

Women's Ministries Resources

Celebrate
HIS GOODNESS

*"They celebrate your abundant goodness
and joyfully sing of your righteousness."
Psalm 145:7*

2018 - 2019 Program Year



Women's Sunday

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Women's Sunday.

Serving and Praising a Good God in the Past, Present and Future!

October 1, 2018 By Lt. Colonel Marilyn Arnold



Welcome and Introduction of Theme

(Women's Ministries Secretary or other Leader)

Invocation

Remembering the Past

Song # SB 47/113

"O God, Our Help in Ages Past"

Brunch

1st Course—Salad (pre-set)

Table Talk 1

Sharing about the Goodness of God

Poem or Special Song

"The Goodness of God"

Brunch

2nd Course—Hot Dishes (Served Family Style)

Enjoying the Present

Table Talk 2

Game: Napkin Toss

Women's Ministries Leadership Recognition by Corps Officer

Devotional — "Good God, Good Service," Psalm 145:7 (NIV)

"They will celebrate Your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of Your righteousness."

Corps Officer, Women's Ministries Chaplain or Guest Speaker

Anticipating the Future

Annual Report and Vision for the Future by the corps officer and women's ministries leader

Closing Prayer

Psalms 71:15-16 NLT

I will tell everyone about Your righteousness.
All day long I will proclaim Your saving power,
though I am not skilled with words.
I will praise Your mighty deeds, O Sovereign Lord.
I will tell everyone that You alone are just.

Serving and Praising a Good God in the Past, Present and Future!

Invitations

Create invitations including the color scheme of the event with a few pictures of the women's ministries in the past and the present. Send the invitations to all the women of the corps and encourage them to invite other women to attend. Include an RSVP so you can have a rough estimate of how many women to plan for. Hold the event right after the Women's Sunday Celebration or even the day before Women's Sunday. Invite the young girls from Girl Guards to be a part of this brunch as well. Make sure to secure childcare so that young mothers can attend without concerns. The RSVP will also help with planning for child care needs.

Decorations

Centerpieces picture frames: Find pictures of the starting years of the women's ministries group. Ask some of the members to see if they have older pictures of the group or check in the corps library for pictures. Scan these and place the pictures in three various sized frames. Place the frames on the tables with a short flower vase with forget-me-nots and baby's breath.

Use real china or "looks like real china" for the table setting, tablecloth and napkins. Coordinate the color scheme based on what will accentuate the picture frames, chinaware and the flower arrangement.

Create a display of pictures of various women's ministries activities throughout the year. Use some of the pictures that are being used as centerpieces and enlarge them so they give the appearance of an art show room. If you have a number of women's groups, display photos that represent each group.

Brunch Meal

Serve a family-style simple lunch. Preset the tables with the salad and then bring out hot dishes after the poem or special music. Recruit the men of the corps to serve the women. This could be a men's ministry project. Get a caterer or a cook to prepare the meal. An easy meal

could be a berry spinach salad, choice of bacon and ham quiche, fruit bowl, mini pastries or French toast, coffee, tea and citrus punch.

Program Elements

Invite a musician, pianist or violinists from the corps to provide background music during the event.

Table Talk One

Invite the women to share personal stories of God's goodness to them in the past by answering the following questions:

- 1 Share a time when you felt God's goodness in your life when you needed Him the most?
- 2 How do you explain the goodness of God to others when they have a hard time seeing anything good around them?
- 3 Have you experienced or know of a person who has demonstrated the goodness of God that sets them apart from others?

Place table talk cards at each setting or assign a hostess at each table to pose the questions giving the opportunity for each woman to share.

Poem or Special Song Selection

"The Goodness of God" by Robert Alfveby. Have someone read the words as a poem or ask someone to sing it as a special number. For the music see page_____

The Goodness of God

I'm praising the Lord for all His goodness to me,
 For paying sin's penalty that I might go free,
 For sharing His love divine, for giving me peace of mind,
 Just think of all the goodness of God.

Chorus

I look back and marvel at the goodness of God,
 To think how He's guided in ways I have trod,
 The past has been glorious, marvelous,
 Victorious. Just think of all the goodness of God!

Verse 2

I'm praising the Lord for it gets sweeter each day,
 I find now in serving Him that it really pays,

He blesses me more and more, and still there is more in store,
Just think of all the goodness of God!

Verse 3

And someday when life is o'er and I enter in,
The place He's prepared for me to dwell there with Him.
And share there with heavens throng,
In singing the heav'nly song,
Just think of all the goodness of God.

Favors

Laminate the words of this song making them into bookmarks. Place them at each table setting for the women to take home.

Table Talk Two

Napkin Toss: Have an extra napkin at each table. Ask the hostess to toss the napkin to one of the women, who answers the following question before tossing it to another woman: Because of His Goodness I am ... The idea is for the women to describe how God has been affecting their lives. For example: Because of His Goodness I am saved, my family life is better, I have been healed, I've learned more about Him and have a closer relationship to Him. I've made some new friends here as part of this women's group.

Leadership Recognition

Research the meaning of each of the Women's Ministries Leaders' names. Use that information to recognize each leader and highlight their gifts and attributes. As gifts, purchase from a craft store wooden letters of their first names and present them as gifts. Or frame certificates of their names with the definitions tied to their leadership gifts and contributions to the women's group. For Example: *Cheryl: This name is a combination of names Cherie and Beryl. The name Cherie is a French name that signifies darling and Beryl, which is an English name, is the name of a green mineral, which are varieties of precious stones. Cheryl, you are a precious leader to our group. The time, passion and care you invest in hosting our various meetings allow for each of the participants to feel treasured and valued. An analysis of your name is associated with hardworking, protective, rich and humble. You display these characteristics, not only in your duties as the Hospitality Chair, but also in your role as one of our Focus Group leaders as you mentor women each month.* (Visit <https://www.themeaningofname.com> to search for definitions of names.)

Annual Report and Vision for the Future

Include activities that took place throughout the year—fundraisers, World Services projects, special trips—in the annual report and share with the group. Use the women's ministries

report form as a guide. Take this opportunity to include information about the various groups and women's ministries' activities that will be taking place in the future and invite the women to join any of the programs. Use this opportunity to appeal for more leaders and share the various goals and visions for the coming year.

"Good God, Good Service"

Major Johanna Pook

Psalm 145:7 (NIV) "They will celebrate Your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of Your righteousness."

About ten years ago, The Salvation Army in the United States searched for a new brand slogan that would identify us to the public. I remember being part of discussion groups about this new slogan and being asked to share my feelings and ideas on how we could promote it in our respective communities. There were some mixed feelings about stating that we were an Army that was "Doing the Most Good." Only in recent years have I begun to connect my own application and heart with these words. In being part of a Christian organization, whose head and commander is a good God, why should I not be challenged with doing my part by "Doing the Most Good" in the service I render to Him? After all, He has done more than "the most good." He has done the ultimate good.

I have come to realize that everything we do has a consequence. That consequence can be good or bad. This result can be seen in the service that we perform in every aspect of our lives. As Christ's followers and especially those in The Salvation Army, we are called to serve. On the Army uniform there are two Ss which stand for "Saved to Serve." We are not saved by good works, but we are "Created to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Eph. 2:10). As women's ministries members, volunteers and friends, service is an important part of our ministry. No matter what we are called to do or where we are called to serve, our lives should reflect who we are and whose we are. Everything we do in service should point people to God and His goodness to us. We have seen His goodness in past. We can see His goodness today, even amidst turmoil, hate and darkness. We can anticipate His goodness in the future. So why not claim that accountability? Let us continue to be challenged to "Do the Most Good" in the name and strength of God.

In Matthew 5:16, Jesus sums this service principle up very nicely in the Sermon on the Mount: "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in Heaven." When we serve in the name of Jesus, it points people to Jesus and celebrates the goodness of God. I thank God for doing His part and I thank each of you for doing your part. Let us continue to strive to do more good, not only in our women's ministries group but also in our local corps, community, division, territory and around the world. May you serve faithfully and joyfully in His name.

About author



Lt. Colonel Marilyn Arnold

Central Territory



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Celebrate His Goodness

October 1, 2018 By Major Johanna Pook



[Women's Sunday Poster](#)

[Women's Sunday Poster \(Microsoft Word\)](#)

[Women's Sunday Poster \(Editable\)](#)

Related Scripture: Psalm 145:7

Welcome and Call to Worship

*Great is the Lord and exalted among the nations.
Mighty and powerful is He who is the King of heaven and earth.
Holy and good is our Lord, beyond our understanding,
So, let us worship Him and proclaim His goodness to all worlds!*

(Adapted from *The Worship Sourcebook*)

Congregational Song (HC #2)*

"What the Lord Has Done for Me"

Testimony of God's Goodness

(Select three women's ministries members to share God's goodness in their lives.)

Reprise

"What the Lord Has Done for Me" (HC #2 chorus only)*

Responsive Scripture Reading

Selected Women's Ministries Members (*see page...*)

Praise and Worship

"Lord, You Are Good" by Israel Houghton
"Good, Good Father" by Anthony Brown & Pat Barrett
"Forever...Give Thanks to Lord" by Chris Tomlin
"O Great God" HC 238*
"Great is the Lord" HC 21*

Prayer Chorus

"God Is so Good" by Paul Makai

Pastoral Prayer

Special Music

"When I Think About the Lord" by Hillsong
United Choir, Soloist, Duet, Dance Presentation

Or a PowerPoint review of local
Women's Ministries activities throughout the year

Message

Celebrating His Goodness

Time of Reflection

*"How Great is our God" HC 157**

Closing Song

"To God Be the Glory, Great Things He Hath Done"
(*The Salvation Army Song Book, #279*)

Prayer and Benediction

**Hallelujah Choruses*

Message

Celebrating His Goodness

In the late 1990s and early 2000s there was a saying often expressed in worship services. A meeting participant or leader would say, "God is good," and the congregation would respond, "all the time." The leader would then repeat "all the time" and the congregation would reply, "God is good." I'm sure this expression is still used in many settings, but unfortunately, I have not heard it recently. I think we often get so caught up with the business of our lives that we forget to see God's goodness and celebrate it.

When my children were younger and we were getting ready to leave for officer's councils, I would encourage them to please be good. While away, we would call and ask them how things were going and if they were being good. If they were good and did everything that was requested of them, we would reward them and celebrate their goodness when we returned home.

The Psalms often speak about God's goodness. In Psalm 34:1-8 we read, "I will praise the Lord at all times. I will constantly speak His praises. I will boast only in the Lord; let all who are helpless take heart. Come, let us tell of the Lord's greatness; let us exalt His name together. I

prayed to the Lord, and He answered me. He freed me from all my fears. Those who look to Him for help will be radiant with joy; no shadow of shame will darken their faces. In my desperation I prayed, and the Lord listened; He saved me from all my troubles. For the angel of the Lord is a guard; He surrounds and defends all who fear Him. Taste and see that the Lord is good. Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in Him!" In this portion of scripture the Psalmist reflects on the goodness of God and sings praises to Him both individually and in community. He shares his testimony about all God has done. To celebrate God's goodness, we need to follow his example and: 1. See and Know Who God Is—He is a Good God! 2. Remember His Goodness, 3. Sing Praises of His Goodness and 4. Share His Goodness.

1. See and Know Who God Is—He is a Good God!

He is God our creator. It all started with these words in Genesis: "In the beginning God created." God spoke, and the world was created, but when it came to humankind, He took us in His hands and molded us in His image. Psalm 139 reminds us that God knows everything about us: "O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me" (verse 1). The Psalmist goes on to tell us, "You [God] made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb (verse 13). "Every day of my life was recorded in Your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed" (verse 16). Doesn't that amaze you? God has a plan for you and me that was designed for us before we were born. You are His special creation, and as is often said, "God doesn't make junk." He is a good God.

We can rejoice because God is our redeemer. In the Old Testament we read that God redeemed His people, Israel, by sending Moses to lead them out of slavery in Egypt. This must have seemed like an impossible task to the Israelites. After ten plagues and a walk through a dry Red Sea, they began to realize that with God nothing is impossible. Their deliverance and redemption are symbolic of what Jesus' death on the cross did for us. We are saved from our sins and promised eternal life through His redeeming blood shed for us. God is a good God!

God is our provider. His provisions for mankind started with Adam and Eve. He created everything that they needed and then placed them in the beautiful Garden of Eden He had prepared for them. Because of their disobedience they were cast out of that garden. But still God took care of them and provided for their needs. We read in Genesis chapter 22 of another example of God's provision. He told Abraham to sacrifice his son, Isaac, but as he was about to plunge the knife into the boy, the Angel of the Lord told him not to harm him. God provided a ram for the sacrifice in Isaac's place. Abraham called the place, "The Lord Will Provide," for the Lord had indeed provided. When through disobedience the Israelites wandered in the wilderness for 40 years, God provided for their every need with manna, quail and water. Every time God's people have a need, He provides for them. God is a good God!

We read in Psalm 84:11, "For the Lord God is our sun and our shield. He gives us grace and glory. The Lord will withhold no good thing from those who do what is right." This is how we want our relationship with God to be. We want Him to bless us and show us His goodness as our loving Heavenly Father. Unfortunately, at times we also want the freedom to act any way

we want and to do things in our own way. When something doesn't work out the way we think it should, we get upset and think that God isn't being good to us.

As parents, we don't reward our kids for bad behavior. When they misbehave, rebel and disobey, we don't take them out for ice cream as a reward. No, we discipline to correct them because we love them. It is the same with God; if we want Him to bless us, we must live according to His will for our lives. Every time we read through the pages of the Bible we get the same message that God is good.

2. Remember His Goodness to His People

The beautiful song "Great is Thy Faithfulness" reminds us of God's goodness to His people. "Great is Thy faithfulness; Morning by morning new mercies I see. All I have needed, Thy hand hath provided; Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!" What a great reminder that all we need, His hand has provided. We are the recipients of God's goodness.

One of the problems today is that we live in a world of dissatisfaction. No matter what we have or where we are, it is not enough. Author and speaker Emily P. Freeman said, "Discontentment shows up when we focus on what we can't have rather than what we do have." We focus more on what we don't have and miss all that God has given us. We become like the wandering Israelites, grumbling and forgetting the goodness of God.

The Israelites grumbled and complained about their situation and forgot how God delivered them from bondage in Egypt. They forgot that He protected and provided for them while they were in the wilderness. They complained that they had the same meal of manna and quail every day. "They began to speak against God and Moses. 'Why have you brought us out of Egypt to die here in the wilderness? There is nothing to eat here and nothing to drink. And we hate this horrible manna!'" (Number 21:5). His people kept on forgetting God's goodness and complained, completely ignoring His good deeds.

There are some very interesting verses in Numbers 11 that focus further on the Israelites' complaining and lack of thankfulness. "Then the foreign rabble who were traveling with the Israelites began to crave the good things of Egypt. And the people of Israel also began to complain. 'Oh, for some meat! We remember the fish we used to eat for free in Egypt. And we had all the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic we wanted. But now our appetites are gone. All we ever see is this manna!'" (Numbers 11: 4-6). As I read those words I thought, did they forget what it was like in Egypt? They made Egypt sound like a vacation resort with a pool, servers, unlimited buffet, bus boys and room service. But they seemed to forget that they were slaves. Their experiences in Egypt were terrible. They were whipped, beaten, starved and made to work harder and harder. Even though God redeemed them and provided for them in the wilderness, all they could focus on were the negative aspects of their present position.

We've all met people who are quick to focus on the bad things in their lives. In one of our appointments there was a woman who complained that everything was wrong. The lights in

the chapel were too bright one day and too dim on another day. The building was either too cold or too warm depending on how she felt. She never seemed to find anything good. Anytime you asked, "How are you?" she was quick to tell you about all that was bad or wrong with her life. She failed to remember that she had the strength to get out of bed that morning. She forgot that she had a place to live, a car to drive, a church family who cared for her and good health. She had a hard time focusing on God's continued goodness.

We read in Matthew 7:9-12, "You parents—if your children ask for a loaf of bread, do you give them a stone instead? Or if they ask for a fish, do you give them a snake? Of course not! So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask Him." Are we also guilty of focusing on the stones and the snakes, rather than the bread and the fish? We see all the bad things in our lives and those things that we don't have, but fail to remember all God has provided and that we have every reason to celebrate.

In order to celebrate God's goodness we need to remember what He has done and what He continues to do for us. There is a chorus that says, "When I remember that He died for me, I will never go back anymore." We read in the Bible how God, since the beginning of time, has masterfully worked everything out for us. He loved us so much that He sent Jesus so that we could have forgiveness for our sins and be reconciled to Him. When we remember this, we should be singing at the top of our lungs, "I'll never go back anymore." Wow! How can we forget that goodness to us, His people?

3. Sing Praises of His Goodness

When we remember His goodness and it is constantly in our thoughts, we can't help but burst out in praises to Him. We sing praise in corporate worship, which is what we have done this morning. We sang, as a corporate body of believers, "Lord You Are Good." It is a powerful weapon of worship when we sing together about the goodness of God. Heaven rejoices and Satan trembles in fear because God's people are singing of God's goodness.

We sing praise in private moments when we are overwhelmed by God's presence and goodness. The thing about singing in the private moments is that no one but God can hear you sing, and it doesn't matter if you have a beautiful voice or an awful voice. You might feel hindered in corporate worship because your voice isn't the best; but on your own, in the car, in the shower at home where no one can hear you, you can give it all you've got. The only person that can hear is God and if your song is from your heart, it is a sweet, sweet sound in His ears. As the song says, "I love you Lord, and I lift my voice to worship You, O my soul rejoice. Take joy my King in what You hear. May it be a sweet, sweet sound in Your ear."

We can sing His praise by writing down all the reasons God is good. You might say, "That is not singing." And technically, you would be right. But when we read about God's goodness and treasure it in our hearts, the song, though never sung out loud, is precious to God.

4. Share His Goodness

Part of celebrating His goodness is sharing it. I don't know about you, but I don't like to celebrate alone. It's at those moments that we can bring people up to date with what is happening in our lives and share our hopes and dreams. When I attend any festivity, I enjoy celebrating with those I know and with people I'm getting to know.

