundry soap, dryer sheets, Bibles, a copy of *The War Cry*, contact information, a light canteen-style lunch and took part in conversations and prayer.

Saturday is the busiest day for Laundromats. During the morning and afternoon volunteer teams visited five locations, which varied in number of customers. Since most customers are able to do all their laundry in about an hour and a half, visiting during peak times is essential.

The visits were designed to encourage people at the laundromat. Customers were quite surprised by the attention. Cain states, "Many people asked, 'Why are you doing this?'" We told them because Jesus loves us all, we just want to show His love to others. People were amazed and overall, accepting of it. Many people told us that we made their day and it was very encouraging." About 200 people, representing 96 households, had a lunch of hot dogs, chips, soda or water.

Roxie Cain, a soldier at the corps, was able to provide a Spanish Bible and have a conversation with a Spanish-speaking mother, whose son translated their conversation. The woman began to cry. Her son explained that she was crying because she was so happy to have a Bible in her own language, something she had never had before. In the past, her children read from an English Bible and translated it into Spanish for her.

A married couple met a woman who was trying to avoid eye contact with them. Eventually they were able to engage her in conversation. She related her fears that she would not be able to stay sober. She was 40 days clean and was trying to stay away from people and temptations. The husband had just graduated from the Adult Rehabilitation Center and was able to tell his story of overcoming a meth addiction. Their conversation and prayer time emphasized that she was not alone. They also invited her to the corps.

"The focus of our outreach was just to be generous and share love," Cain said. "Every corps has a way to reach out, we just have to find it."

About author



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## Community

# Outreach – Mugs and Muffins

Español

October 1, 2019   By [Major Lolita Sanchez](#)   0 comments



Invite women in the community, corps, apartment building, work group or exercise club to join in a time of fellowship. This will focus on forming strong bonds between women. Women often don't find the time or energy to take time for themselves. They are always caring for family members or others in the church.

Develop a simple invitation, which can be distributed via email, text or flyer. Include the date, day and time. Ask the women to bring their own mug to share coffee or tea together. The

corps could provide a snack. This should not be an over programmed time, but rather a time to hear the Word of God and pray together for their individual needs.

About author



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## **Community**

# Outreach – S.A.M.S. Salvation Army Meals for Students

[Español](#)

October 1, 2019   By [Lt. Colonel Michele Lescano](#)   0 comments



Schools provide children in the lower income status with free meals during the school week, Monday through Friday. However, on the weekends many of these children don't receive a decent meal and are undernourished.

## Program Idea

Ahead of time contact the school(s) near the corps to obtain permission to provide backpacks that contain two full meals for needy students on the weekends. The school faculty representative will discreetly hand out the backpacks on Friday, and then the empty packs will be returned on Monday. Invite the women to conduct a food drive focused on what would be needed to provide these meals. They could present the specific plans, sponsored by the women's ministries, corps members, Advisory Board members and other community groups such as Kiwanis, Rotary, Boy Scouts, Fire and Police Departments.

### Volunteers Needed

The women can be involved in collecting the food items, filling the backpacks, taking them to the designated schools on a Friday and picking up the empty backpacks on a Monday.

About author



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## **Community**

# Outreach – Sports Fellowship

[Español](#)

October 1, 2019   By [Major Lolita Sanchez](#)   0 comments



How many times have you had to drop your child off at a sport practice or music rehearsal that only lasted an hour? So you decided to sit in your car or read a book while waiting. Instead of waiting alone, organize a get together with the other moms and share your gifts and talents with each other. The group won't necessarily be faith-focused. If you are the only Christian in the group, you can preach with your life. Your words and your actions will speak loudly to a group of non-believers. You never know what gifts each mom will bring. One may

be able to teach sewing or quilting. Another may lead a health-conscious series about food, exercise and eliminating toxins from your families' diet.

About author



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## Community

# Outreach — Spring Fling

[Español](#)

October 1, 2018   By [Major Tammy Larson](#)   0 comments



**Spring Fling** (or Christmas in July) is a Women's Rally Day with the goal of connecting new women to the ministry of The Salvation Army. The women currently involved in women's programs are encouraged to invite several women to this event. It makes it even more special if surrounding corps can join together. The women love getting together and fellowshiping with one another. However, the goal is to invite women who are not yet connected, so offer prizes for those who bring a guest as well as for the guests themselves.