In Luke 15 there are three parables of things lost and found. The first was a lost sheep, then a lost coin and thirdly a lost son. At the end, when the sheep and the coin were found and the son returned home, the father threw a party and invited others to rejoice with him. We can see this as an example and be willing to rejoice together in God's goodness.

We can share God's goodness by telling others what He has done for us. Testimonies about God's goodness do not have to take place only on Sunday mornings or when we are in church. Anytime God opens a door for you to share about His goodness, take that opportunity. How many times a day are you asked by people, "How are you today?" That is an open door for you to tell someone about God's goodness. Unfortunately, our natural response is usually to answer, "I'm okay." We shouldn't be afraid share about how good God is and what He is doing in our life. In Hebrews 10:25 we read, "Do not give up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing, but encourage one another, and all the more as you see the day appearing."

Sometimes it is hard for us to see God's goodness because of how bad things seem to us. It is then that we need those around us to point out His goodness. One day a Salvation Army officer gave a ride to a man who he saw walking along the street. In the ensuing conversation, the man shared that he was new in town and his family was in need of furniture. The officer was able to help them with furniture, clothes, food and rent to get them back on their feet. When the furniture arrived, the officer helped them get it set up. While visiting with the family he had the opportunity to share that all the Salvation Army had done for them was to assure them of God's love and goodness. Before leaving He offered to pray with the family. They readily agreed and gave thanks to God for all He had provided.

In this new age of technology each of us can point people to God's goodness through social media—Twitter, e-mail, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, text and phone calls, or even in a good old-fashioned letter. Use whatever method you are comfortable with to share God's goodness so they can celebrate with you.

Conclusion

God is good! That is as true a statement as God is love, God is compassionate, God is faithful. It is one of His attributes. It is not the nature of God not to be good. He can never not be good. God never has a bad day when He withholds His goodness from His people. Even to those who are disobedient, He continues to show His goodness, compassion and mercy. Everything stems from God's goodness to us.

My challenge to you today is to think about all the ways that God has been good to you. Whether it is simply the fact that you woke up this morning, were able to get out of bed and come to church, or that He continues to provide for all your needs day after day. Then when you go home, write them down and treasure them in your heart. Celebrate His goodness. Let your heart sing praises for His goodness. Also, think how you can share God's goodness with someone. Maybe it is with the person sitting beside you this morning. Maybe when you get home today you will want to post a message on Facebook or write an e-mail to share what God has done for you day after day.

As we continue with our time of reflection and prayer, think of who God is and His goodness shown to you; reflect on what He has done and His goodness in your life. Sing His praises as we sing our closing song "How Great Is Our God." Remember as you leave this place to share your testimony and proclaim His goodness to someone today.

Responsive Scripture Reading

Reader 1: I will exalt you, my God and King, and praise Your name forever and ever. I will praise You every day; yes, I will praise You forever.

Reader 2: Great is the Lord! He is most worthy of praise! No one can measure His greatness. Let each generation tell its children of Your mighty acts; let them proclaim Your power.

Reader 1: I will meditate on Your majestic, glorious splendor and Your wonderful miracles. Your awe-inspiring deeds will be on every tongue.

Reader 3: I will proclaim Your greatness. Everyone will share the story of Your wonderful goodness; they will sing with joy about Your righteousness.

Reader 1: The Lord is merciful and compassionate, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love.

Reader 2: The Lord is good to everyone. He showers compassion on all His creation. All of Your works will thank you; Lord and Your faithful followers will praise You.

Reader 3: They will speak of the glory of Your kingdom; they will give examples of Your power. They will tell about Your mighty deeds and about the majesty and glory of Your reign. For Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. You rule throughout all generations.

Reader 1: The Lord always keeps His promises; He is gracious in all He does. The Lord helps the fallen and lifts those bent beneath their loads. The eyes of all look to You in hope; You give them their food as they need it.

Reader 2: When You open Your hand, You satisfy the hunger and thirst of every living thing.

Reader 1: The Lord is righteous in everything He does; He is filled with kindness.

Reader 2: The Lord is close to all who call on Him, yes, to all who call on Him in truth.*Reader 3:* He grants the desires of those who fear Him; He hears their cries for help and rescues them.

Reader 1: The Lord protects all those who love Him, but He destroys the wicked.

Reader 2: Great is the Lord

Reader 3: The Lord is good!

ALL: We will praise the Lord, and may everyone on earth bless His holy name forever and ever!

(Psalm 145 New Living Translation (NLT))

About author



Major Johanna Pook

Central Territory



Women's Sunday

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*"They celebrate your abundant goodness
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Psalm 145:7

Date:

Time:

Education Programs

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2018 - 2019 Program Year





Archive Education Programs

September 2019 — Ahoy Mate...Talk Like a Pirate Day

September 1, 2019 By Major Pam Werner



Introduction

Invite the women to dress like a pirate (pirate shirt, pirate hat, flashy jewelry, rags for scarves). Encourage them to talk like a pirate with each other by recalling dialog from TV and movies. Consider inviting boys and girls of Character Building groups or children and grandchildren of the women to join the fun for this program.

History of Pirate Day

Two friends, John Bauer and Mark Summer, while playing racquetball at the YMCA, started "Talk Like a Pirate Day" in the summer of 1995. However, it was not until 2002, when humorist Dave Barry supported it by featuring it in his column in the *Miami Herald*, that it was really launched. "Talk Like a Pirate Day" is observed annually on September 19th nationwide. This "yo-ho-ho" holiday gives every swashbuckler the opportunity to wear that eye patch, put the stuffed parrot on their shoulder, wear a peg leg or hook and yell "Arrrrrr"! To find a pirate event in your area, check the community calendar or websites for listings.

Decorations and Games

Create a pirate atmosphere with treasure maps, treasure chests, coins, gold and silver beads, anchors, parrots and ships. Many ideas are available on the Internet and at Pinterest. Place photos of pirates on the tables. See how many the women can identify and tell what movies they were in. For example: Jack Sparrow, *Pirates of the Caribbean* or Black Beard or Captain James T. Hook from *Peter Pan*.

Games

- Put the eye patch on the pirate (similar to pin the tail on the donkey)
- Dig in a treasure chest to find hidden treasure
- Name that pirate movie
- Give words that pirates may use

A lot of this information is on the Internet. Using Google search on the words "talk like a pirate."

Other Program Ideas

- Teach the women a pirate jig
- Read a children's pirate books
- Watch a pirate movie if time permits or select clips from it
- Hold a contest to see who sounds most like a pirate

Menu Ideas

Identify the food items with tags giving the pirate names.

Polly Crackers

Crackers of Choice

Shark Bait

Cheese

Golden Nuggets

Chicken Nuggets

Fish 'n Chips

Goldfish and Chips

Sea Dogs

Hot Dogs

Cannon Balls

Meatballs

Sea Water

Bottled Water

Pirate Jewels

Fresh Fruit

Seaweed Dip

Spinach Dip

Peg Legs

Stick Pretzels or Pickles

Pirate Phrases

Ask the women to explain the meaning of these pirate words.

Ahoy!

Hello!

Ahoy, Matey!

Hello, my friend!

Ahoy, me
hearties!

Hello, my friends!

All hand hoay!

a call to action for the ship's crew for all hands to be on
deck

Buccaneer	a pirate
Bucko	a buccaneer
Crow's nest	small platform atop the mast where the lookout stands
Heave ho	give it some muscle and push it
Jacob's ladder	the rope ladder one uses to climb aboard a sloop
Lad, lass, lassie	a younger person
Old Salt	an experienced sailor
Shipshape	cleaned up and under control
Thar she blows!	whale sighting
Yo ho ho	cheerful exhortation to demand attention

God Uses Imperfect People

Read Jonah 2:1-9.

Have you ever thought about imperfect things or people? When we have a bowl or plate that is not perfect, most of us still use it. It doesn't have to be perfect to be useful. But often we look at people and expect them to be perfect. We just read the Scripture about Jonah. Did you ever think about why he fled from the Lord? Has the Lord ever asked you to do something and you ran as fast as you could the other way?

We all know the story: God called Jonah to go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against the wickedness of the people. But Jonah resisted and tried to run away to Tarshish to get away from the Lord. I believe that often the Lord asks us to do things and we, like Jonah, try to run away ignore what we think the Lord is asking of us.

In the story, God called up a big storm at sea and the ship's crew threw Jonah overboard in an attempt to stop the storm. A great fish, sent by God, swallowed Jonah. For three days and three nights Jonah was inside the large fish's belly. Jonah prayed, repented of his

disobedience and thanked God for His mercy. Have you ever been in a situation where you prayed for deliverance from a situation? In Jonah, God spoke to the fish, which spit Jonah out safely on dry land. As with Jonah, God delivers us in His time.

As we know from the Scriptures, Jonah was rescued and then obeyed the call to prophesy against Nineveh, causing the people of the city to repent and God to forgive them. In Chapter 4 we read that Jonah was furious and told God that this is the reason he fled from Him. He tells God that he knew Him to be a merciful God. Jonah then asked God to kill him, a request that is denied. Have you been in a situation where you did not get the answer you were hoping for, causing you to be unhappy with God? Maybe sometime later you realized why you were given that answer. You may feel like you are imperfect, like that imperfect piece of china, yet to God you are still very useful and greatly loved. You may be the answer that someone else may need, even though you may feel imperfect. God can use us with all of our imperfections for His kingdom.

Jonah did not want to go to Nineveh as God instructed. But when he did he became one of the most effective prophets of God. As a result of his preaching, the entire population of Nineveh repented and was spared destruction. In the same way, God can use us. We can still be used for the kingdom of God and while striving to be more like Christ. Know that God can use you, even if you are imperfect in your eyes. Today, be who you are and the person God wants you to be.

About author



Major Pam Werner

Southern Territory



Archive Education Programs

October 2018 — Taming the Bullies

October 1, 2018 By Major Robin Hackbarth



Preparation

Set up six small clay flowerpots to form a pyramid. Write names that bullies might use on baseballs or rocks. Also have available a bottle of glue.

Introduction Demonstration

Bullying can take many forms, and most people do not understand its effects on people. (*Ask a couple of the women to take the balls and throw them at the clay pots. The goal is to break the pots.*) Just as the balls break the pots, bullying can break a person. People who are bullied are more likely to consider suicide.

Of course, I can take this glue and try to fix the clay pots. I might be able to fix them so no one can tell that they were even broken. However, they will never be as good as they were before. It is the same with bullying. People who are bullied can look fine on the outside, but they will never be the same on the inside. Never to break the pots in the first place is the best solution. That is why we are going to learn a few strategies to help prevent bullying.

What is Bullying?

- Give the women some scenarios and have them discuss whether they consider this bullying. Make sure you cover the most popular forms of bullying: verbal, social, physical and cyber. Example: A woman is trying to buy a snack from a machine. The machine will not accept the dollar. One person says, "Maybe God is trying to tell you something." Everyone laughs. Is this bullying? Why or why not?
- Am I a bully? Some people do not realize that their behavior is in fact bullying. There is a quiz at <http://www.togetheragainstbullying.org/bullying-self-assessment>, which helps to identify this tendency. This site also has related videos and other resources.
- Ask the women to discuss how bullying can affect someone's life. They may have real life stories that they would be willing to share.

Prevention Ideas

- Training – Visit <https://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/training-center>. This website has training for preventing bullying.
- Guest Speaker—Contact the local high school to inquire about a speaker on this subject. Most schools have staff trained in this area.
- Have the women discuss ways in which a person can stop bullying. Examples: Speak up when it is happening: think before you speak, encourage people, look for signs that bullying is taking place.

Sticks and Stones

"Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me." This is a famous phrase that we have all heard. We may have used it when someone called us a silly or hurtful name. The phrase first appeared in in a publication called *The Christian Reporter* in 1862.

It has become a famous comeback line that kids use at playgrounds and siblings tell each other when someone calls them a nasty name. But to be honest, words do hurt. When someone says something to us in jest or trying to be funny, it does hurt. We may not show it on the outside but inside we are feeling pain. Making fun of someone is a form of bullying. It may not be considered physical bullying, but it is bullying nevertheless. In fact, it can be a lot more harmful than being punched in the arm.

Bullying has always been a problem among kids. Social media sites like Facebook have made cyber-bullying a big issue, especially among teenagers. Some people have committed suicide because of cyber-bullying. We get mad when we read about these stories on the Internet, yet we may be guilty of bullying other people. We sometimes say mean things to our kids or to our spouses or other loved ones. We may not be aware of the damage that our words may have on other people.

What kind of struggles are you going through because of the bullying you faced when you were younger or perhaps you face today? Bullying affects the self-esteem of people. It makes us lose confidence in ourselves. It makes us feel inferior to those who bully us. The scripture for today's devotional deals with the sense of hopelessness we face when we are surrounded by people who appear to be out to get us.

Read Palms 43. In verse 1 the writer asks God to rescue him from his enemies. It's obvious that he feels overwhelmed by his enemies to the point that he feels God has abandoned him, (verse 2). We all want people to like us and to accept us for who we are. When people call us a nasty name or make fun of us, it hurts. Sometimes the pain is so intense that we feel hopeless and depressed.

We have all heard the saying that water rolls off a duck's back. Ducks (and most waterfowl) have a special gland near the tail called the "preen gland" that produces a waterproof mixture of oils and waxes. The process of preening spreads this oil over the feathers so the water does not weigh the ducks down but rolls right off them. This is a great example of how our lives can be when we have God living in our heart. The nasty things that people say or do to us can roll off our backs when we turn them over to the Lord. Don't allow anyone to take away your joy and happiness. God will be the source of all our joy (verses 3 and 4).

Follow-up Application

Have the women decide on a follow up application. Here are some ideas:

- Write notes to anyone that you may have bullied to say you are sorry.
- Talk to your children about bullying.
- Speak up if you know someone who is being bullied.
- Take a vow to be more conscious of what you are saying or doing to others. Be an example.

Further Resources

<http://www.bullyingstatistics.org>

<https://www.stopbullying.gov>

<http://www.togetheragainstbullying.org>

About author



Major Robin Hackbarth

Southern Territory



Archive Education Programs

November 2018—Round and Round ... Look for Circles Day

November 1, 2018 By Major Debby Hudson



Introduction

Did you know that there's a "Look for Circles Day"? Look around the room. How many can you spot? Did you ever stop to realize how many circles we encounter every day? When we are asked to look for something specific, we do it with intention and begin to notice those around us. We see what's been there but has gone unnoticed.

Circles

Ask the women to identify circles that we encounter everyday. Some of them could be incorporated into the decorations.

Buttons
Balloons
Wheels
Camera lens
Doorknobs
Period (grammar)
Contact lens
Dots
Full moon
Beads
Earth
Globe
Bowl

Program Ideas

Using a dry erase board, play a game of Pictionary® featuring circles. You could utilize some of the suggested objects above. The instructions for this game can be found on the Internet.

Ferris Wheel Trivia Game (answers are in bold)

- 1 The Ferris Wheel was originally called: a. the giant circle, b. big wheel, c. merry go round
- 2 The Ferris Wheel was introduced at the World's Fair in what city? a. Chicago, b. New York City, c. Paris, France
- 3 George Ferris, developer of what came to be called the Ferris Wheel wanted it to rival what iconic landmark: a. Eiffel Tower, b. London Bridge, c. The Great Pyramids
- 4 In six months, the 1893 Ferris Wheel attracted how many visitors? a. 48,000, b. 27 million, c. 5 million
- 5 What were the compartments where people rode called? a. gondolas, b. cars, c. baskets
- 6 The first Ferris Wheel was 264 feet tall, equal to: a. a 15-story building, b. the empire state building, c. a 26-story building
- 7 This Ferris Wheel was built to withstand winds up to: a. 100 mph, b. 200 mph, c. 150 mph
- 8 Each ride took how long to complete two circuits? a. 8 minutes, b. 15 minutes, c. 10 minutes

- 9 The original Ferris Wheel was dismantled and then rebuilt in what city? a. New York, b. Chicago, c. San Francisco

Refreshments

Serve cookies and sandwiches cut into round shapes, tea and coffee.

Books

Check the Internet for children's books on circles. Some also contain a message about differences, friendship and hope. A couple of these are: *The Story of Circle and Square* and *Circles of Hope*. Another option is Author Shel Silverstein's book *The Missing Piece Meets the Big O*, a provocative exploration of the physical, emotional, spiritual and mental processes involved in becoming whole.

Facts About the Wheel

The invention of the wheel was a relative latecomer. These significant inventions predated the wheel by thousands of years: Sewing needles, woven cloth, rope, basket weaving, boats.

The first wheels were not used for transportation. Evidence indicates they were created to serve as potters' wheels around 3500 B.C. in Mesopotamia—300 years before someone figured out to use them for chariots.

There are no wheels found in nature. They are exclusively man-made. Before their invention, people had to pull or push things around. The wheel made the way for faster travel and many tasks simpler. (Use photos in a PowerPoint presentation to show examples of primitive wheels and their use.)

No one really knows who invented the wheel but we've all heard the expression cautioning against reinventing the wheel. The earliest wheels in North America were used for toys.

A Time for Everything

Read Ecclesiastes 3:1-11.

Have you ever watched a dog trying to catch its tail? It goes around and around but is never able to catch it. Sometimes life feels that way. As our days pass, we try to catch a moment, a break, a nap but they're always just out of our grasp.

We are nearing the end of another year and maybe you feel like you've been going in circles this year or maybe you've had a year where the path has been straight and smooth. One thing is certain: We've experienced both in our lives.

We've been through the cycle of seasons as Solomon writes in Ecclesiastes: "For everything there is a season." He lists birth and death, crying and laughter, grieving and dancing. He couples things we would call bad or sad with the good. In this portion of scripture we come to know they are inseparable. We cannot have death without birth. Like a circle that has no end, our days continue through every season. Ecclesiastes 3:10 and 11 say: "I have seen the burden God has placed on us all. Yet God has made everything beautiful for its own time." Perhaps Solomon considers these turnings the burden of life. He goes on to remind us that God has made everything beautiful for its own time.