The website <https://www.ctainc.com> offers many themed items for women's ministry programs that can be purchased and used for table settings, table favors and thank-you gifts.

As part of the day, offer workshops based on a theme. Usually craft or food workshops work well. Also, set up a prayer room as one of the workshops for those who feel they are not "crafty." DHQ leaders, women from the programs, and Women's Auxiliary members are all good candidates to teach workshops. Charge a small fee to help cover the cost of supplies. We charged \$15, which covered the lunch and the two workshops.

Below is a sample schedule:

9:30-10:00 am

*Registration, Refreshments, Bake and Craft Sale*

10:00-11:30 am—*Workshop 1*

***Beaded Vine Bracelet*** (Chapel Lobby)

***Vegetable Bouquet*** (Fellowship Hall)

***Easter Candy Bouquet*** (Portable)

***God's Promises—Prayer Room*** (Fireside Room)

11:45 am—Lunch and Program (Gym)

1:00-2:30 pm—*Workshop 2* (see above)

2:45 pm—Dessert Program (Gym)

3:30 pm—*Homeward Bound*

Don't forget to have registration cards available so you can gather the guests' information. Also, have printed materials with your Home League and Women's Ministry Calendar for distribution. A picture slide show of your events over the past year will spark guests' interest in becoming involved.

About author



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**Women's  
Sunday  
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**Women's Sunday**

## Women's Sunday Meeting Program Outline

[Español](#)

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### **Welcome Home**

Living A Christian Life In Your Home

[Women's Sunday Posters – PDF](#)

Women's Sunday Meeting Program Outline

**Welcome to our Home**

Responsive Call to Worship, **"Our Home in Christ"**

**Opening Prayer** – By Women's Ministry Member

Announcements and Offering

**Praise and Worship** – Women's Praise Team

*"Cornerstone," "Great Are You Lord," "Lord I Need You"*

**Pastoral Prayer**

**Responsive Scripture Reading – "The Garments of Our Home"**

**Testimony**

**God's Dwelling Place: My Home**

Women's Ministry Member who has experienced God's love restoring a broken relationship or home.

**Congregational Song #1016/385, "Home is Home"\***

**Offering and Announcements**

**Dramatic Presentation**

**The Recipe: Foundations for a Christlike Home**

**Scripture Reading** – Colossians 3:13–4:1 (NIV)

Special Music – **Solo or Women's Ministry Group**

**Message: "Home Sweet Home"**

**Time of Reflection**

**Closing Song – "Amazing Grace" #453/#57\***

**Benediction** – Colossians 3:15–17, (NIV)

*\*The Salvation Army Song Book*

**Responsive Call to Worship**

**“Our Home in Christ”**

Leader: The Lord is our refuge.

**Congregation: We can find peace in God's abiding love.**

Leader: When troubles assail us, we call upon the Lord.

**Congregation: When joys abound, we call upon the Lord.**

Leader: Welcome this day to God's house, one of many dwellings of the Almighty One.

**Congregation: We thank and praise God for His refuge and sanctuary.**

**All: Amen**

**Responsive Scripture Reading**

***“The Garments of Our Home”***

(Based on Colossians 3:12–17, *The Message*)

*Leader:* Chosen by God for this new life of love, dress in the wardrobe God picked out for you: compassion, kindness, humility, quiet strength, discipline.

**Congregation:** Be even-tempered, content with second place, quick to forgive an offense.

*Leader:* Forgive as quickly and completely as the Master forgave you.

**Congregation:** Regardless of what else we put on, we must wear love. It's our basic, all-purpose garment. We should never be without it.

*Leader:* Let the peace of Christ keep you in tune with each other, in step with each other. And cultivate thankfulness.

**Congregation:** Let the Word of Christ—the message—have the run of our homes, allowing for plenty of room in our lives.

*Leader:* Sing, sing your hearts out to God! Let every detail in our lives—words or actions—be done in the name of the Master, Jesus, thanking God the Father every step of the way. Amen.



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## Women's Sunday

### Welcome Home

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October 3, 2019   By [Captain Nicole Parker](#)   0 comments



[Women's Sunday Posters](#)

[\*\*Sunday Morning Message\*\*](#)

## Living a Christian life in your home

### Based on Colossians 3

One of television's most popular shows for home design and remodel was "Fixer Upper." This show takes you into the life of a family whose passion is to inspire others to own their home. They take an old, rundown fixer-upper house in the heart of Waco, Texas and transform it into a beautiful, masterfully created home. What is a home? It is the place where love casts out all fear, where we are surrounded and supported by those who love us unconditionally and who welcome us despite our failures. It is not defined by four walls, but rather it's the place where we share our life with others. Our faith in Jesus not only changes who we are as people but it should also change our homes. Sometimes we need God to intervene and fix up the home He desires for us.

By some accounts, American homes are radically failing. Both mothers and fathers are working outside of the home, often leaving children to fend for themselves. Single parent homes are on the rise, putting a strain on the family as they try to cover all the bases. What our American homes have become seems far from ideal. Is this what God intended? He established the home at the very beginning of creation (Gen 2:18-25). But because of sin, there has been a breakdown of the structure known as "home." Centuries ago Confucius said: "The strength of a nation is derived from the integrity of its homes." Each one of us can contribute to building godly homes. Through God's Word we can discover key components in our relationship with Christ, and others, that will lead to Christ-centered homes.

I recently conducted a Facebook poll and asked: "What qualities do you hope your home represents to your family and to others? What makes your home a home for you?" The most popular responses were love, safety, forgiveness, accountability and peace. Each one of us has the desire to be welcomed into a household where these qualities reside, but most importantly where unconditional love is the foundation. So we must ask ourselves today, how do we compete in the world to capture such an environment when we know it is lost to many? We must operate out of a position of love.

In creating a home, top designers always have plans and tips, many of which include the following elements: A focal point, pieces that make a space, and warm layers. I would like to use these elements as we look at how God desires our Christian homes to be designed. Let us open God's Word and read together from Colossians 3:12 - 4:1 (NIV).

It is important for us to know the history of the day when the Apostle Paul was writing this letter. When Paul laid the groundwork for peace and stability he was very aware of the breakdown of society during the Roman reign of Caesar Augustus who ruled for 41 years. Paul was a Jew who converted to Christianity. He was also a Roman citizen very connected with the lifestyle during these times. He confronted the deeper values of the citizens in the passage just read. The propaganda of the empire was the *Pax Romana*, which promised security and prosperity. The Apostle Paul began and ended his letter with a different way of thinking than that of Augustus.

To understand the Roman context in which Paul's letter was written, we must look at parallel passages taken from other letters of Paul written during this same period of time. The Roman Empire was in crisis in 29 BC. Augustus believed that with strong security and prosperity, life would begin to be shaped more peacefully in homes. Augustus also understood that there also needed to be order inside the domestic life in the empire. It meant that he was promoting the Roman family, the *familia* in Latin.

The *familia* to Augustus is not what we consider to be an average family: two parents, two children, a dog, a car, a house surrounded with love and empathy. Rather, Augustus believed the rebuilding of the *familia* would be the foundation of the empire. He would come to be considered the father of the Roman Empire. He set out to restore, "fix up" and go back to a time when the family was much stronger. It is like our recollections: "Remember when ... kids did not have cell phones? When we actually had to go to the library to find resources? When we had to walk to school and actually grow our own crops instead of pulling up to the Walmart® call ahead service?"

### **The Pieces of the Home**

The *familia* (the pieces a designer needs to make a home) was a household—a community of people who lived and worked together. It always consisted of a husband, wife, children and slaves. The order of the society brought codes to live by and order to be maintained. They believed such things would bring stability, not only to homes, but also to the entire empire. The head of the household, the father, would be the oldest male member of family. The father owned everything in the household and was legally responsible. He could keep children or kill them. He had the choice and the authority. His wife was his property along with his children and slaves. There was no such thing as childhood development. Statistics of the day show that fifty percent of the children died before the age of 10; and because of this, it affected the way people thought of children in the Roman world. They had no protection and were forced to labor when very young. The final components of the Roman family were slaves. They were not racial slaves, but slaves awarded by conquest. Slavery was pouring into Rome during this time so that there were possibly two to three million slaves out of a population of seven million. This is the world to which Paul was writing. This type of family system had been in place for 75 years, and the empire was dependent on it. So Paul, a Christian leader anointed by God, entered this cultural milieu and shared a new way to design the household.