There will be a time when you are heard and a time when your voice is still. A time we welcome new beginnings and a time we grieve earthly deaths. In each one, we can find God's beauty of grace and comfort, His beauty of strength and mercy. He will turn our mourning into dancing in His time.

About author



Major Debby Hudson

Southern Territory



Archive Education Programs

December 2018 — Doctor Who?

December 1, 2018 By Captain Lauren Boatman



Pretend to be a Time Traveler

“Let’s be Wibbly-Wobbly, Timey-Whimey, not to mention Fantastic, for a day!” Quote from the BBC TV *Doctor Who*. There is a video on YouTube of a character uttering this statement.

Cosplay Through the Ages

Cosplay is a shortened form of two words—costume and play. It is the practice of portraying a fictional character and identifying as that character while in costume. Based on the popular TV series *Doctor Who*, invite the women to come in a costume as a historical figure. Ask them to be prepared with a three-sentence reason why this character inspires them. The leader of this program could be Doctor Who. Use a TARDIS for a Cosplay Photo Opportunity. A large cardboard box will work well.

Major Historical Events Trivia

This is a Jeopardy style game using world-changing events. Following are some sample questions:

US History Questions

- 1 This battle led by General George Washington turned the tide toward an American victory during the Revolutionary War. Valley Forge
- 2 Thomas Jefferson doubled the size of the United States with this purchase through shrewd negotiations. Louisiana Purchase
- 3 Robert Oppenheimer, along with several international scientists, gathered for this project during World War II to create the ultimate weapon in warfare, which was used on Japan to end the war. The Manhattan Project
- 4 This conflict led to a generational catch phrase of "Make love, not war." Vietnam Conflict
- 5 President Abraham Lincoln delivered this famous speech during the Civil War, providing hope, motivation, and encouragement to the Union Army. Gettysburg Address

World History Questions

- 1 This one event in the Middle East has changed the way the world marks time, giving us the BC and AD eras. Jesus' Death and Resurrection
- 2 On October 31, 1517 Martin Luther changed the course of the Church and gave birth to the Protestant movement by doing this. Nailing his 95 Thesis to the door
- 3 In 1914 Archduke Ferdinand of Austria was assassinated sparking this conflict known around the world. World War I
- 4 In a New England harbor in 1773, a group of rebels held this event making the colonists' intentions clear regarding Britain. Boston Tea Party
- 5 On the Ides of March 44 BC this leader of Rome was assassinated by his own Senate as a precursor event to the fall of Rome. Julius Caesar

Literature Questions

- 1 George Orwell wrote this dystopian novel describing a gender-neutral world without emotion and a people that only knew good facts as told by the media and government. 1984
- 2 Written by the ancient Chinese military strategist, Sun Tzu, this book revolutionized military strategy and training throughout history and is still used today to train American soldiers. The Art of War
- 3 Before this translation was published by England in 1611, the public did not have access to the Bible. King James Version
- 4 World War II held many horrors, and none as evident as the Holocaust. This novel brought humanity to the many victims and helped future generations see the individuals involved. Diary of Anne Frank
- 5 This epic poem, which takes the reader on a journey through Heaven and Hell, meeting memorable characters along the way, has changed the perspectives on life and death since 1321. Dante's Inferno

A Ripple in the Pond

What is one thing we can do to change the world today? Using current events and current mindsets of Americans as a whole, what are some simple ways we can change our families, neighborhoods and churches for the better? This is not meant to be a service project but an individual challenge to be creative and proactive in our world.

Tapestry

What would happen if one event in history were changed? Can you imagine a world where Hitler was killed in battle during WWI? Or Penicillin was never discovered? Or Julius Caesar died an old man? History is made of small moments strung together to make the tapestry of our world. If we change one event/outcome, there is a ripple effect that unravels that tapestry and changes the present, as we know it.

If we could jump in the TARDIS (The TARDIS is a fictional time machine and spacecraft that appears in the British science fiction television program *Doctor Who*) and change one moment in our lives, how would it affect the present? *Encourage the women to think of an example and then share it.* Would we be better people? Or would there have been something worse? In life we have good times and bad times. But we cannot erase the bad and assume everything will be better. We learn and grow from the pain. We can rejoice and find rest in the sovereignty of God.

Science fiction, including *Doctor Who*, has shown audiences what could happen when people change the timeline. Most characters think they are helping, but in the end, they have to reset the events because it caused horrible consequences to the whole world—or universe. The

important thing to remember is that God can see the past, present and future. He knows what is best for us. He guides us in the way we should go. Because God has worked in the lives of His people, we are the right people, in the right place, at the right time, to do the right thing if we are paying attention.

Quotes from *Doctor Who*

"You don't just give up. You don't just let things happen. You make a stand! You say no! You have the guts to do what's right, even when everyone else just runs away!" Rose Tyler

"In 900 years of time and space, I've never met anyone who wasn't important." The Doctor

"We all change, when you think about it. We're all different people all through our lives. And that's okay, that's good, you've got to keep moving, so long as you remember all the people that you used to be." The Doctor

"Together, or not at all." Amy Pond

About author



Captain Lauren Boatman

Southern Territory



Archive Education Programs

January 2019 — I'm Ok, You're Ok?

January 1, 2019 By Lieutenant Emily Arroqui



Introduction

It's okay to be different. The purpose of this program is to discuss mental illness and emphasize that it is nothing to be afraid of.

Program Ideas/Activities

Remind the women that their mental health is just as important as their physical health.

- Give each woman a lime green ribbon to wear in honor of mental illness awareness.
- Share a “TED Talks” video about mental illness. <https://www.ted.com/talks>
- Share the warning signs of mental illness. Fifty percent of cases of mental illness begin by age 14, and three-quarters begin by age 24. For information check the website: <https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/warning-signs-of-mental-illness> or <http://www.mayoclinic.org> (search on mental health)
- Statistics: <https://www.nami.org/learn-more/mental-health-by-the-numbers>
- Make stress balls using Play-Doh® and balloons. Check the website <http://www.moonfrye.com/diy/diy-play-dough-stress-balls> for instructions.

Information About Mental Illness

Prepare an informational sheet giving the websites and hotline telephone numbers for the women to take home with them.

- <http://www.my-borderline-personality-disorder.com>
A website for those struggling with Borderline Personality Disorder. There are resources and a chat-room for those seeking someone to talk to.
- <https://www.imalive.org>
This online crisis network is the first network where 100% of its volunteers are trained and certified in crisis intervention. Chat with someone if you are in crisis or considering suicide.
- <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org>
This is a website that provides resources and learning tools on eating disorders. You can chat with someone about this issue.
- <http://www.proud2bme.org>
This website is for those who struggle with body image. Read stories and learn about different resources on coping.
- <http://www.ok2talk.org>
The goal of OK2TALK is to create a community for teens and young adults struggling with mental health problems. It encourages them to talk about what they're experiencing by sharing their personal stories.

Hotline numbers to call in crisis:

Borderline Personality Disorder Resource Center	1-888-694-2273
National Suicide Prevention Hotline	1-800-273-8255
Disaster Distress Hotline	1-800-985-5990
National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders	1-630-577-1330
National Crime Victim Helpline	1-800-394-2255
National Domestic Violence Hotline	1-800-799-7223
National Eating Disorder Association Helpline	1-800-931-2237
National Organization for Victim Assistance	1-800-879-6682
National Sexual Assault Hotline	1-800-656-4673
Obsessive Compulsive Anonymous Nationwide Conference Call	1-712-432-0075
Samaritan's Crisis Hotline	1-212-673-3000
Crisis Call Center	1-800-273-8255

Online websites to find support groups:

- www.afsp.org — *American Foundation for Suicide Prevention*
- www.adaa.org — *Anxiety and Depression Association of America*
- www.coda.org — *Co-Dependents Anonymous* (for those who struggle with low self-esteem)
- www.dbsalliance.org — *DBSA (Depression and Bi-polar Support Alliance)*
- www.emotionsanonymous.org — *Emotions Anonymous* (for those struggling with self-esteem issues, loneliness, and other destructive feelings)
- www.anad.org — *ANAD (National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders)*
- www.healgrief.org — *Heal Grief* (for those who are grieving)
- www.iocdf.org — *International OCD Foundation*
- www.sidran.org — *Sidran Institute* (for those struggling with PTSD)

To download these helpful applications go to the Apps Store on your phone.

- *ThinkUp* (This allows you to build your own self-improvement program using positive affirmations recorded using your voice. This technique has been proven to make our minds work for us.)
- *7 Cups* (This allows people in emotional distress to connect with trained listeners for free, while completing a program track picked specifically for them.)
- *MoodTrek* (This allows you to track your moods and to be able to see any patterns and learn from them.)
- *Happify* (This application provides fun science-based activities and games to elevate happiness; choose a personalized happiness track created by experts; reduce stress and anxiety through guided relaxation/meditation; gain insights and track progress over time, and train your brain to overcome negative thoughts.)
- *SAM* (This allows people to record their anxiety levels. It includes 25 self-help options to help users cope with their anxiety. Users can also create a personalized anxiety toolkit.)

It's Ok to Be Different

I remember the moment when my therapist said, "That's enough. You need to see a psychiatrist. You need medicine to help you with your depression." Never had I felt weaker, more lost, or broken than on that day. I thought I had lost the battle with myself because I needed medicine to cope with everyday life. It was terrifying to think that I was different and thus wouldn't be accepted.

Looking back, I realize that this was the beginning of a transformation and real change in my life. I'm still on the journey of discovering myself and finding out that having depression or a mental illness does not mean I am strange or unlovable. God wired me differently, and that's okay. He loves and accepts me and wants me to be the best I can be.

Many times, we feel different than others in the world around us. We feel we are alone, outside the norm. It doesn't take a mental illness to have these feelings. But we can have the assurance that God is always by our side, ready to take our hands when we reach out for Him. He is faithful. He is our Comfort in times of loneliness and sadness. Isaiah 41:10 says, "Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand."

The next time you feel that you're different, remember that God made you unique and that's perfectly okay. Let's also remember that mental illness is nothing to be ashamed of. We need to pray for those who fight that battle daily. Let us educate ourselves on these matters and educate our children and those around us. Let us demonstrate the love of Christ to those who feel like they are too different to be accepted. Together, we can change the stigma of mental illness and help those who are struggling with it never to feel alone.

About author



Lieutenant Emily Arroqui

Southern Territory



Archive Education Programs

February 2019 — Did You Know?

February 1, 2019 By Major Missy Romack



Heaven's Poetry Etched On Lives

“For we are the product of His hand, heaven’s poetry etched on lives, created in the Anointed, Jesus, to accomplish the good works God arranged long ago.” (Eph. 2:10, *The Voice*).

Introduction

In celebration of Black History month, this program focus on acclaimed women poets whose beautiful and poignant words are etched on peoples' lives. We will come to see how we are epic poems written by God.

Program Ideas — Poem Share

Several renowned black women poets (some deceased and some still living) include: Rita Dove, Elizabeth Alexander, Alice Walker, Gwendolyn Brooks, Lucille Clifton, Nikki Giovanni, June Jordan, Audre Lorde and Amena Brown. Using the Internet or the library select one or more of their poems to share with the women. Project a picture of the poet on the screen as you read her poem. Conclude with the video of Amena Brown's spoken word poem, which can be found on YouTube.

Poems And Presidents

Throughout history, only five presidential ceremonies have included a recitation or reading by a poet. Significantly, two of these were not only women, but black women specifically. In 1993, Maya Angelou recited her poem, "On the Pulse of Morning," at the presidential inauguration of Bill Clinton. (If time permits, read this poem.) At that time, a poet had not been on an inaugural program for 32 years (since Robert Frost's "The Gift Outright," was read at John F. Kennedy's inauguration in 1961). Then in 2009, Elizabeth Alexander read "Praise Song for the Day," at the inauguration of Barak Obama. This is quite a tribute to these two black women. Show video clips, which are available on YouTube. Invite the women to discuss the poems and their reactions to them.

Poem "Beauty"

Ossie Davis was an actor distinguished by roles dealing with racial injustice on stage, screen and in real life. Ask one of the women, preferably a black woman, to share his poem "Beauty." This can be accessed at: <http://www.thekitchensalon.com/2013/01/19/natural-365-beauty-a-poem>

Testimony

Ask a black Christian woman to share her testimony on how the Lord has helped her find beauty and self-acceptance in her ethnicity.

Heaven's Poetry Etched On Lives

Joseph Roux, a French Catholic parish priest and poet, said, "Poetry is truth in its Sunday clothes." As such, it is a great instructional tool, giving deep, beautiful and meaningful expression to our deepest joys and sorrows. Poetry, at its best, calls forth our deepest being.

We read in Ephesians 2:10 “For we are the product of His hand, heaven’s poetry etched on lives, created in the Anointed, Jesus, to accomplish the good works God arranged long ago” (The Voice). Indeed, this is truth in its “Sunday clothes,” as it speaks directly to our identity and our purpose, two things for which people hunger.

When Paul says that you are heaven’s poetry, he had in mind works of masterful creativity. Think of great epic works such as *The Odyssey*, *The Divine Comedy*, or *Paradise Lost*. What God wants you to understand, through Paul, is that you are one of His epic poems. You are an important work of art crafted by the divine poet–artist, making you a masterpiece. Every piece of art has something of the character, vision and values of the artist embedded within it; and so it is with you. The Bible says that you were made in God’s image and that you reflect His glory. This is your identity.

This verse also speaks to our purpose. Pure and simple, as God’s poem, we were created to accomplish good works. God made us to express His own heart and vision in an active way, to bless and serve the world by doing good and beautiful things, as an extension of His hands and feet. The trajectory of our life is to conform to the very image and likeness of Christ, so that we do the same things He would do, allowing others to come to know Him as they see Him in us. In this way, we are always figuratively “dressed in our Sunday clothes” and with “heaven’s poetry etched on our lives.” We become an epic witness to biblical truth and to God’s goodness and glory.

About author



Major Missy Romack

USA Southern Territory



Archive Education Programs

March 2019 — Women's History Month

March 1, 2019 By Captain Elaine Canning



Decorations

Check out books from the library on women in history and display them around the room. Print historical pictures of women found on the Internet.

Getting to Know You

- 1 What one woman do you think has made a significant impact on history? Why?
- 2 Name a woman who has had a significant impact on your life.



Amelia Earhart with Evangeline Booth

Game "Who Am I?"

- 1 I was a Roman Catholic saint who led the French army to numerous victories during the Hundred Years' War. Who am I? Joan of Arc
- 2 In 1907, at the young age of 87, I became the first woman to receive the Order of Merit. Who am I? Florence Nightingale
- 3 I was the first woman Prime Minister of Britain and known as "The Iron Lady." Who am I? Margaret Thatcher
- 4 I was the first female pilot to fly across the Atlantic Ocean in 1928. Who am I? Amelia Earhart
- 5 I founded the Order of the Missionaries of Charity, a Roman Catholic congregation of women dedicated to helping the poor. I was canonized as the Saint of Calcutta in 2016. Who am I? Mother Teresa
- 6 I was nationally recognized as the "mother of the modern day civil rights movement" in America. I refused to surrender my seat to a white male passenger on a Montgomery, Alabama bus on December 1, 1955. Who am I? Rosa Parks
- 7 I was the wife of the 35th President of the United States. My first mission as the First Lady was to transform the White House into a museum of American history and culture that would inspire patriotism and public service in those who visited. Who am I? Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis
- 8 In 1981, I became the first woman to serve as a justice in the 191-year history of the United States Supreme Court. Who am I? Sandra Day O'Connor
- 9 My family and I helped Jews escape the Nazi Holocaust during World War II and saved nearly 800 lives. Who am I? Corrie ten Boom
- 10 I was the daughter of William and Catherine, the fourth General in The Salvation Army and the first woman to hold the appointment of General. Who am I? Evangeline Booth

Watch video about Evangeline Booth: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hxloO574Dsw>



Helen Keller with Evangeline Booth

When I Grow Up

Read Genesis 5:1-2.

Do you remember as a little girl saying, “When I grow up, I want to be (fill in the blank)?” As we have been looking at women in history and the impact they have made on the world, I wonder how many of us have said, When I grow up I want to be Florence Nightingale, Amelia Earhart, Sandra Day O’Connor, or Evangeline Booth? One woman I am certain we never said we wanted to be when we grew up was Eve from the book of Genesis.

However, we need to acknowledge that Eve did not begin the way most of us remember her. She began as a creation of God, made in His likeness. In Genesis 1:27 we read, “In the image of God He created them,” and in Genesis 5:1 we read, “He made them to be like Himself.” Just like Eve, we are all made by God, our Creator, and made in His likeness.

Made in His likeness—what does that mean? It means from the very beginning, we were made to reflect who God is and His Glory. It means from the very beginning we have the potential to be like Christ. It is not about outward appearance. It is about the image or likeness of our hearts to Christ.

From the beginning, God has made us in His likeness and with good plans for our lives, but just like Eve we have choices. Jeremiah 29:11 states, “For I know the plans I have for you,’ says the Lord. ‘They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.’” God has a good plan and does not intend harm but has hope and a future for us. His first plan is that we know Him as our personal Savior from sin. Then He will use us to bring others to Him, whether that comes through being a teacher, nurse, pilot, or a stay-at-home mom. The question is, will you allow Him the rights to your heart and life? We see Eve was consumed by the idea that she might know what was better for her life than God did. She chose not to be a part of God’s plan but to live out her own plan. Satan’s plan and his temptation were “to know more, to have more.” Eve lacked the depth of personal relationship with God and obedience to Him. Therefore, she did not reach her full potential and plan that God had for her from the start.

We see a contrast in Evangeline Booth who had an unswerving faith in God and obeyed Him. She was a woman created in the likeness of God, a woman who chose early on to submit her entire life to Him and follow His plan. What a difference; what a Godly legacy! It was all a part of God’s plan from the beginning for Evangeline Booth. God used her to change lives and win souls for Him.

Some of you are thinking right now, I will never be an Evangeline Booth. However, I know that God has a plan for you. You are called by God and gifted by Him. What do you want your life to say? What is your legacy? What difference do you want to make? How will you allow God to

use you? Regardless of the choices you have made in the past, you can start new. If you have not accepted Jesus into your heart or have wandered away from Him, or if you are only committed halfheartedly to His plan, you can have a new beginning with Jesus. He has a good plan for you. Will you be a part of God's plan for the future?