What Paul writes in Colossians 3 gives insight into the way God has directed the family. He also penned two other letters at the same time—Ephesians and Philemon. Ephesians 5:21–6:9 is a parallel passage to Colossians 3. Paul enjoined wives to submit, not to obey legalistically, but to behave with respect. In her world, a woman had no power over anything. Paul said the wife should treat her "husband" with respect. This is paralleled in Ephesians 5:21, 22: "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ." Submission is a character virtue. Submit to your husband as is fitting to the Lord. Paul says her measure of submission is no longer Rome, but rather that of Christ, which goes against those times.



Paul then addresses the husband who has both power and authority. He says, "husbands, love your wives." In the ancient Roman world, there was no expectation of love between a husband and wife. Paul says the husband is to love and not be harsh. In Ephesians 5:25, he is to "Love (his) wife as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her." This was totally contrary to societal expectations.

Children were property; they were not considered people. In Ephesians 6, Paul connects obedience with the commandment, "Honor your father and your mother." Rather than a matter of fear, such honor is to be an act of worship. You honor God in the way you obey your parents. In Colossians 3:21, Paul says, "Do not embitter your children." He knew fathers can impose a great amount of fear. Paul writes, treat them as people, with "sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord."

A British criminal by the name of John H. Starkey was very evil and murdered his wife. When he died, officials called upon General William Booth to conduct his funeral. At the ceremony, Booth was surrounded by those who spoke about Starkey's evil life. Booth's first words to the crowd gave them all pause. "John H. Starkey never had a praying mother," he said. Children are to be raised in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). Children also need to have godly parents who will teach them the ways of the Lord.

Paul then finally brings slaves into the picture. He wanted to transform the relationship between slaves and master. Unfortunately, Paul didn't have the authority to overrule slavery, but he could subvert it. Paul said that a slave who is a Christian is accountable to God and He would reward him. He must work as if doing it for the Lord. In Ephesians 6:9 Paul urged, "And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know both your Master and his is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with Him." Your Master is not Augustus, not the "father" of your household here on earth, but rather God, who is sitting on the throne in Heaven. All are accountable to Him.

The letter to Philemon was written at the same time as Colossians. It is a letter Paul wrote about a runaway slave. The slave had been converted but then had to return to his hometown and confront his slave master, Philemon. "Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back forever—no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother," Paul writes in Philemon 1:15-16. "He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a fellow man and as a brother in the Lord." Paul said to think of your slave as "a dear brother," which was a very different way of thinking.

### **Focal Point of the Home**

If a Christian household is different, people will notice. And they will see the "charity/love" Paul wrote about in Colossians 3:13-15 (NIV):



“Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.”

### **Warm Layers of the Home**

What does this statement mean to us today? When Christ enters a person's heart, authority and mastership in our households are repositioned. Seven times in Colossians 3 Paul declares who is in charge—the Lord. Many of us have a sign hanging in our homes from Joshua 24:15, which states, “As for me and my house we will serve the Lord.” Are we truly serving the Lord by the way we show agape love, forgiveness, grace, mercy and peace? Are we allowing the Lord to be the head of our homes and of ourselves? There are many ways we go wrong in our families, but the one way to go right is to be sure that Jesus Christ is Lord and that our homes reveal warm layers of design—order and love, discipline and love, justice and love.

### **Home:**

- What is it like at your home?
- What kind of atmosphere is created?
- Is there love or is there hate?
- Is there grace or condemnation?
- Is there forgiveness or accusation?

Imagine families today embracing this letter from the Apostle Paul. Imagine their reaction to the introduction of charity—God's agape love in the home.

Matthew 11:28–30 from *The Message* states, “Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.” The Spirit of the living God wants to reside, not only in your heart, but in the home He has blessed you with. The pieces of our families may look a little different, but the layers of love, grace, peace and charity can all be found when Christ is at the center.

Do you long for God's love to flow in and through your home? Do you believe God's foundation for family is greater than the inferior ways of our society today? Let's keep and preserve the original structure of a home—God's unconditional love. Do you need to have an overhaul of your home? Do you need the Holy Spirit to come in and do some “fixing up?”

Seek Him today. He will restore our families and make them places where we can enter and say, "Home, sweet, home!"

### **Time of Commitment**

#### **Resources:**

Wiersbe, Warren Wm. "A Family Affair." *Be Complete: Become the Whole Person God Intends You to Be*, David C. Cook, 2008, pp. 139–148

Macarthur, John F. "A New Man Makes a New Home." *Macarthur New Testament Commentary*, Moody Press, 2015, pp. 166–175.

Call to Worship: <http://www.ministrymatters.com/worship/entry/8127/new-worship-connection-may-14-2017>

### [Women's Sunday Posters](#)

About author



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## Women's Sunday

### Drama – The Recipe

[Español](#)

October 1, 2019   By [Captain Nicole Parker](#)   0 comments



### Drama – The Recipe

Music from "[The Waitress](#)" by: [Sara Bareilles](#)

Lyrics and Music Adapted by: *Sabrina Borum*

Inspired by: *The Bible* and various devotionals

*Sugar, sugar/ Sugar, butter / Sugar, butter, flour/ Sugar, butter, flour / Sugar, butter, flour.*

*My hands pluck the things I know that I'll need, I take the sugar and butter from the pantry.*

*I add the flour to begin what I am hoping to start and then it's down with the recipe and bake from the heart.*

*Sugar, and butter, and flour, and mother .*

*What's inside? Everyone wants to know what's inside.*

*And I always tell them but I (what's inside) feel more than words can say.*

*You wanna know what's inside? Simple question, so then what's (inside) the answer?*

*Our whole life is in here (what's inside), generations baking, recipes for living.*

**Daughter:** Grandma I remember the first time I tasted this recipe like yesterday.

**Mother:** There's no way you do; you were only 4!

**Daughter:** I may have been 4 but I remember every detail. It all comes back to me every time I smell it baking.

**Grandma:** You should've seen your mom the first time she tasted it. Running about the kitchen with a piece in each hand, trying to eat them at one time. Max licking up the trail of crumbs.

**Mother:** Waking up to the amazing smell of your baking on Christmas morning got me out of bed faster than presents, that's for sure.

**Daughter:** It gets all of us out of bed, Mom. Grandma, why did Peter's cornbread always taste a bit savory, almost like there was some bacon in it? This recipe doesn't indicate anything like that.

**Mother:** Nanna used to coat her pan with bacon grease before putting the batter in it.

**ALL:** Everything's better with bacon!

**Grandmas:** Hand me that bowl sweetie ... and make sure to write that bit about the grease down. It'll be important to you 30 years from now. Cornbread is a staple at the dinner table.

**Daughter:** ... that and prayer!

**Mother:** Remember how you used to say, "God is grace."

**Daughter:** God is grace ... and great and I sure do thank Him for this food. Whoa, how far back do these recipes go?

**Mother:** Generations.

**Grandma:** ... and generations.

**Daughter:** ... and generationsssss (*all laugh*). Thanks for gifting me with this recipe box; it means so much.

**Grandmas:** Some of my favorite recipes came from my grandmother. Passing what she knew about how to prepare food was passing love in a way, and I'm happy to share that love with you.

**Mother:** Food wasn't the only thing she passed down. She told great stories that always came with a lesson.

**Grandma:** Time just flew by listening to her. After a long day of sharing and cooking we'd be so hungry, this cornbread would just hit the spot. She may be gone, but in each warm bite I remember her fondly.

**Mother:** She loved to cook simple recipes, and I do too.

**Daughter:** Open can, pour contents into pan, heat until hot, serve in bowl. What?

**Mother:** Now that's my kind of recipe!

**Grandma:** That was for the dog when he was sick. We all know ability is what you're capable of doing.

**Mother:** Motivation determines what you do.

**Daughter:** And attitude determines how well you do it.

**Grandma:** That's right. Ability, motivation and attitude are all ingredients for winning in the kitchen and they can't be omitted or substituted. "If you do these things you will never stumble," 2 Peter 1:10.