About author



Captain Elaine Canning

Southern Territory



Archive Education Programs

April 2019 — Autism Awareness Month

April 1, 2019 By Major Kathy Williams



Explanation of Autism

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and autism are both general terms for a group of complex disorders of brain development. These disorders are characterized, in varying degrees, by difficulties in social interaction, verbal and nonverbal communication and repetitive behaviors. Parents usually notice signs in the first two years of their child's life.

Studies also show that autism is four to five times more common among boys than girls. An estimated 1 out of 42 boys and 1 in 189 girls are diagnosed with autism in the United States. ASD is estimated to affect more than 2 million individuals in the U.S. and tens of millions worldwide.

There is a lot of information on the Internet about Autism. Pinterest is also a good source when looking for activities for children.

Resources: <http://www.webmd.com/brain/autism/understanding-autism-basics#1>

[Autism Speaks](#)

[Poster](#)

[Resource Guide](#)

[Hosting an AUTISM-FRIENDLY EVENT](#)

Here are some insights on how to work with someone with autism:

- Keep your language simple
- Teach specific social rules/skills
- Give fewer choices
- Avoid using sarcasm
- Avoid using idioms
- Give very clear choices
- Repeat instructions and check understanding
- Set a daily routine
- Provide warning of any impending change of routine
- Use various means of presentation
- Avoid overstimulation

Decorations

The symbol for autism is a multi-colored ribbon with shapes of puzzle pieces. For a centerpiece you can use puzzle pieces scattered in the center of the table. Also enlarge the autism ribbon symbol and print on cardstock. Cut it out and attach to a stick. Then place in a container with a floral foam block and shredded gift bag paper.

Refreshments

One suggestion when dealing with someone with autism is not to give too many choices. Your refreshments could be very simple such as cut up fruit and cookies, or chips with two types of dip.

Program Ideas — Information Page

Make up an information page from material gathered on the Internet to help explain this disorder.

Calming Down Helps

Children with autism often need help in changing their focus when feeling upset. Here are a couple of ideas. Fill a clear soda bottle with rice and tiny objects like buttons and small toys. Fill the bottle with paper clips. Add a magnetic wand to move the paper clips around. Add clear pony beads to the bottle. Fill the bottle with water and glitter.

Speaker

Invite a speaker who works with children with autism to share with the women. A good place to start is the local school. Another possibility would be parents who have autistic children and who would be willing to share the impact this condition has on their family.

Jesus Loves the Little Children

Read Luke 18:15-17.

As children in Sunday School we sang the song:



Jesus loves the little children
All the children of the world
Red and yellow, black and white,
They are precious in His sight.
Jesus loves the little children of the world.

In Luke 18 we see the fact that Jesus loves children. He wants us to bring them to Him. The parents in this story are great examples to us as they brought their children to Jesus. They knew how important it was for Jesus to touch and bless them.

Children are teachable and reachable. We can help them come to know Jesus in a real way because they are open to the truths about Jesus. We can help them grow in their spiritual walk throughout their life. When they are older and have difficulties in their lives, they will remember that Jesus is close enough to touch, can pick them up when they fall, and is there to protect and keep them safe.

The disciples scolded the parents for bothering Jesus, but Jesus told the disciples that they were wrong for not allowing the children to come to Him. If we look back in history we will find many great leaders of our time were saved and heard the call of Jesus at a very young age. They lived their lives serving Jesus.

Verse 17 of Luke 18 sums it all up: "I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn't receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it." We must be spiritually born into the family of God. We do this by receiving Jesus as our Lord and Savior. We must ask for forgiveness and trust in His love. Come as a reachable and teachable child.



About author



Major Kathy Williams

Southern Territory



Archive Education Programs

May 2019 — Where No Man Has Gone Before

May 1, 2019 By Major Cathy Riley



May 3, 2019 is International Space Day

Introduction

“The goal of space day is to promote math, science, technology and engineering education by nurturing young peoples’ enthusiasm for the wonders of the universe and inspiring them to

continue the stellar work of today's space explorers." (Quote from: spaceday.org)

Space or outer space describes the vast empty regions between planets and stars. The study of these and other astronomical objects is called astronomy, one of the oldest sciences. It is often said that space exploration began with the launch of Sputnik 1, the first man-made object to orbit the earth. Then in an almost unbelievable feat of human achievement Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin travelled to the moon in 1969 and set foot on its surface during the Apollo 11 mission.

Recently it has become clear that the possibility of space colonization may no longer be exclusively reserved for science-fiction stories. Many controversial issues surrounding space have come to light, including commercial spaceflight, space laws and space weapons. (Check Wikipedia for additional information.)

Decorations

Hang stars, moons and planets from the ceiling. Use black table covers with star sprinkles or glitter sprinkles and moon rocks (balls of aluminum foil) over the tables. Small rockets using toilet paper rolls can be used as a centerpiece for each table (instructions on Pinterest). Glow sticks could be given to the women to take home as a reminder of the program.

Refreshments

Anything with a space related theme would be good for the refreshments such as: Moon pies, Milky Way candy bars, rock candy (looks like meteorites), Star Crunch cakes, Starburst candy and Bomb Pop frozen treats (look like rockets). Any flavored drink that has color can be labeled as Rocket Fuel.

Program Ideas

The video found at <https://www.makers.com/documentary/womeninspace> traces the history of women pioneers in the US space program. It is 53 minutes long and includes interviews with [Eileen Collins](#), the first woman to pilot a spacecraft and [Mae Jemison, the first woman of color astronaut](#). It also includes an interview with [Peggy Whitson](#), the first female commander of the International Space Station, as well as many others. The hour ends with the next generation—the new group of pioneers. It is narrated by Jodie Foster.



Expedition 50 Flight Engineer Peggy Whitson is suited up in the U.S. Quest airlock getting ready for her record-breaking eighth spacewalk. Taken on March 30, 2017. Click Image for link to the license.

Hidden Figures Movie

Show clips from the movie "Hidden Figures," which tells the story of a team of [female African-American mathematicians](#) who served a vital role in NASA during the early years of the U.S. space program.

[Hidden Figures Video 1](#)

[Hidden Figures Video 2](#)

Our Solar System

Using information found on the Internet make up a true and false questionnaire about our solar system. Or make a crossword puzzle of space related words. One site is: crosswordhobbyist.com.

Outer Space

Read Psalm 147 and Psalm 19:1 – 2.

When I was young I can remember looking at the shapes of clouds and deciding what they resembled. When we rode in the car, I would imagine the clouds were following me, because if I closed my eyes for a few minutes and opened them again, the clouds were still right where they were before. I enjoyed watching the same cloud change shapes as the wind blew. I liked taking the time to smell the flowers in my grandmother's yard when I climbed the fence to retrieve a ball. I remember plucking a flower off the stem and sucking the sweet juice from the end. I remember taking time to enjoy God's creation. However, as I got older I looked at the clouds less frequently because "things" started to crowd out those leisure moments. We fail to "take time to smell the roses" and gazing at stars because these activities are for children who have all the time in the world or for teenagers who have zoned out in English class as they stare out the window. We have more important things that take up our time.

When you are young it seems all you have is time, but as we get older our lives tend to get busier and busier. There are always errands to run, commitments to keep and good reasons to rush. If we are not intentional, we will miss the opportunities to experience the beauty of God's creation.

Psalm 147 speaks of the stars, the clouds, the rain, the heavens and many aspects of God's creation. Psalm 19:1 – 2 (NIV) reminds us that:



¹ The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
² Day after day they pour forth speech;
night after night they reveal knowledge.

When we take the time to look at the skies, we clearly see evidence of God's glory. God created the heavens and earth so that everything living would rejoice in His splendor. But we rarely take the time to notice. He created all of creation for us to rejoice in and so often we completely overlook it. As we celebrate Space Day this year, let us be intentional about enjoying His creation. Let us make an effort each day to take time to marvel at the creation and the Creator. Let's look daily at the beauty that surrounds us and be reminded of God's faithfulness to us.

Close by singing, "Great is Thy Faithfulness" #26 in *The Salvation Army Song Book*.

About author

Major Cathy Riley



Southern Territory



Archive Education Programs

June 2019 — How Shocking!... Celebrating National Electricity Day

June 1, 2019 By Captain Nichole Bell



Introduction

National Electricity Day brings attention to electricity. We thank God for its discovery and for its availability, which is so vital to our everyday life. This program features ways to maintain its

use in the years to come. Break up this program in two sections Old Spark and New Spark.

Old Spark — Program Ideas

Show short videos of electricity's history. Following are some websites:

- The Discovery of Electricity: Brief History of Electricity — <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OesCNKaqc8o>
- Why Did Thomas Edison electrocute an elephant? (A Brief History of Electricity) — <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apjVqtmb4Dw>
- Shock and Awe: The Story of Electricity — Jim Al-Khalili BBC Horizon — <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gtp51eZkwol>
- History of Electricity—<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6p5WXzrYYil>

Activities

Using the following website create a true and false game about electricity:

<http://www.alliantenergykids.com/EnergyBasics/AllAboutElectricity/000418>

Do some science experiments from:

<https://www.stevespanglerscience.com/lab/categories/experiments/electricity>

New Spark — Program Ideas

Ask one of the women to research Green Energy and share her findings with the women. She will want to cover the following subjects:

- Solar Power
- Wind Power
- Hydropower
- Geothermal Power
- Bioenergy
- Biomass

Activity

Print pictures of solar panels, windmills, dams, thermoelectric tubes, anything to do with electricity. Scatter the pictures around the room. Read a descriptive statement describing the pictures. The first person to bring the right picture to the front of the room wins a prize. The

following is an example of a descriptive statement: "I stand tall in the sky with arms reaching out. I was born in Scotland in 1887. I produce 40% of the energy in Denmark. Who am I?"

Answer: Wind power/Windmill

Our Source of Light

Read Psalm 77.

How many of us are really connected to the Lord as our source of life? At a recent family gathering of over 25 people, I saw a collection of people of different ages and in different stages of life. Some were young parents, some young adults, some were looking for jobs, some were parents of teens and some were adults approaching retirement. No matter what was going on in their life, each was connected to a different source to provide life to them every day. Some of these sources included relationships, hobbies, work and family. Unfortunately, all of those are temporary and fleeting and therefore cannot be sustained.

In reading Psalm 77, I am reminded that we serve a God who is not temporary. Psalm 77:14-20 states, "You are the God of great wonders! You demonstrate Your awesome power among the nations. By Your strong arm, You redeemed Your people, the descendants of Jacob and Joseph. When the Red Sea saw You, O God, its waters looked and trembled! The sea quaked to its very depths. The clouds poured down rain; the thunder rumbled in the sky. Your arrows of lightning flashed. Your thunder roared from the whirlwind; the lightning lit up the world! The earth trembled and shook. Your road led through the sea, Your pathway through the mighty water a pathway no one knew was there! You led Your people along that road like a flock of sheep, with Moses and Aaron as their shepherds."

It is natural to plug ourselves into a good cup of coffee to get a jolt, to experience an emotional high from a great day with family, or to feel overwhelmingly satisfied with ourselves from a job well done. When we don't have these energizing experiences, do we seek God for an encounter of His presence to send a bolt of life energy to our souls? Why not maintain a steady flow of that same life energy so that we are not left without? 2 Corinthians 4:18 says, "So we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever." So many people struggle to maintain happiness, satisfaction and joy with life. But because they seek it from the wrong source, it never satisfies.

As is true of electricity, we need a source. Our world looks to wind, water, and sun for new sources to maintain the demand for more and more electricity. We have to become innovative and creative to find that new source. People do the same thing in life. They go searching for new, innovative and creative ways for a source of life energy. Some finally return to God as the source and say with the Psalmist, "But then I recall all You have done, O Lord; I remember Your wonderful deeds of long ago. They are constantly in my thoughts. I cannot stop thinking about Your mighty works. O God, Your ways are holy. Is there any god as mighty

as You?" (Psalm 77:11—13). What rejoicing in heaven when we acknowledge that God's ways are holy and mighty, and there is no other source of life but Him.

About author



Captain Nichole Bell

Southern Territory



Archive Education Programs

July 2019 — Got to Smile... Spoonerism Day

July 1, 2019 By Captain Jennifer Jones



Introduction

A “spoonerism” happens when a speaker mixes up the initial sounds of two or more words in a sentence. For example: “The Lord is a shoving leopard” should be “The Lord is a loving shepherd.” It was named after Doctor William Spooner of New College, Oxford (1844–1930), who had a nervous habit of mixing up the syllables of his words. A couple of unintentional

slip-ups in his lectures started a trend among students and before you could say “well-boiled icicle” (well-oiled bicycle), the public had named such humorous mishaps after him. This absent-minded professor was so well loved that there is even a holiday in his honor: Spoonerism Day is celebrated on July 22. What a great thing to have an entire day to celebrate our silly mix-ups. We all need a reason to smile.

Spoonerism School

Dress up as an absent-minded professor and teach your “students” all about Dr. Spooner and the term spoonerism. Ahead of time, inform the women that the uniform for this special school is funny, mixed-up clothing with different patterns and crazy color combinations. Schedule the program like school with craft time, snack time, story time, and recess (game time). Ring a bell when moving on from one segment to the next. The Internet has a lot of information about William Spooner and some funny videos about spoonerisms. Be sure to screen the videos ahead of time for content. Two great books to read to the group are, “Runny Babbit” by Shel Silverstein and “The Rails I Tote” by Christopher Manson. Both are available at [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

Decorations

This is a great opportunity to use all the items in your supply closet that don't match. Use weird wrapping paper as table covers paired with super hero plates and orange napkins. Write spoonerisms on small chalk boards and use as the centerpieces. Place a cookie in a treat bag labeled: “You're one Cart Smookie!” and give as prizes or as table favors.

Snack Time

Following the mixed up theme serve mixed nuts, fruit salad, trail mix, casseroles, seven layer dips or seven layer cookie bars. Put signs up with the spoonerized names of each food item.

Craft

Spreading Smiles! Take plastic spoons and dip them in melted chocolate. Before the chocolate hardens, sprinkle them with crushed peppermint chopped nuts, mini-chocolate chips, or sprinkles. Once dried, add tags with a spoonerism on one side such as: “Spoonerisms make for Sunny Flips!” On the other side, put Numbers 6:25 “May the Lord smile on you and be gracious to you.” Beneath the verse, add a note saying, “When you enjoy your cup of coffee today, know that the thought of you makes me smile!” Ask some of the women to deliver or mail the spoons to women who haven't been to a meeting in a while or to a friend who needs encouragement. Invite the women to make a number of spoons so there will be plenty to give away.

Games—Spoonerize It!

Give the women a list of phrases for them to turn into spoonerisms. Or ask them to unscramble the spoonerisms. There are examples of the Internet. One site is: http://www.fun-withwords.com/spoon_example.html

Spoons!

Save this fast-paced card game until the end of the program, as it will get exciting. You can find the rules at: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spoons>

Imperfectly Perfect

We've had a lot of fun today. These crazy mixed up phrases caused a lot of smiles and laughter. Did you know that you can bring a smile to God's face? As His child, He delights in you. He wants you to know that you have His favor and He loves you. Did you say to yourself: "Me, No way! God's so perfect and holy that there's no way that mixed-up me makes Him smile. I'm not good at anything and I always mess up."

When I was a little girl, my singing company competed in a competition. The song chosen was "From the Inside Out" by the Bill Gaither Trio. (Play the song, which is available on YouTube). At the time I didn't fully understand the lyrics but they have stuck in my brain all these years and have been a great comfort to me. The lyrics talk about how God doesn't focus on our outward appearance or imperfections. He looks at our hearts. Don't ever think that because you're not "perfect" by the world's standards that you are not treasured by your Heavenly Father. To Him you are imperfectly perfect.

God uses the not-so-perfect people to show others His power. For example, Moses told God that he was "slow of speech and tongue" (Exodus 4:10), but God promised to help him and teach him what to say. Moses, and his mixed-up speech successfully led God's people out of captivity. We may mix up our words, put our "moots in our fouths," but God can do great things through us if we are willing for Him to use us. Even the Israelites, God's chosen people, got things mixed up over and over again. Yet, God treasured them. Listen to what God told the priests to say to His people: "May the Lord bless you and protect you! May the Lord smile on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord show you His favor and give you peace" (Num. 6:24-26). God treasures you and shares in your laughter. I'm so glad we have a Father who smiles at the thought of us.