**Daughter:** Remember the time I tried to use Parkay<sup>®</sup> instead of butter?

**Grandma:** And what a stumble that was! You can't change Nanna's ingredients and then blame the recipe when things don't turn out right.

**Daughter:** 2 Peter? Is that why we call Nanna's cornbread Peter's recipe?

**Mother:** Oh yes, she got her recipes for the kitchen from her Nanna and for living from the good book.

**Grandma:** Sugar, the Lord's power and promises. We mix that sweetness into our butter, 'cause we *butter* be believing and living ...

**Mother:** ... that He strengthens our ability, inspires our motivation and empowers our attitude.

**Daughter:** ... for cooking, and cleaning, for forgiving our siblings for stealing our clothes. Oh goodness mom, you go back to that for everything.

**Grandma:** As she should. Peter goes on to add some extra things to his flour, just as you should be doing right about now—to faith we add virtue, knowledge, self-control.

**Mother:** ... perseverance, godliness, kindness and love.

**Daughter:** No wonder Nanna was so fruitful!

**Grandma:** Adding a little of these here and there does wonders and prevents us from stumbling.

**Mother:** It's the same in life, honey. Follow the Lord's instructions diligently, and you'll find that His recipe will bring spiritual growth that's sweet and fulfilling.

**Daughter:** Just like Nanna's Peter cornbread.

**Grandma:** Remember, "If you do these things you will never stumble."

*Sugar, butter, flour / Sugar, butter, flour*

*What's inside? Everyone wants to know what's inside*

*And we always tell them, but we feel more than words can say*

*You wanna know what's inside? Simple question, so then what's the answer?*

*Our whole life is in here, generations baking, recipes for living.*



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## Women's Sunday

# Annual Meeting and Leaders' Recognition

[Español](#)

October 2, 2019   By [Captain Nicole Parker](#)   0 comments



**"Home, Sweet, Home!"**

Preliminary Music ["Home" by Chris Tomlin](#)

**Parts of our Homes**



Display significant items the women bring from their homes.

Welcome Home!

Invocation

**A Home Cooked Meal**

(Sunday Roast and Fixings)

**Our Home Snapshots**

(Highlights of Women's Ministry Yearly Program and Finances)

**Key Components of our Home**

Leadership Recognition

**"Your Heart, His Home"**

Devotional

**Closing Song**

"Home is Home, However Lowly"

#1016/385 *The Salvation Army Songbook*

Benediction

### **Decorations**

Display mason jars filled with wildflowers, along with small home wooden cutouts and candles.

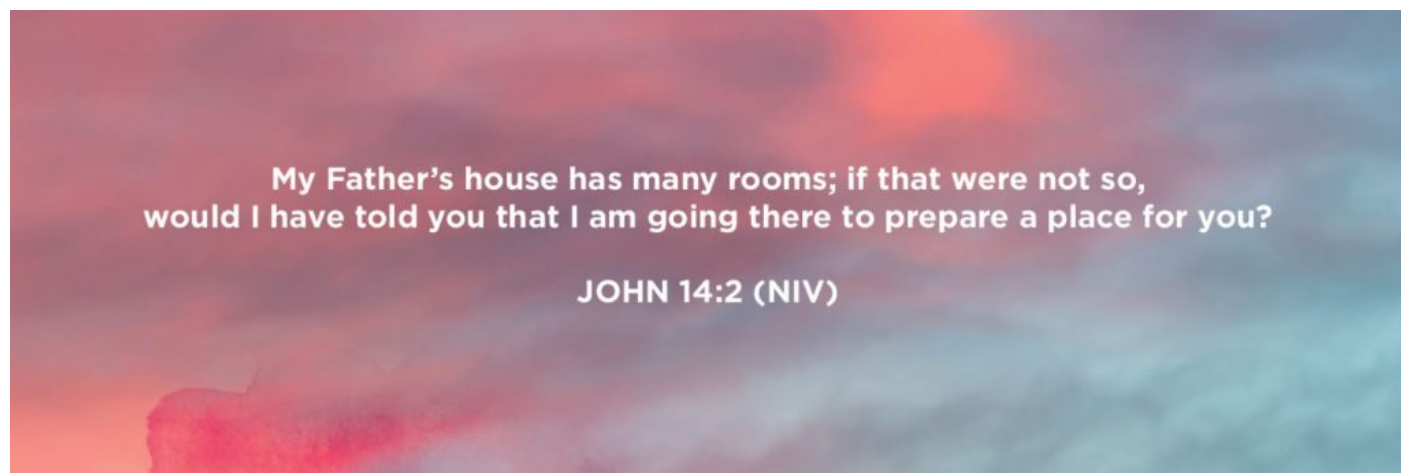
Table favor could be a cookie in the shape of a house. Hang pendant banners from ceiling with the words "Home Sweet Home." Create a living room atmosphere utilizing a few chairs, table and lamp. Add throw pillows with words, "Home Sweet Home."

### **Center Focal Table—Parts of our Home**

Use a lace tablecloth and other layers to display the items the women brought from their homes. Provide a small card for the description and significance of the item along with their name. Either before or after the program, invite the women to view the display. This could also be an element of the program.

## Welcome Table

On the welcome table post a sign with the words from John 14:2 NIV: "My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?" Using an address book, invite the women to write their favorite scripture in the comment section. Following the program, create a list of these verses and mail it to the women.



## Gift Favors

Anything that represents home would be suitable: candles, tea towels, key chain.

## Devotional

### "Your Heart, His Home"

Our lives revolve around our homes. There we raise our children, make memories, celebrate life and create spaces that we enjoy. A home should be a place where you feel safe, a place of renewal and retreat where you can take down all the barriers and just be who you were created to be in Christ.

Have you ever been on a long journey and just couldn't wait to walk through the front door of your home and say, "Finally, I'm home!" Or maybe you have been some distance from your family, and you hear them saying, "When are you coming home?" We know the phrase from *The Wizard of Oz*, "There's no place like home, there's no place like home." Truly, there is no place like home.

We learn love from our home. When I think about earthly love and how much I truly love those God has placed in my life, I know nothing can compare to the One who is love. "So the Word became human and made His home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen His glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son" (John 1:14, NLT). The scripture from John 1:14 uses the word "home" to describe God coming in human form and being with us. He was and is immersed in everything that was and

everything that is. He came to be a part of our lives. Exciting right? Or maybe that causes a moment of panic.

Through faith we invite the Savior into our home, our heart. You can probably remember a time in your life when someone asked you, "Would you like to invite Jesus into your heart?" For some young children, it is a puzzle. How can Jesus live in my heart? He is a big guy, the creator of the heavens and earth. Today we can giggle at such a thought, but truly the God of the Universe desires to permanently dwell within us as we surrender control to Him. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Jesus came because sin had to be confronted and defeated.

Incredible! Jesus experienced our world, our home, so that He might be able to express His unfailing love and His faithfulness in a way we could understand. The word "unfailing" is defined as "never changing or getting weaker in times of trouble." His love never changes—it is not dependent on what you do or do not do, or the stumbling blocks you may hit in your faith journey. His love is unfailing, unlike many of the disastrous love stories we read in magazines. Oh, no! There is no compromise in His love relationship with us. He is faithful.

Jesus came to write the ultimate love story in your life. He is Himself love and gave His life for you. There is no sweeter love story. Have you seen His glory? Have you accepted His gift of true love? Have you allowed Jesus to be at home in your heart?

### Prayer

Sweet Jesus, there is no other name we love more. May we know the unfailing love that covers us as daughters of the King. May your Word be written on the tablet of our hearts today so that we can experience the fullness of Your glory and grace! May our hearts reflect of the One we serve. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

About author



Captain Nicole Parker

USA Southern Territory



My Father's house has many rooms;  
if that were not so, would I have told you that  
I am going there to prepare a place for you?

— John 14:2 (NIV)



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# WOMEN'S SUNDAY



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# WOMEN'S SUNDAY



DATE:

TIME:



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# Women's Ministry Resources



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