About author



Captain Jennifer Jones

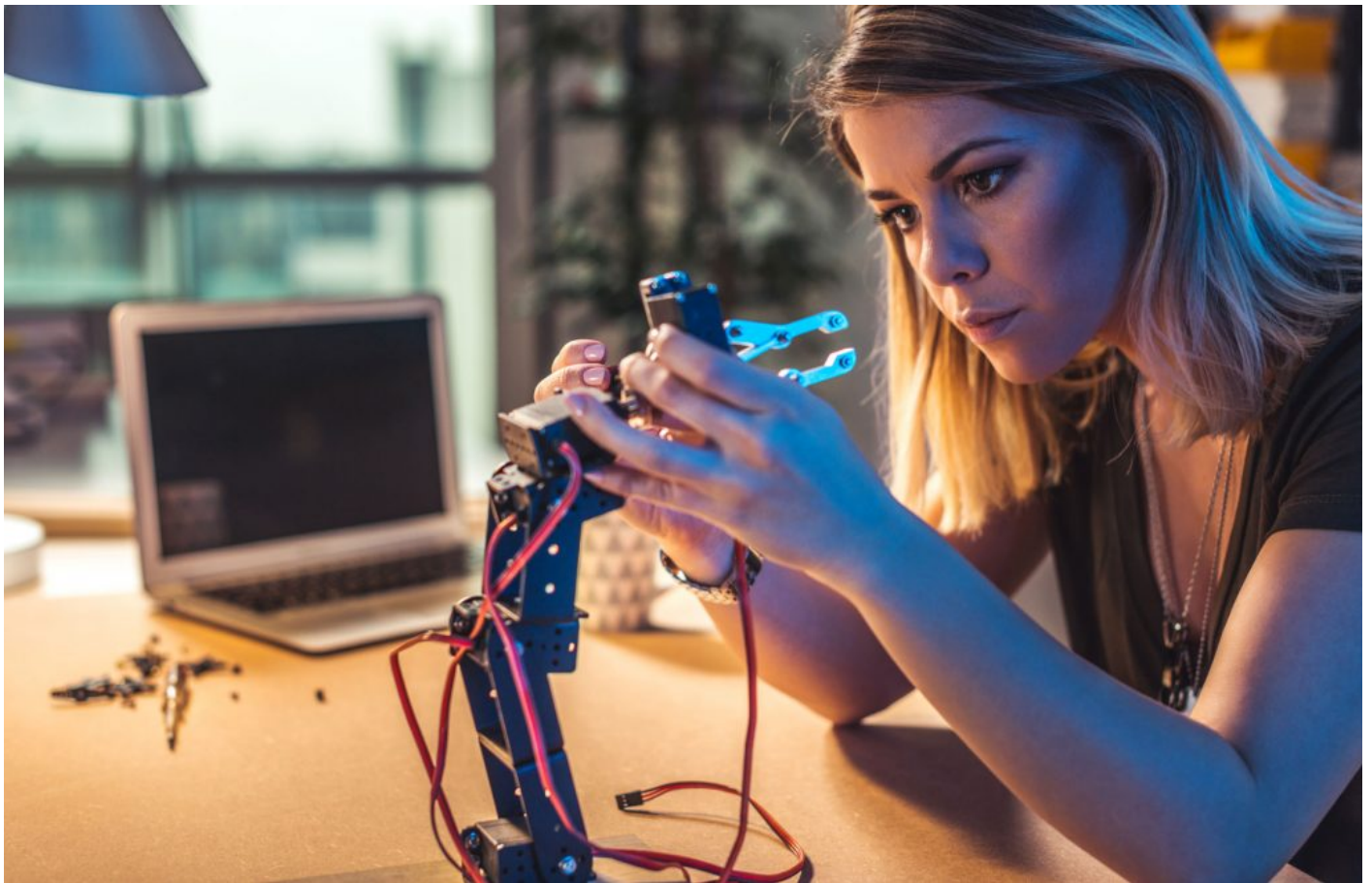
Southern Territory



Archive Education Programs

August 2019 — Eureka...National Inventors Month

August 1, 2019 By Major Julie Anne Loudon



Decorations

Display pictures of inventions that we take for granted today: iron, curling iron, cell phones, television, electric coffee maker, vehicles, refrigerator, bicycle, light bulbs. Show how they have changed over the years from when they were first invented.

Refreshments

Invite the women to “invent” their own trail mix. Provide some of the following items: white chocolate covered pretzels, nuts, raisins, mini-marshmallows, chocolate chips, almonds, cashews, M&M’s®. Place the mix in a baggie or cup for a snack. Serve different juices mixed with sprite or ginger ale allowing them to “invent” their own delicious sparkling fruit drink.

Program Ideas

Report of Inventions

The purpose of National Inventors Month is to promote the inventors whose ideas have made real contributions to the world. Ask one of the women to present information on some of the most innovative inventors and inventions. An alternate idea is to ask some women to research an invention and present information regarding it to the group. Facts about these inventions can be found on the Internet. Cover this information: Who invented them and when? Where are they produced? How many are made today? How have they evolved over the years? Try to co-ordinate those pictures on display in the room, with the presenter’s information.

Video

Show a YouTube® video on how various inventions are made. At the end, ask questions about each item. Award prizes to those women who remember the most facts. Invite the women to share about their experiences over the years with each invention and how they have had an impact on their lives.

Share—I Remember Them

Share pictures of items that have been replaced by newer technology. For example: cassette and 8-track players, boom boxes, walk-man, car phones, Game Boys, etc. Invite women who used these items to share what they remember about them.

What About You?

Now that you’ve heard about these inventors and the words of some of the most notable, do you feel inspired to make today the day that you begin your creative journey? Have you ever thought about inventing something? Remember, for every invention, the inventor must take one step forward outside of their comfort zone to pursue that idea that’s been living in their mind for quite some time. All it takes is a little courage, a lot of creativity and a healthy dose of perseverance to one day turn your dreams into reality.

Lost

Read: Luke 15—Parable of the Lost Sheep, of the Lost Coin and the Lost Sons.

One of the most frustrating experiences is to lose your car keys or your glasses or perhaps your cell phone. This is so common that people have invented products to help you find those misplaced items. Losing something happens to most people all the time. It's a huge relief when you find that lost item. Most people are overjoyed and may even celebrate the fact that they have found their missing item.

In Luke chapter 15 there are three parables that describe finding a lost item and the joy and celebration when found. First there was the lost sheep (verses 1–7), then the lost coin (verses 8–10) and finally the prodigal son (verses 11–31). These three linked parables explain why Jesus associates with sinners.

There are four ways to become lost described in this Scripture. The sheep was lost by wandering away from the flock. The coin was lost through the inability or carelessness of the woman. The prodigal son was lost by overt and willful disobedience. The elder brother was lost through pride, selfishness and self-righteousness.

Jesus in these parables explained that a single sheep, a single coin and the lost sons were of value to the shepherd, the woman and the father. He was illustrating that all people have eternal value in the eyes of the Father. God loves every person. His Word tells us that it is not His will that any should perish but for all to have eternal life. John 3:16 reads, "... whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." The very reason Jesus came to earth was to seek and save the lost.

God is looking for those who know they are lost and are looking for answers. For every sinner who has longed to return, for every lost soul who has longed to be found, listen and rejoice. God is looking for you. He is longing for you to be found. God is planning a party to rejoice in your repentance, your return and your restoration. When we pray for the lost, we can know without a doubt that we are praying according to His will.

Closing Prayer

Dear God, help us to reach out to those who are lost and wandering in sin. Help us to show Your love and kindness to all. Thank you, Lord, for not giving up on us and finding us. Thank you for Your love and that You continue to forgive us of our sins. Romans 15:13 says, "I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in Him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit." Amen.

About author

Major Julie Anne Loudon



USA Southern Territory

Fellowship Programs



Celebrate
HIS GOODNESS

*"They celebrate your abundant goodness
and joyfully sing of your righteousness."
Psalm 145:7*

2018 - 2019 Program Year





Archive Fellowship Programs

September 2019 — Remember His Goodness

September 1, 2019 By Lieutenant Patricia Torres



Program Ideas

Musical Blessings

Invite the women to write down three ways in which God has blessed them during the year. Instruct them not to put their names on the paper. Similar to how you would play musical

chairs play song “God is Good” by Don Moen (available on [YouTube®](#)). Have them pass the paper to the right until the music stops. The woman left holding the paper when the music stops reads it to the group. This continues until all the papers have been read.

Service Project

Put together Son Shine Bags or Breast Cancer Awareness bags. Fill yellow bags with items that are the color yellow. Inexpensive items can be found at the dollar stores—candy, gum, shower scrub, hand lotion. These can be given when visiting someone in the hospital or sent to someone who is going through a difficult time. The color yellow represents the sunshine of Jesus.

Fill pink bags with pink items. These can be taken to your nearest cancer center so they can be distributed to women going through chemo or radiation treatments. The month of October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. These colorful bags can also be used for the Community Care Ministry program.

Invite the women to write a note of encouragement and share a Scripture verse to be included in the bags. Advise the recipient that as the bags were filled a prayer was offered for them. Include a copy of the *War Cry* and contact information.

The Kindness of the Lord

I love the fall season. I’m from California. So many people from other states tell me that we Californians can’t distinguish one season from the other. That’s not true. I know it’s summer because the kids are out of school and the temperature gauge reads over 75 degrees. I know it’s spring because at my local hardware store all the potting soil, flowers, and gardening tools are on sale. I know it’s winter because, believe it or not, it rains (not a lot, but it does!) I know it’s fall because the tree in my backyard goes through its annual ritual. At the end of September, the leaves turn a pale yellow. By the end of October, they go to a bright, beautiful orange. Then by Thanksgiving the tree is completely bare. I love to see how my beautiful tree changes throughout the year and I know that come spring, it will start to sprout leaves and flowers, and by mid-summer I will have delicious pears.

I see my life like that tree. In each season, the Lord has been so good. In our Scripture today we read, “I will tell of the kindnesses of the Lord...” In the spring of my life, my dreams were tall and full of flowers. God was teaching me that His plans for me are plans of good. When my father lost his job and suffered a heart attack all in the same week, God showed us that we were not alone. “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship...” (Rom. 8:35 NIV). My dad recovered not only his health, but got a new job. The Lord was good.

In the summer of my life, God saw that there were some branches that definitely needed to be chopped off and thrown into the fire. It was a painful process that took a long time, but in

the midst of it all, He was there. “My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when He rebukes you...” (Heb. 12:5 NIV). Even while in the middle of the discipline, I could say, “Thank You for loving me.” The Lord was so good.

The winter of my life was filled with much doubt, confusion and pain. “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for you are with me” (Psalm 23:4 NIV). The pain of others’ rejection and belittlement made me question who I was and why I was living, or better yet, simply existing. God showed me that it wasn’t others’ opinions that made me who I was. It was the fact that I am the daughter of an Almighty King—a princess! The Lord was so very good. I didn’t walk alone.

So now in the autumn of my life I can look back at my experiences and see that I have been highly favored. “I will tell of the kindnesses of the Lord, the deeds for which He is to be praised, according to all the Lord has done for us” (Isa. 63:7). Those deeds are too numerous to mention, but just to name a few: health, safety, loving people, surrounding grace, and mercy. Not only has God blessed me with things that are meaningful to me here on earth, He has blessed me with the most meaningful gift that will last an eternity—salvation. Those deeds are most definitely something for which to praise Him because He has done so many good things for us.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, what words can we use to express our gratefulness for the blessings you have showered us with, blessings that we surely do not deserve. But in your infinite mercy and love you open the floodgates of heaven and pour them down upon us. All we have to do is give You our hearts. Use us however you see fit and we will give you all the honor and glory forever and ever. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

About author



Lieutenant Patricia Torres

Western Territory



Archive Fellowship Programs

October 2018 — Reaping His Goodness

October 1, 2018 By Major Lawry Smith



Preparation

Ask the women to bring an apple pie that they have baked. Cover a table with a red and white checkered tablecloth. Display the pies on an assortment of decorative pie stands of varying heights. Award a blue ribbon and either an apron, a cookbook, or a fancy pie dish to the

winning pie. Serve the apple pies for dessert. An alternate suggestion would be to auction the pies with the funds going to World Services.

Decorations: "A Little Bit of Country"

Decorate the tables as for a country picnic with red and white checkered tablecloths. For the centerpieces, use mason jars with red ribbons tied around the top. Fill with fresh sunflowers, and place a lace doily on top. For each table make three candleholders out of Fuji apples. Cut a hole in the top of each apple that is ¼" deep x 1 ½" in diameter (the size of a tea light candle). Place a tea light in the top of each apple. Use white plates, white napkins and red plastic tableware. Place a large bowl on your buffet table filled with apples of several varieties.

Refreshments

Have an old-fashioned country picnic lunch with BBQ chicken, potato salad, coleslaw, cornbread, ice tea, and apple pie for dessert.

Word Search Puzzle

Create a word search puzzle using the website <https://mywordsearch.com> featuring the different varieties of apples. These can be placed on the tables for the women to work on as they arrive before the program begins.

Game

Place several varieties of apples on a table and equal slips of paper listing the names of each apple. Invite the women to match the name with each apple. Tasting, smelling and holding the apple is allowed. The winner receives a basket of apples.

Following the game describe each apple and what it is used for. Share some recipes that call for the different varieties of apples. For more information on types of apples and their uses go to <http://www.bettycrocker.com/how-to/tipslibrary/ingredients/apples-and-their-uses>.

Here are some suggestions

Variety	Flavor	Texture	Used For
Fuji	Sweet	Crisp	Eating/Salads

Variety	Flavor	Texture	Used For
Gala	Sweet	Crisp	Baking/Eating/Salads/Sauce
Red Delicious	Sweet	Crisp	Eating/Salads
Golden Delicious	Sweet	Crisp	Baking/Eating/Salads/Sauce/Pies
Honey Crisp	Sweet	Crisp	Baking/Eating/Salads
Braeburn	Sweet- Tart	Crisp	Baking/Eating/Salads/Sauce/Pies
McIntosh	Slightly- Tart	Tender	Eating/Salads/Sauce
Granny Smith	Tart	Crisp	Baking/Eating/Salads/Sauce/Pies

God's Goodness

Apple picking is one of my favorite things to do in the fall. When I lived in Northern California, I used to love to visit a place called Apple Hill, located in Placerville, California. Nearly 30 apple farms are located there and on a sunny, crisp, fall day my family and I would ride the hay wagon, pick apples from the trees, sample pies and cider, and even select our pumpkin from the nearby patch—so much fun!

Now that I live in the state of Washington where the state fruit is the apple, I am excited to explore the many apple orchards that are all within a two-hour drive from my home. I don't know what I love more—the country air, the beautiful landscape of the orchards, or the smell of apple pies baking, but when I am in an apple orchard I can't help but bask in God's goodness to us. In fact, any time we are able to enjoy God's creation we begin to grasp just how incredible He is to His people.

We read in Psalm 31:19, "How great is the goodness You have stored up for those who fear You. You lavish it on those who come to You for protection, blessing them before the

watching world.” This scripture is a wonderful reminder of how great God’s goodness is to those who love and fear Him and that He lavishes His goodness on us. Synonyms for the word “lavish” are extravagant, over-the-top and excessive. In other words, God lavishes His goodness on us in “over-the-top” abundance.

Take the apple for example. Did you know that there are about 7,000 varieties of apples in the world, so even if you tried a different apple every day it would take you nearly 20 years to sample the entire spectrum? To me that is amazing! As far as I am concerned the few we sampled today would suffice. But no, God doesn’t stop there. He lavishes us with 7,000 varieties because that is how much He loves us and how well He treats us.

Ephesians 3:20 says, “To Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us.” Again, the Bible reminds us that God continues to bless us far beyond our imagination and certainly far beyond what we deserve. And He does so, not because we are great, but because He is. What a wonderful God we serve!

Ask the following questions and allow the women to respond.

- How does it make you feel to know that God provided us with so many varieties of apples when we would have been content with only a few? What does that say about our God?
- Was there a specific time in your life when God did immeasurably more for you than you could ever have imagined?
- How has God lavished His love and blessings on you recently?

I pray that you fully understand God’s goodness in your life today and that you are able to recognize how much He loves you and how He lavishes you with His many blessings over and above what you could hope for and ever imagine.

Closing Song, #49, *The Salvation Army Song Book*, “How Great Thou Art.”

About author



Major Lawry Smith

USA Western Territory



Archive Fellowship Programs

November 2018 — Taste of His Goodness

November 1, 2018 By Major Lynn Stewart



Decorations

Decorate using colors associated with fall—brown, orange or rust tablecloths. Place mason jars filled with fall flowers—chrysanthemums in yellow and orange.

Favors: Give small bottles of olive oil. The bottles can be purchased from a craft store, then filled from a larger container of olive oil.

Program Outline

Welcome

Prayer

Icebreaker:

The Best Thing I Ever Ate! (Ask the women to share some of their favorite things to eat and why they like them.

This could be something associated with their childhood or a family favorite.)

Praise and Worship

Song suggestions: "You're a Good, Good Father," "God Is So Good"

Scripture Reading

Psalm 34:1-8

Devotional

Taste of His Goodness

Closing Prayer

Let's Eat

Service Project or Outreach Idea

Invite the women to prepare soup in a jar to be shared with a friend or neighbor along with a word of encouragement. Include the directions for preparing the soup. Following is the recipe for Pasta Fagioli Soup. There are many other recipes on the Internet.

Pasta Fagioli Soup in a Jar

- 1 cup small pasta shells
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup pinto beans
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup kidney beans
- $\frac{3}{4}$ great northern or navy beans (white)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup parsley flakes
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup dried diced onion

- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tsp. basil
- 1 tsp. oregano
- 1 tsp. rosemary
- ½ tsp. garlic powder
- ¼ tsp. red pepper flakes
- ½ tsp. black pepper
- quart-sized jar
- 4 zip-top sandwich bags

Additional Ingredients Needed

- 1 28 oz. can diced tomatoes
- 3 carrots, chopped (in plastic bag)
- 2 stalks celery, chopped (in plastic bag)

Place pasta in a plastic bag, press out air and seal. Set aside. Place parsley flakes, diced onion, oregano, basil, rosemary, garlic powder, pepper flakes and black pepper in the second bag, press flat and seal, set aside. Layer beans in the quart jar, gently tapping between each layer to pack down.

To prepare soup: Place beans in a Dutch oven; add 6 cups water. Bring to a boil; boil 2 minutes. Remove from heat; cover and let stand 1 to 4 hours or until beans are softened. Drain and discard liquid. Return beans to the pan. Add contents of seasoning packet and 6 cups of water. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer 1 hour or until beans are tender. Add tomatoes, carrots, celery and salt; cover and simmer 30 minutes longer, stirring occasionally. Stir in pasta. Cover and simmer 5–10 minutes or until pasta and carrots are tender, stirring occasionally. Remove bay leaf before serving. Garnish with cheese if desired. Yield: 14 servings (3–1/2 quarts).

Taste of His Goodness

Read Psalm 34:1–8, The Message (MSG)

What was the best thing you ever tasted? We had some fun sharing about some of our favorite foods. There is a show on Food Network which I love to watch called *The Best Thing I Ever Ate*. It features different chefs from around the world who talk about their favorite dishes.

The best thing I ever tasted has to be my mother's homemade dinner rolls. I can remember as a child watching the entire process, and waiting, watching the oven until the timer dinged. Every year at Thanksgiving I try to duplicate my mom's recipe for my family. The first time I tried it the rolls came out hard, and I realized I didn't use fresh ingredients. There was also rushing and impatience involved. Over time I've learned that to make mom's rolls correctly I need fresh flour, butter, eggs and milk. All the ingredients have to be mixed by hand. You see it was all done out of love. She wanted us to have the best possible rolls and to experience this good thing. In the same way, God the Father wants the best for His children.

We read in Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have for you says the Lord, plans to prosper you and not harm you. Plans to give you a hope and a future." Psalm 34:8 from *The Message* tells us to: "Open your mouth and taste, open your eyes and see how good God is. Blessed are you who run to Him."

An awesome God, whose goodness never gets old or runs out, loves us. He doesn't give us His sloppy seconds. We can taste and see all He has done for us in our lives, and we should never take for granted His showers of blessings on us. When was the last time you thanked God for all He's done? Let's spend some time in prayer together lifting up prayers of thanksgiving.

Closing Prayer

Father, your love is amazing. We thank you for what You have done, and for all Your blessings. You have given us every good thing, and we are grateful. Amen.

Let's Eat

Serve different types of soup along with bread, crackers and cheese.

About author



Major Lynn Stewart

USA Western Territory



Archive Fellowship Programs

December 2018 — The Good Gift of God

December 1, 2018 By Captain Audra Whipple



Gift Exchange

The gift exchange can be done in a number of ways.

- 1 "Stealing": Using Post-its® number the gifts as the women arrive.

- Invite the women to draw numbers from a hat. They select a gift in number sequence. Another way is to ask trivia questions. The first person to answer correctly gets to draw a gift.
 - Have the woman open her gift for everyone to see.
 - Each woman has the choice to “steal” a gift from one already opened or pick a new one from the table. Gifts can only be “stolen” twice.
- 2 Each time a woman can relate to one of the following statements she exchanges the gift she has with another woman who can also relate. Once a gift has been exchanged twice it stays with that person.
- I have been attending Home League or Women’s Ministries for more than 10 years.
 - I have never lived outside of city where the corps is located.
 - I have a family member who is a veteran.
 - I have more than three children.
 - I finished reading a book last month.
 - I can name all of the characters on the television show *Friends*.
 - I can remember using a land-line phone with a cord.
 - I had more than one cup of coffee today.
 - I can name 10 Bible characters.
 - I have snuck out of the house.
 - I love Jesus.
 - I have a Christmas tree up.
 - I have finished my Christmas shopping.
 - I have played organized sports.
 - I am allergic to something.
 - I have a pet.
 - I can remember the inaugurations of more than three presidents.
 - I like making crafts.
 - I wouldn’t mind if I got my own gift in this exchange.

Trivia Game

Following is a list of the most popular Christmas gifts over the last 100 years. Ask the women if they received any of these gifts as a child and to share any interesting stories associated with them.

- 1 1910 – Rocking Horse, Fireworks, Nuts
- 2 1920 – The Radio Flyer, Joy Buzzer, Yo-yo
- 3 1930 – Red Ryder BB Gun, Sock Monkey, Army Men
- 4 1940 – Legos, The Magic 8 Ball, Slinky
- 5 1950 – Barbie, Fisher Price Little People, Mr. Potato Head
- 6 1960 – Etch-A-Sketch, Easy Bake Oven, G.I. Joe
- 7 1970 – Rubik's Cube, Nerf Ball, Star Wars Action Figures
- 8 1980 – Cabbage Patch Kids, Teddy Ruxpin, Transformers
- 9 1990 – Tickle Me Elmo, Super Soaker, Furby
- 10 2000 – Wii, Bratz, Razor Scooter
- 11 2010 – iPad, Legos, Xbox 360 with Kinect
- 12 Today – LeapPad Ultra, Furby Boom, Teksta Robotic Puppy

Cookie Decorating for Santa

Using plain sugar cookies, frosting and other cookie decorating supplies, invite the women to decorate their ultimate holiday cookie. In connection with this activity talk about being taught that we give gifts at this time of year. We leave Santa cookies because we appreciate all that he is doing for us. This idea can piggy-back on the devotional to show appreciation to God for His gift of Jesus.

The Perfect Gift

I can't remember very many Christmases from my childhood, but one stands out vividly in my memory. I received everything I wanted—things I didn't ask for but that my mom knew I would love. Among those items were a Goo Goo Dolls® CD and a new bed-in-a-bag set. After opening my gifts and spending the appropriate amount of time with my family I retreated with my things to my room. I spent the following hours listening to John Rzeznik singing through my CD player while I stripped my bed of its old ragged linens. Carefully, I unzipped the plastic cover holding my new bedding.

The sheets were white with small yellow and blue flowers. This was the first time I had unwrapped new sheets. I can still remember pulling the cardboard from the center. The comforter was reversible. One side was a pale yellow flannel pattern and the other a blue with

polka dots. It was beautiful. I chose the yellow side up first. I loved the way the sunlight bounced off the yellow and lit up my bedroom.

Next came the pillows. There were four pillowcases. Four! And they all matched the rest of the bedding. I know this might not sound like much to you, but my linens had been hand-me-downs and mismatched for as long as I could remember. Now, not only did I have regular pillowcases that matched my sheets, I also had shams. I spent the rest of the day lying on my beautiful new bed singing along to the one song I knew from the Dizzy Up the Girl album. It was a great Christmas memory for a young teenager.

In the years following I took really good care of the bed set my mother gave me. I would wash it properly. I made sure I didn't spill anything on it. And it returned the favor. On really cold mornings I would lie in bed under that cotton comforter eyeballing my closet and choosing my clothes. Then I would leap out of bed and pull the day's outfit under the covers so that they could warm up. Once they were warm enough from my body heat I would dress under the warmth of the comforter.

Scripture tells us of another gift, a gift far better than matching shams and warm cotton. The gift of Jesus. Most of us know about Jesus. We know about His birth being the reason for our celebration this time of year. But do we treat the gift of Jesus, the gift of an innocent baby sent to redeem us for our sins as we treat the material gifts we exchange with one another? The gift of Jesus is beyond any other gift we receive. It is more than we deserve.

We read in James 1:17, "Whatever is good and perfect comes down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow." Perfection is only found in Jesus. 1 John 3:5 tells us of His perfection, "You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin." Jesus is the perfect gift that comes to us from God who loves us so much that He gave us the gift of salvation.

I know that I don't cherish this gift like I should. There are days when I neglect to see how God is providing for me. There are moments when I could spend more time with Him relishing His love but I squander my time and efforts on things that really don't matter.

My bedding eventually faded. The sheets wore thin in the spot where I slept and the cotton in the comforter balled up in little pockets. Like all material things, the gift that I loved and cared for became old and less useful.

Today we have exchanged gifts—a fun activity. Many of us will use and love what we received but if the thing to remember is the importance of cherishing the gift of Jesus, which is far greater than any other gift. Jesus won't get old, worn out or faded. Jesus will always provide for us and comfort us. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Heb. 13:8).

Cherish God's perfect gift to us this season.

About author



Captain Audra Whipple

Western Territory



Archive Fellowship Programs

January 2019 — His Good News

January 1, 2019 By Major Cathi Boyd



Introduction

If life gives you lemons, make friends. Invite the women to bring a friend to the lemonade tea.

Decorations

Check the website Orientaltrading.com for lemon decorations, plates and cups. Use yellow balloons, streamers and tablecloths with bowls of lemons as the centerpiece, or mason jars with real or artificial flowers.

Refreshments

Serve lemonade or iced tea in small mason jars with straws. Lemon bars, lemon pie, lemon poppy muffins, or lemon cupcakes will carry out the theme. The bakers in the group might like to share their favorite lemon recipe. Have a blind taste test to see if the women can guess who brought the various items.

Who Am I?

Divide the women into smaller groups. The size will depend on the overall size of the group. Ask the women to write their answers to some questions and place them in a basket. The first woman draws a slip of paper from the basket and tries to guess who answered the question in that way. If she is wrong, the next woman tries to guess. If she is correct, she gets a point. This continues until all the answers have been matched to the right woman. Some suggested questions might be: My favorite meal is___? I am scared of___? My favorite movie is___? No one would guess that I once___?

Lemon Facts

Check the Internet for interesting and fun facts about lemons that can be shared with the women.

Friendship with God

The story is told of a boy who wanted to meet God. Knowing that it must be a long trip to where God lived, he did the sensible thing and packed a suitcase with Twinkies® and a six-pack of root beer. When he had gone about three blocks, he decided to sit down on a park bench. On the other side of the bench was an old woman who was staring at the pigeons.

The thirsty boy opened his suitcase and reached for a root beer. As he was about to take a sip he noticed that the lady looked hungry. So he offered her a Twinkie®. He was rewarded with a lovely smile, so he opened a root beer and gave it to her. Again she smiled at him. The boy was delighted. The two of them sat together all afternoon eating, drinking and smiling, but they never said a word. As the sun began to set, the boy realized he was tired and decided to head back home. Before he had gone more than a few steps, he turned, ran back to the old woman, and gave her a big hug. She gave him her biggest smile yet.

When the boy opened the kitchen door at home, his mom was surprised by the look of joy on his face. She asked him, "What did you do today that made you so happy?" He replied, "I had

lunch with God." Before his mother could respond, he added, "You know what? She's got the most beautiful smile I have ever seen!"

In the meantime, the old woman, also radiant with joy, returned to her home. Her son was surprised by the look of peace on her face. "Mother, what did you do today that made you so happy?" She answered, "I ate Twinkies® in the park with God. You know, He's much younger than I expected."

This story brings a smile to us, but it also highlights an important truth. Friendship with God is something we all desire, whether we realize it or not. God created us this way—it's in our DNA. In the Garden of Eden God walked and talked with Adam and Eve. Genesis 3:8 tells us that "When the cool evening breezes were blowing the man and the woman heard God walking about in the garden" (Gen. 3:8). He sought their company to chat about their day, perhaps to share the beauty of the sunset. How His heart must have broken when Adam and Eve confessed to doing the one thing He asked them not to do. For this rebelliousness, they had to leave the Garden and were barred from returning. God had to practice tough love. The toughest of all loves.

Men and women since that time have tried to fill that missing piece of their lives with all sorts of religions and philosophies. Empty passions that drive us to drink, spend, eat, seeking fulfillment in wealth, power, or sex. All of these hollow things fail to fill the vacuum inside. There is only one answer. St. Augustine wrote, "You have made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You."

We need to know that all along God had a plan to restore our friendship with Him. It cost Him dearly—it cost Him everything. Romans 5:8–11 tells the whole story: "But God showed His great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, He will certainly save us from God's condemnation. For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of His Son while we were still His enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of His Son. So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God."

Friendship with God! It doesn't get much better than that. When we put our trust in Him, and in the freedom that is ours through the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ, we can call ourselves friends of God. Just as we have spent time today getting to know each other better, God invites us to get to know Him through the reading of His Word. He wants us to share our daily days with Him, our joys and our pains, our sleepless nights, and the moments that take our breath away. Prayer is conversation with God, our best Friend.

Today, can you say with assurance "I am a friend of God?" The Bible tells us that when we draw near to God, He draws near to us (James 4:8). If you will take the first step towards Him, He will meet you where you are. Today is a good day to make a new friend.

Close in prayer and invite anyone who would like to know more to meet you after the meeting. Sing song #795, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" from *The Salvation Army Song Book*.

About author



Major Cathi Boyd

Western Territory



Archive Fellowship Programs

February 2019 — His Good Love

February 1, 2019 By Captain Leilani Armendariz



Decorations

As this is a Valentine party, decorate the tables with pink and black tablecloths, napkins and plates. Place small bowls of assorted sour candies on each table. Some examples: conversations hearts, sour gummy bears and sour lollipops. On another table, close to where the devotions will be shared, place an assortment of sweet candies for the women to enjoy

after the devotional. Use this as an illustration of how sweet God's love is towards us and how we should reflect His love to others. "For we are a sweet aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing" (2 Cor. 2:15).

Games

1 GUESS THE LOVE SONG

Print excerpts from love songs and invite the women to guess the title. Or play excerpts from the songs and give points for the title of the song and the performing artist.

- Love Song Suggestions (All available on [YouTube®](#))
- "How Am I Supposed to Live Without You" by Michael Bolton
- "Heartbreak Hotel" by Elvis Presley
- "All of Me" by John Legend
- "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry" by Hank Williams
- "What Hurts the Most" by Rascal Flatts
- "How Do I Live" by LeAnn Rimes
- "Yesterday" by The Beatles
- "I Can't Make You Love Me" by Bonnie Raitt
- "How Deep Is Your Love" by Bee Gees

2 HEART PUZZLE RACE

Cut a large piece of poster board into a heart and then cut the heart into smaller puzzle pieces. Place a puzzle on each table prior to beginning the program. Have the teams at each table race against each other to see who can mend the broken heart first.

3 GUESS THE BAD DATE

Ask the women to write on an index card a short description of the worst date they've ever had. Collect them and have the women take turns picking a card, reading it aloud and guessing who it belongs to.

4 VALENTINE CANDY CHARADES

Ask the players to draw a conversational candy heart from a bowl. Using the regular rules for charades, they must act out the message on the candy heart.

5 VALENTINE STORY

Divide the women up into small groups. Each group is to come up with a story that they will share with the entire group. Give them a theme that they are to write their story around. Use the love song titles above, or other suggestions such as: "She done me wrong;" "Worst date ever;" "They lived happily ever after—not!" An alternate idea would be

to ask several of the women ahead of time to write a story, which they will share with the group on the day of the program. Award a prize to the best story.

Refreshments

Ask several women to bring their favorite dessert to share.

Love That Won't Quit

Valentine's Day can be particularly difficult for many people. For some it is reminder that they have no one with whom to share the holiday. For others it is the reminder of loved ones who are no longer with them.

I love you. All of us want to hear those three words. We believed that in those three words we can find comfort, peace, strength, courage and acceptance. Some of us so are so desperate to hear those words that we look for them in all the wrong places. Why do you think there are so many songs about love gone wrong?

What we failed to realize is that love sought in the wrong places isn't good love. Hearts get broken, feelings get hurt and loneliness takes up residence in our hearts. When not mended, hearts begin to harden and turn to stone making any chance of healing seem impossible. But then God shows up.

Where hearts are broken, God heals. Where feelings are hurt, God mends. Where loneliness is found, God brings restoration and peace and most of all unconditional love. You see, God's love is good.

We read in Psalm 107:1 "Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! His faithful love endures forever." Faithful love—forever. Not only is God's love good, but also the Psalm tells us that it is forever. Unlike many things we have staked our hearts on in our lives, God is always faithful. We don't have to walk on eggshells waiting for His love to turn. This Valentine's Day, as we reflect on what love means in our lives, let us remember the love that won't quit—God's good, faithful and forever love. What has God done for you? Is there someone who needs to hear about His love today?

About author



Captain Leilani Armendariz

Western Territory



Archive Fellowship Programs

March 2019 — Spring Fling

March 1, 2019 By Captain Jennifer Swain



“Everyone will share the story of Your wonderful goodness, they will sing with joy about Your righteousness” (Ps.145:7).

Introduction

Goodness gracious! Swing into spring with flowers and friends! The purpose of this program is to grow the friendships of the women in the group, to share the goodness of God as seen in the lives of the women around us and to testify to God's love as witnessed in His creation.

Program Ideas

Invite each woman to share a little information on her favorite flower. For example, "I love sunflowers because my grandmother always had some in her garden. She would complain that she didn't plant them, but rather that they planted themselves. She made it seem that they were a bother. In spite of this she carefully watered them and talked to them as she worked in her garden."

Or the women can share general information about their favorite flower. If you decide to choose this option, let the women know ahead of time so that they can be prepared. An example: "Sunflowers are the only flower with "flower" in their name. The sunflower turns its face throughout the day to follow the sun. They are native to the Americas. The world's tallest sunflower was 30 feet and one inch tall. In 2012, sunflower seeds were taken into space and grown on the International Space Station."

Ask the women to bring a dozen of their favorite flowers to share with the other women in the group (similar to a cookie exchange at Christmas time). This will ensure that each woman leaves with a bouquet and that during the week she can remember the women represented by the flowers.

Decorating Ideas

On each table place a medium-sized vase filled halfway with water. As they arrive, ask each woman to place one of the flowers she brought in the vases on each of the tables. Additional vases will be needed to hold the women's flowers during the flower exchange. In addition, place a half-sheet, color photo (postcard size) of a flower in bloom. This will be used for the activity during the devotional time. Napkins, plates and cups should be in keeping with the floral theme. Flower seed packets, or scattered seeds, are a lovely addition to the table setting.

Refreshments

Cut finger sandwiches into flower shapes using cookie cutters. Cookies and melon can also be cut into flower shapes. Serve floral tea, such as rose or lavender, in flowered teapots.

"He Loves Me!"

Many little girls like to play the game "He loves me, he loves me not." By pulling the petals of a flower she can determine if her current boyfriend is "the one," her true love. With God we never have to wonder about this. We know that He loves us. His Word tells us that this is true.

We read in Matthew 6:26, “Look at the birds. They don’t plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren’t you far more valuable to Him than they are?” Jesus continues to explain this love a few verses later, “And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, He will certainly care for you” (Matt. 6:30).

Activity

One way to understand God’s love for us, which is far greater than His love for the flower in your vase, is to have it affirmed by others. Each of you has a picture of a flower at your place. Please turn the picture over and write your name on the back. Once you have written your name, hand it to the woman on your right. Once you have received your new flower, write one thing you enjoy or appreciate about the woman who passed it to you on a flower petal in the picture. Once you have written a word or phrase of appreciation, pass the picture to the woman on your right. Now, check the name on the back of the picture, and write one thing you appreciate about that woman on a flower petal. It may be something simple like her smile or something deeper like her knowledge of God’s Word. Once you have written your word, pass it to the woman on your right. This will continue until everyone has their original flower returned to them. Now you hold in your hand a flower whose petals reflect all that God created you to be, all that He lovingly placed in you. Each petal represents the beauty those around you see in you, a reflection of the Father.

Prayer

Father, thank you for the gift of flowers and friends, both of which remind us of Your faithfulness to us and through us. We are blessed by the beauty we see in one another and in the flowers in front of us. Help us as we walk through this season of blossoms to see the beauty in those around us, to encourage one another, and to acknowledge Your goodness to us. Help us to sing Your praise!

About author



Captain Jennifer Swain

USA Western Territory



Archive Fellowship Programs

April 2019 — His Goodness Reigns (Rains)

April 1, 2019 By Major Beverly Lloyd



Decoration

Using fishing twine hang open umbrellas, with the handles pointing down, from the ceiling. Attach pale blue streamers to the umbrellas representing rain. Cover the tables with pale blue tablecloths.

Refreshments

Make a rainbow-colored veggie plate (red peppers, green peppers, yellow peppers, green cucumber, orange carrots). Provide hummus and ranch dressing for dipping. Cut an orange in half and slice the halves to make half moon shaped slices of orange. Attach these to a bendy straw to make the bend of the straw look like the handle of the umbrella. You can also use half-unpeeled Babybel® cheeses.

Program Ideas

How Many Words?

Ask the women to write the word “umbrella” and “rain” on the top of a white paper table map. They are to see who can come up with the most words using only the letters found in these two words. Give a new umbrella as a prize.

My Umbrella

Ask the women to bring an umbrella from home that maybe is a little different. Have them share where they bought it. Invite them to share a funny rain story or a memory associated with rain.

Did You Know?

The word for umbrella evolves from the Latin word ‘umbella.’ An Umbel is a flat-topped rounded flower. In Britain in the late eighteenth century, umbrellas were sometimes referred to as ‘Gamps.’ ‘Brolly’ is a slang word for umbrella. ‘Bumbershoot’ is a fanciful Americanism from the late nineteenth century. The history of the umbrella goes back to the first century. In ancient Egypt, they were used as a mark of distinction. In Ancient Rome, umbrellas were used for protection. In Siam, nobles carried umbrellas with painted cloths hanging from them. In the 17th and 18th century umbrellas were used as shade from the sun and were known as ‘parasols.’ In the late 18th century umbrellas, coated with wax, were known to be used for protection from rain. They also became used for self-defense. In the 20th century, umbrellas were refined as self-defense weapons and became modernized with self-opening buttons. They have influenced art and architecture alike. But often they are thought of as only basic household objects, often lost in the bottom of purses or retrieved from under car seats.

Rain, Rain, Rain

But why are we thinking about the rain and umbrellas?

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-4.

In 1 Corinthians 2 we are reminded that the “good news” saves us and that it is most important (verse 3). What is this good news? It is that Christ died for us, was buried and raised on the third day. As a result of Christ’s death, burial and resurrection we have new life in Him. His blood, shed on the cross, has saved us from the penalty of sin, has overcome the power of sin in our lives and has given us a new life in Christ now and for eternity.

This is the news that we can stand firm on today. How often do we think that we are too bad to be saved or that we are not sinners and therefore too good to need God? The truth is that we were all born in sin. We are all sinners; sin separates us from God. But Christ died for our sins and His shed blood means that when we accept Him God no longer sees us as sinners but as His redeemed children. We are no longer under sin’s power but empowered in Christ to overcome it and to receive the reward of eternal life. This is indeed a cause for celebration. So today, we celebrate that Christ’s goodness “rains” on us. What a good gift He gave us.

Umbrellas save us from getting wet or protect us from the rays of the sun. But have you ever put that umbrella down and raised your face to the sun and let the rain fall on your face? Your tongue? Have you ever danced in the rain? Kids love to do this.

There’s a children’s song that Barney the purple dinosaur used to sing:

“

“If all the raindrops were lemon drops and gum drops, oh what a rain that would be!
 Standing outside with my mouth open wide Ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah.
 If all the raindrops were lemon drops and gum drops, oh what a rain that would be!
 If all the raindrops were bubble gum and ice cream, oh what a rain that would be.
 Standing outside with my mouth open wide Ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah.
 If all the raindrops were bubble gum and ice cream, oh what a rain that would be.”

So, if you think of God’s gift to you as a rain of goodness, why would you not stand in this rain and open your arms and let it soak you?

In closing sing song #314 “There Shall Be Showers of Blessing” from *The Salvation Army Song Book*. Open your arms and as you sing think of God’s gift raining down upon you, covering you and changing you.

About author



Major Beverly Lloyd

Western Territory



Archive Fellowship Programs

May 2019 — United in His Goodness

May 1, 2019 By Major Cathi Boyd



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"How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1 NIV)

Refreshments

Arrange to share a potluck lunch together. There is something special about uniting together over a meal.

Ice Breaker

As the women arrive, put a nametag on their backs that is one half of a famous couple (i.e., Romeo and Juliet, George and Martha Washington, Adam and Eve, Joseph and Mary). Encourage them to figure out who they are and find their mate. Everyone must ask yes or no questions only, and no one can tell anyone else who they are.

Activities

Find the Words

As the pairs are formed, invite them to sit together at a table and begin working together on a word puzzle. On the top of a sheet is the phrase: "United we stand." The challenge is to find words of three letters or more. Score one point for a three-letter word, two for a four-letter. Award prizes for the top teams.

Newsworthy

Split the group in two (if you have more than 50 participants, divide the group into three). You will need a few newspapers from the day of the program. Ahead of time go through the paper and make a list of 8 to 12 article titles, advertising, photos or people. For instance, you might choose an ad for tomatoes at \$1.00 a pound, an obituary of a city leader, or an article about a local football team. Note the page number where each item is located. Every participant is given a page from the newspaper. A runner from each group is chosen. Set up a chair or small table in the front of the room. As the item from the newspaper is called out, each woman searches her sheet to see if she has that item. The woman who has the item raises her hand, and the runner will grab the page and take it up front. One point is awarded for the team that finds the item first. The team that wins may go through the lunch line first.

Unity

The Bible says, "How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity" (Psalm 133:1)! Today we have been having some fun working together to solve puzzles and engage in a newspaper scavenger hunt. These activities would not be nearly as much fun if we did them by ourselves. And how boring would lunch be if everybody had brought potato salad? When we work together, we can achieve so much more.

Have you heard the old story about stone soup? It takes place in a poor village. In the middle of the town, a traveler sets up a pot filled with water and a stone. A curious villager approaches the stranger and asks what he is cooking. The traveler tells him that it is stone soup. He slurps a spoonful down and tells the villager that it is quite good, but it's missing

something. The man hurries home and brings back a couple of carrots for the soup. Another villager comes by and the traveler again tastes the soup and tells the woman that it is quite good, but there is something missing. The woman also hurries home, grabs some potatoes and brings them back for the soup. This goes on all day long, and finally, at sunset, the traveler pronounces the soup ready to eat. He removes the stone. The whole village brings bowls and bread, and they all eat a better meal in unity than they would have by keeping to themselves.

There is a story in the second chapter of Mark that speaks of what can be accomplished when people work together. Picture a sunny, hot day. Four men are carrying a stretcher with a paralyzed man. The friends want to take their friend to see Jesus, because stories have spread far and wide about the miracles that have happened wherever this Teacher has traveled. Unfortunately, there are so many people crowded inside and all around the house where Jesus is speaking that they can't find a way to get their friend inside the door.

Some people might have given up at this point. Not these four friends. They were united in their resolve to get their paralyzed friend to Jesus. They put their heads together and came up with a plan. They climbed up to the sitting area on the roof of the house, dug through it and lowered their friend into the house, right in front of Jesus. Talk about creative problem solving.

Jesus looked up at the four friends and, seeing their faith, healed their friend. What a wonderful example of what can happen when we work together in unity. The four men had faith that Jesus could help their friend, and they didn't give up even when the circumstances were stacked against them. Jesus blessed their faith and effort.

Doesn't it make you wonder what seemingly impossible things we can achieve when we work together? Feed a whole village with a stone and a pot of water? Bring a friend to Jesus, despite seemingly impossible circumstances? Yes, these things and so many more are possible when

"God's people live together in unity!"

About author



Major Cathi Boyd

Western Territory



Archive Fellowship Programs

June 2019 — Radiating His Goodness

June 1, 2019 By Lieutenant Loreen Hamilton



Scripture

“Yet God has made everything beautiful for its own time. He has planted eternity in the human heart, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God’s work from beginning to end” (Eccl. 3:11).

Preparation

Ask the women to bring photos of themselves in a period of their life when they felt most beautiful. This may be a current photo or one from the past.

Room Set Up

Be as simple or elaborate as you like. This would be a great week to invite new women. Adorn tables with fresh flowers to make the room beautiful. Candles and tablecloths can also bring a simple and elegant beauty to the room.

Refreshments

Plan a potluck and ask the women to bring food to share.

Activity Ideas

Color Me Beautiful

Provide printouts of coloring pages printed with Ecclesiastes 3:11 at the top. There are some free versions online and others available for a small fee. Spread out a variety of crayons, markers and colored pencils. Give the women the opportunity to color their pages. Remind them that there is no right way and that beauty is unique to each one of us. This is a fun activity that allows the women to continue enjoying fellowship with those around them.

I Am Beautiful

Find a local Mary Kay or Avon representative, or a local cosmetologist who would be willing to donate some time. Ask them to do make-overs or manicures for the women. Allow the women to choose which they feel most comfortable participating in.

A Beautiful Bonnet

Purchase plain hats and embellishments—flowers, ribbon, jewels, netting. Invite the women to decorate their hat using a hot glue gun. While the women work on their hats play the song, “You Make Beautiful Things” by Gungor (available on [YouTube](#)). When their hats are finished, invite them to walk down the “runway” in the middle of your room to the song “Gold,” by Britt Nicole.

Beautiful You

Give each woman a moment or two to show the photo they brought and explain why they chose it. If you have a group larger than six, split into smaller groups and have the women share with those in their group. Some of the women may have been reluctant to share a

photo feeling that they are not beautiful. Remind them of 1 Peter 3:3–4, “Do not let your beauty come from the outside. It should not be the way you comb your hair or the wearing of gold or the wearing of fine clothes. Your beauty should come from the inside. It should come from the heart. This is the kind that lasts. Your beauty should be a gentle and quiet spirit. In God’s sight this is of great worth and no amount of money can buy it.” To God we are all beautiful, no matter what stage of life we are in.

Beautiful

The verse that was chosen for today's devotion comes from a passage in Scripture that is well known. It tells us in Ecclesiastes 3:1, “For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven.” Solomon (who wrote Ecclesiastes) then goes through a list of living, dying, beauty and pain to tell us that there is a time for everything. And though everything has its own time, God has made everything beautiful, in its own way, for its own time.

Here on earth, we value a certain standard of beauty. Beaches and mountains are nearly unanimously declared beautiful, while deserts, in the opinion of many, lack beauty. Youth is prized and many people spend large sums of money to hold onto that “youthful glow” for as long as possible. Aging is not valued nearly as highly.

It's important to remember that everything is beautiful in its own time; but even more, Scripture tells us, that we cannot see the whole scope of God’s work. In every season and stage of life, God is working—even if we don’t understand exactly what He is doing.

Today as we enjoy our fellowship together, let us remember that God has larger things at work than we can perceive. As we learned when we shared with one another earlier, we all see beauty in different ways and God has made all things beautiful in their own time. Most important of all, He works through the good and the bad, the old and the young—even if things don’t look beautiful by every person’s standard in that moment.

About author



Lieutenant Loreen Hamilton

Western Territory



Archive Fellowship Programs

July 2019 — The Warmth of His Goodness

July 1, 2019 By Captain Lisa Barnes



Decorations

Create the feeling of a mermaid lagoon. Use green, teal, blue, purple, lavender and pearly white tablecloths and napkins. Place balloons in this color on the wall or along the tables to resemble bubbles or the movement of water. Use nautical images like anchors, boats and sand as the centerpieces. Drape nets over the tables and the backs of chairs.

Refreshment Ideas

Pearl cookies: Take small cookies, like Nilla Wafers, pipe the inside with colorful frosting and place a candy pearl on the outside edge of the frosting. Place a second cookie at top at an angle to look like a clam with a pearl inside.

Seaweed dip: Ppinach dip, with chunks of bread for dipping.

Crab sandwiches: Make sandwiches out of croissants. Add googly eyes on toothpicks to look like crabs.

Ocean punch: Combine one large bottle of blue Hawaiian Punch, a two-liter bottle of lemon lime soda, and one large can of crushed pineapple.

Fish and chips: Mix together bowls of multi-colored Goldfish crackers and potato chips.

Activities — Sea Inspired Jewelry

There are plenty of sea inspired beads and charms available at craft stores. Look for inexpensive beads that resemble sea glass or artificial pearls.

Items needed

- Stretch cord
- Beads
- Sea charms
- Super glue

Instructions

- 1 Start with a piece of stretch cord about 12 inches long. This is too big for a bracelet, but a little extra cord gives you room to work with.
- 2 String the first bead onto the cord and tie a loose knot around it. This will be untied once you are finished. Leave a tail of about 3 inches.
- 3 String enough beads to make a complete bracelet. If you are adding a charm or two, do this somewhere before the last bead on the bracelet.
- 4 Once it is long enough, carefully untie the first knot around the first bead. Tie a few knots to keep the ends together. Add one drop of Super Glue to the knots to make sure that they do not come undone. Allow to dry completely.

- 5 These bracelets are quick and easy. If you can, encourage the ladies to make one for themselves, and one for a friend that they would like to invite to
- 6 Women's Ministries or to church. These make a great evangelistic tool.

God Is Good

Read Psalm 145:1–10 from *The Message*.

When we were young, many of us dreamed about being a mermaid. We saw the Disney movie, *The Little Mermaid* and longed to be Ariel. We pictured ourselves as a beautiful creature who lived in the ocean, not having to obey all the rules and obligations that were being imposed on us in the real world.

Maybe our parents were hoping we would be an international soccer player, but this didn't interest us. We dreamed of becoming an artist instead of a doctor. Maybe we wanted to dance and sing instead of studying and writing a great novel. These thoughts led to positive introspection about who we really were and what our dreams could be.

As we got older, reality set in and few of us continued to wish we were mermaids. However, we still view the ocean and appreciate the creative wonder it is, filled not with imagined creatures like mermaids but with real, majestic creatures and plants.

The mighty ocean is beautiful, filled with brightly colored fish with interesting markings. The sight inspires awe and wonder, reminding us how powerful and magnificent our Creator is. The ocean is powerful and life giving. It continues to amaze those who study it.

There are things that the ocean does that almost seem like magic, at least to those who don't understand the amazing ways that the Lord works. Just look at sea glass—beautiful, like buried treasure. In reality it is trash, garbage—bottles and bits of colored glass that have been discarded into the ocean. The ocean tosses these glass pebbles around; sand and grit polish them, making them into something beautiful, something worth collecting and treasuring.

Because naturally occurring pearls are extremely rare, most pearls today are manmade. Pearls form naturally when an irritant works its way into an oyster, clam, or mussel. For many years, people assumed that the irritant was a grain of sand, but we now know that the irritant that causes the pearls is most often a microscopic parasite. Not nearly as romantic as the proverbial grain of sand, but in a lot of ways, a beautiful and rare pearl coming from a parasite sends a message of hope about finding beauty in life from something usually viewed as damaging. Once the parasite is imbedded in the mollusk, then the creature starts coating it layer upon layer with a liquid called nacre. This is the same coating that makes these mollusks shiny on the outside. Years later, usually at the end of the life of the mollusk, the beautiful pearl is formed.

The ocean is full of beautiful things that reflect on the magnificence of the Creator and cause us to reflect on how we fit into God's big plan. Some of us are like the fish, beautiful and unique, created for a specific and clear purpose. Some of us feel like sea glass. Maybe we started by feeling discarded, but through the elements and the water that symbolize the Creator, we are polished and made new. And some of us see ourselves as pearls. It may have taken us some time to get where we are, and we probably are not finished yet. But our God is mighty and with us the whole way. He is bigger than the process and willing to invest the time needed for us to become who we were meant to be.

About author



Captain Lisa Barnes

Western Territory



Archive Fellowship Programs

August 2019 — Singing of His Goodness

August 1, 2019 By Lieutenant Tammy Poe



Introduction

Singing karaoke can be a little intimidating to some but to others it brings out their adventurous side. Some get ahold of the microphone and can sing like a bird. Others grab it and think they can sing like a bird, and then there are those who grab the microphone and...

Well. Let's just say they make a "joyful noise to the Lord." Each one of us is uniquely made. We are all created in the image of God and were created to give Him praise.

The karaoke machine is very helpful to keep us in tune and to provide the words by highlighting them on the screen. But if we leave the machine in the box unused, then we just have a silent machine. The same thing happens with our testimony when we keep what God has done for us in the box, sealed up. It does not bring anyone to God, nor does it bring glory to Him. The Psalms tell us to sing unto the Lord. Sing a new song, sing, sing, sing!

Program Outline

Welcome

Read Psalm 47

Opening Prayer

Sing Karaoke Praise Songs

Music Games

Testimony "Share Your Story"

Call to Worship Rev. 5:9

Devotional "Sing a New Song"

Activities

Hum Diddly Do

Each team chooses a woman from their side who chooses a song from a list provided. Both women turn to their teammates and hum the song until a team member guesses the song correctly. The first team to guess the song is the winner of that round. Repeat for as long as you wish.

Don't Forget the Lyrics

The contestant sings along to a musical track with the lyrics written along the bottom. For an at home version of this game, go to YouTube® and search "[Best karaoke songs with lyrics](#)" (choose your genre). Each team can choose their song from the page. Play the video and as the team sings along, the opposing team stops the music at any time. After the team continues to sing what they think comes next, play the remainder of the song and check to see if they got it right.

To make the event fun, give out rewards: First place a 100 Grand[®] candy bar, second place Zero[®] candy bar and third place Pay Day[®].

Sing a New Song

Psalms 98 is a wonderful picture of praise. It starts out with singing to the Lord a new song as a testimony of God's divine reign. The coming of Christ fulfills His plan for people to live with God for eternity. We also see the second coming of Jesus to judge the world. Our lives are a 'new song' of praise, because we are joyful and have the victory over sin. In Luke 19:40, Jesus told His disciples that if the people did not praise Him, the rocks and trees would. Psalm 98:7-9 speaks of rivers clapping their hands and the hills being joyful together. So let us bring on the music, let us sing our new song loud and tell the world what Jesus has done for us. It is your story and only you have the message of God's power and grace, so sing it out loud.

Psalm 40:3 "He put a new song in my mouth," David wrote as he waited patiently for the Lord. God gives us a new song of praise for the trials we experience. People will not see the power of God in the life of a woman who is all put together. They will see Him in a woman who is enduring trials. When will people trust in the Lord? It is not when they see how powerful your faith and prayer life is, but when in the midst of a trial they witness your strength and faithfulness.

Psalm 96 "Sing to the Lord a new song, sing to the Lord, all the earth." The Psalmist sings out his praises to God in awe at His works. He tells us to praise, proclaim and declare what God has done. The best way to get your testimony of praise out is to have your heart full of praise for what the Lord has done. God has chosen each one of us to "declare... His marvelous deeds among all people. How well are you telling your story or singing your new song?"

In the book of Revelation, the persecuted saints, the angels and the twenty-four elders sing praises to the Lord. In Rev. 5:9 we see that the saints in tribulation will sing a new song. What does the "new song" mean? I believe the new song is your testimony, the result of a new life in Jesus Christ. God has given each of us a unique testimony that only we each can tell with authenticity. It is like when a song is sung by the original artist and someone else comes along and sings the same song but without projecting the same sense or feeling. That is how it is when others try to tell your testimony; it will not be as effective.. The words are the same, but the authenticity is missing.

About author



Lieutenant Tammy Poe

Western Territory

Service Programs

Celebrate
HIS GOODNESS

*"They celebrate your abundant goodness
and joyfully sing of your righteousness."
Psalm 145:7*

2018 - 2019 Program Year





Archive Service Programs

September 2019 — Celebrate the Children

September 1, 2019 By Major Linda Vandiver



Introduction

The focus today is on the children who will be going back to school in a few days. We want to take some time to understand the challenges children face today. Some may not have all the essentials for being successful in school. Our hope is that we as a group can provide items to help them and encourage them to succeed.

Funny Times of School

Ask the women to recall hilarious experiences that happened to them at school. Discuss what they used to wear to school. What did their hairstyles look like? Did they bring their lunch or purchase it at the school? How do they think things have changed since they were in school? Are things easier or harder for children today? Sing a few songs from school days. Following this time of sharing, show a video of interviews with some of the school children who attend the corps and were asked what school life is like for them. What do they like or dislike about school? What is their biggest challenge?

Service Projects

Invite the women to bring items children need for school. These may include backpacks, theme notebooks, pencils, pens, erasers, rulers, hole punches, colored pencils, staplers, glue, white-out, notebook paper, colored paper, magic markers, tissues, paper clips, hand wipes. Contact the local school for the lists of items the children need for back-to-school. These may be given to children in corps groups or local schools whose families can't afford to provide them. The schools will probably not provide the names of the children to you (although sometime they will give you the first names). However, they can make sure the items you supply are distributed to the children.

Ask the women to write a note of encouragement for the young person who will receive the backpacks. Let them know that they have been thought of and prayed for.

Jesus Blesses the Children

Read: Luke 18:15-17. This portion of Scripture tells us that parents were bringing their children to Jesus so that He could touch them and bless them. But the disciples thought that the children were unworthy of His time and wanted to send them away. But what did Jesus do? He rebuked the disciples and called the children to come to Him. "Let the little children come to Me," He says, "and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." It is important that we introduce our children to Jesus and that we ourselves approach Him with childlike attitudes.

At times we focus our attention on those who are the best looking, the smartest, and the best dressed. We get this wrong when we see our lives in relation to what the Word of God says. In this passage, Jesus clearly tells the disciples that they are not to divert the little ones away from Him. Furthermore, we are told that unless we receive the kingdom of God like a little child, we will never enter in.

In our corps worship services, there was a time when we had very few children. We prayed for the Lord to send the little ones to us. Over time we have grown to have many children attend. It is so lovely to hear them sing in the services. Their voices are so pure and their smiles

radiate the love of Jesus. It is no wonder that the Lord Jesus wanted them around Him. Jesus even went a step further in that He tells us, "of such is the Kingdom of God" (NKJV). What does that mean? I believe that Jesus is telling us we all must come to Him in childlike faith. We must be willing to set aside our prior beliefs and come and rest at His feet. This is where the learning and understanding comes from. When we rest at the feet of Jesus, He renews us, He completes us, and He forgives us. He teaches us great and wonderful things that we otherwise miss.

In verse 15 Jesus tells us that, "whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it." This is a powerful statement. We must accept His teaching, just like when we were in school. Today we can help our little ones to come to Jesus and live a life that leads to His great Kingdom.

Prayer Time

Pray for the children in the corps as they go back to school and into a new grade. Ask God to bring about His will in their lives and prepare them to know Him in a personal way.

About author



Major Linda Vandiver

Central Territory



Archive Service Programs

October 2018 — Celebrate the Harvest

October 1, 2018 By Major Nancy Mead



Introduction

This program focuses on ways we can support the cadets who are preparing for the ministry at The Salvation Army College for Officer Training (CFOT).

Decorations

- Print out photos of the cadets currently in training. These can be found on The Salvation Army database. Cut them out and glue the image onto cardboard and place them on painted wooden sticks. Put tissue paper in vases and place the pictures of the cadets in the vases. This will give the women a visual picture of the recipients of the service project.
- Cover the tables with red, yellow and blue tablecloths, representing the colors of The Salvation Army flag.
- Print placemats of the buildings at CFOT, which will provide an additional visual image of where the cadets are being trained.

Refreshments

Serve refreshments that remind us of Fall: pumpkin bread, caramel apples, apple cider and harvest mix snacks.

Service Projects

Option One: Encourage the women to purchase at least one five-dollar gift card from places the cadets could use during their training experience—Starbucks®, Walgreens®, Target®, Walmart®, or a grocery store. Ask each woman to write an encouraging note card to the cadet she chooses. Place the gift card inside an envelope and send to the cadet. The corps could bridge this project by inviting other groups within the corps to participate as well.

Option Two: Invite the women to participate in making survival study boxes for the cadets. You may want to survey the cadets ahead of time to ascertain what would be helpful for them. Some suggestions are: snacks, school supplies, stamps.

Option Three: Choose a cadet to adopt during their time in CFOT. They would be remembered on special days—birthdays, anniversaries, Valentines Day, Thanksgiving and Easter by sending notes of encouragement and a small gift. Of most importance, assure the cadets of the group's prayer support.

Option Four: Support the fundraisers that The Salvation Army Training College promotes.

Be a Worker for the Harvest

Read Scripture Luke 10:2

This Scripture reminds us to keep our focus on the harvest for souls. It tells us that the "harvest is plentiful but the workers are few." There are so many people still to win for the Kingdom. We need to keep introducing people to the Lord so they can become workers, introducing others to Him.

How many of us when we were children grew up dreaming about achieving a certain occupation? We wanted to be a movie star, a fireman, Miss America, a world traveler or maybe even Snow White. Who did you want to be when you were young? What happened to your wishes? (Give time for discussion.)

Most of us probably never dreamed of being a servant of God. But God chooses us to be a worker for the harvest. When I was young, I dreamed of being a movie star, but my wishes didn't come true. Instead I became a Salvation Army officer, and God has used me to do some amazing things for Him. I have made videos, been on television and the radio. It's not quite being a movie star, but God has used me for harvesting souls. I haven't been Miss America, but I have worked with the organization at events and state contests. I'm not a world traveler, but I have traveled the world. As far as Snow White goes, I have portrayed her for so many events, using that image to harvest people for the Kingdom. There's nothing like a good princess party for outreach.

To me there is nothing better than harvesting souls. I would love for all of you to become cadets and then officers, but this is probably not realistic. But all of you can be workers in the harvest right where you are. God needs all of us to work while the fields are so ready for harvest. How do you think you could be a worker in your community and church? (Allow time for the women to discuss this.) Keep your focus on God and always be available whenever He brings people into your life who needs to hear the gospel.

Closing

Have special prayer time for the cadets and the workers needed for the harvest of souls.

About author



Major Nancy Mead

Central Territory



Archive Service Programs

November 2018 — Serving Our Veterans

November 1, 2018 By Major Mary Wilson



Decorations

Decorate the meeting room with red, white and blue patriotic decorations. Display military items along with the logo for each branch of service. Images of these can be found on Pinterest. Use a military statue or plaque with flowers on the worship center. Display pictures of active and veteran military service personnel associated with the corps.

Program Outline

- 1 Lead the women in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.
- 2 Show a YouTube® video about the origins of Veteran's Day.
- 3 Invite the women to share what Veteran's Day means to them or share stories a family member who is a veteran may have told them.

Refreshments

Serve a white cake with strawberries and blueberries in the shape of an American flag. You can find samples on Pinterest. Vanilla and strawberry ice cream along with red punch will carry out the theme.

Service Project Ideas — Craft Item

Make patriotic craft items to take to a local hospital or care facility to share with residents who are veterans. An easy craft is a flag candleholder. You need a large glass jar (with the label removed), small American flags, Mod PodgeGloss® and battery operated tea lights. For the directions go to Pinterest.

Items for Homeless Veterans

Coordinate with the corps social service caseworker for the distribution of the bags. Place the following items in a zip-lock bag:

- Roll of Life Savers or other hard candy
- Rice Krispies® Treats or Granola Bars
- Ritz Cheddar Snack Mix® or other Trail Mix
- Easy-open package of tuna or canned meats
- Plastic knife, fork and spoon with a napkin

VA Hospital

Contact The Salvation Army Veterans Administration Voluntary Services Representative for your local Veterans Administration Medical Center (VAMC), or a local hospital where veterans are patients and provide an activity such as a patriotic party, special food treats, or a movie night.

Host a Veteran Appreciation Reception and invite organizations such as the VFW, American Legion.

Serve the Lord

We read in Romans 12:11 “Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically.” This month we celebrate Veterans Day across the nation. The men and women who protect our country serve with great love. Love is being willing to get involved and share with those who are often forgotten.

Service also requires faith. Believing that God will do what He has promised “... Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed” (Josh. 23:14). Recently I read a devotional in *Faith's Checkbook*, a collection of one-minute devotions by Charles H. Spurgeon, titled *You Make the Trenches*: “For thus says the Lord: ‘You shall not see wind, nor shall you see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, so that you, your cattle, and your animals may drink’” (2 Kings 3:16, 17, KJV). Three armies were perishing of thirst. Although the Lord sent neither cloud nor rain, He supplied an abundance of water. He is not dependent upon ordinary methods, but can surprise His people with acts of wisdom and power. Thus are we made to see more of God than ordinary processes could have revealed. Although the Lord may not appear for us in the way we expect, yet He will provide for us.

Sadly, we too often fail to exhibit true and practical faith. Let us this day be on the outlook for answers to prayer. As the child who went to a meeting to pray for rain took an umbrella with her, so let us truly and practically expect the Lord to bless us. Let us make the valley full of ditches and expect to see them all filled.”

Your faithful service will be greatly rewarded by a faithful God. Lastly, service requires dedication to completion. As you enter the main corridor of a VAMC facility, you often see this quote scrolled across the wall: “Serving those who served.” This is a reminder that patients there served their country and us.

In closing, share the poem *Flanders Field* that honors those who served our country. You can find the words and information about its origin on the Internet at:

<http://www.flandersfieldsmusic.com/thepoem.html>.

About author



Major Mary Wilson

Central Territory



Archive Service Programs

December 2018 — We Give Because He Gave

December 1, 2018 By Major Carol Lemirand



Introduction

These service projects are designed to help those individuals who fall between the cracks of our regular Christmas service. They could be people who are confined to their home, those who are grieving the loss of a spouse, or who have difficulty getting out, especially in bad weather.

Service Project ideas

- 1 Bake, decorate and package cookies to be taken to individuals confined to their homes. Arrange for a group of the women to deliver and spend time with them sharing Christmas memories and singing carols.
- 2 Ask the women to bring homemade cookies to the meeting. Arrange a variety of these cookies on plates for delivery to shut-ins.
- 3 Offer to do an errand for a shut-in.
- 4 Pick up a hamburger or a hot meal from a local restaurant and enjoy a time of fellowship over the meal.
- 5 Invite the women to make casseroles during the meeting to be delivered to homebound people. They could be asked to contribute the various ingredients needed.
- 6 Ask the women to bring small wrapped gifts that could be distributed to the shut-ins to brighten their Christmas. Gifts could be lotion, body wash, a solar dancing flower, a poinsettia or a small plant.
- 7 Make a tied blanket using Christmas fabric and deliver to the members. For easy instructions check the website: www.instructables.com/id/How-to-Make-a-Tied-Fleece-Blanket.
- 8 Bring a miniature decorated artificial Christmas tree to a shut-in. These could be decorated during the meeting or take the decorations to the individual's home and have them help in the decorating.
- 9 Take a supply of Christmas cards and stamps to the shut-in and help them address the cards to friends and family members.

Refreshments

Share Christmas cookies or other homemade treats along with hot tea, apple cider or hot chocolate.

Games and Activities

Play the game "Name this Christmas Carol" in so many notes.

Print out the verses to Christmas songs, cut them apart and put them in envelopes. Working as a group the women are to put the songs back in order. To make it more of a challenge put two or three songs in an envelope.

Related Scripture

Hebrews 13:16 (NLT) “And don’t forget to do good and to share with those in need. These are the sacrifices that please God.” Invite the women to share a time when they were able to reach out to someone even as they carried a busy schedule or a great burden of their own. Who benefitted from this experience more, the giver or the receiver?

Bible Verses

Intersperse the following verses during the program. Or have a Bible drill in which the women are invited to look up the Scripture verses and share them with the group — Matthew 25:36, James 5: 13-15, Psalms 30:2, Galatians 5:14, I John 3:17, Proverbs 14:31, Job 2: 11-13, John 13:34-35, Matthew 25:40

Treasures

When our children were young, we talked to them about giving away treasured things. We told them that when we did it cheerfully, it pleased the Lord. We reminded them of God’s gifts to us at Christmas and throughout the year.

A family in our neighborhood had a house fire near Christmas. Upon learning of the family’s loss, our children began thinking of what they could give to make the children in the family feel special. Without hesitation our daughter decided she would give up her giant Barbie dollhouse. Maybe not a big deal, but years later she recalled the incident and wondered what this young girl might have felt over the years as the family recovered from the fire and the girl had possibly the opportunity to share the dollhouse with others. It made me think of the times when we do something for others because they have a need. We may pray for them for a long time but often lose track of them. Do we wonder where they are, what impact if any, our kindness may still mean? Maybe we shouldn’t know because we would have cause to want to take the credit, but God reminds us to continue praying for them.

Often people think of Christmas as the gift of the Child but forget the ultimate goal of Christ was to fulfill the will of the Father. Redemption of God’s people became the will of the Son in obedience to the Father. Now as we “pay it forward” to others who need us, we become obedient to the will of the Father.

I am so grateful for the small and large deeds of kindness shown to me as a young girl and how God used those forgotten moments to make me who I am today. I understand the joy we feel when we do something in the name and for the glory of the Lord—not for our credit but to bring Glory to the Father. May you find opportunity to reach out and do something because God led you to be in the “right place at the right time.” You may be the only one who has access to this situation or who can best perform it for His glory. Invite the women to share their experience in the next gathering of the women.



Major Carol Lemirand

Central Territory



Archive Service Programs

January 2019 — Serve Vigorously

January 1, 2019 By Captain DJ James



Introduction

We often think of service as taking place at the corps building or with a group of friends heading out on a specific mission. But what if we were prepared to serve while out and about? What if we had our hearts always ready to serve vigorously, actively? We can prepare to serve in this way from our very own handbags.

Activity

Check out some handbag trivia online and share the information. One site is: <http://ezinearticles.com/?Historical-Handbag-Trivia&id=6149936>. If any of the women sell or make purses, invite them to share their bags, possibly showing how to make them.

Group Game

Purse Scavenger Hunt

Divide the women into groups. Ask them to look in their purses for the following items for which they will be awarded points:

1 Point: Keys, cell phone, calendar, note pad, pair of glasses, ink pen

5 Points: Driver's License, credit card, check book, library card, calculator

10 Points: Coupon, sales receipt, mints, gum, Kleenex or hanky

15 Points: Lipstick, makeup/mirror, brush/comb, nail file, hand sanitizer, hand lotion

20 Points: Photo of husband/boyfriend, kids or grandkids, cash, snack, postage stamp, pain reliever.

25 Points: Sewing kit, safety pin, tool of any kind

You can find a cute printable version at

<http://www.juliabettencourt.com/printables/puzzles/pursegameprint.pdf>

Service Project

- 1 Encourage the women to bring old but still usable purses or small backpacks to donate for this project. If you have a thrift store, you could collect a number of these items in advance.
- 2 Pack the purses with items to share with someone out in the cold, having a bad day, or in need of encouragement and care.
- 3 Items to consider packing: Socks, gloves, hats, scarves, tampons, pads, toothbrush, gum, granola bar, aspirin, razor, quarters, shampoo, Band-Aids®, deodorant, candy, necklace, hair clips. Pass out this list the week before the program and invite the women to contribute some of these items. Many can be purchased at the 99-cent stores.
- 4 Include information about your corps or a local shelter, pantry services and social service office.
- 5 Also include a note inviting the individual to the corps service giving the time and address.
- 6 Include a couple of appropriate Scripture verses.
- 7 Give each woman one of the purses/backpacks with the instructions that they are to give it to a homeless person when they encounter them.

Scripture

Read Hebrews 6:10-11, "God is not unjust; He will not forget your work and the love you have shown Him as you have helped His people and continue to help them. We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, so that what you hope for may be fully realized."

Stay the Course

Shop until you drop. We laugh at this phrase but if we are honest, we do it to ourselves pretty often; at least I know I do. I love the energy and excitement of heading out for a good sale. I check the paper, set my course, grab my purse and I am off. After about three garage sales I am going strong, but 10 stops and one large cup of coffee later and I am ready to drop. My energy has dwindled and I just don't care anymore. When I reach this point, I often make ridiculous choices, pass up great offers, or make a bee-line to the Little Caesar's Hot and Ready counter because I cannot even imagine cooking dinner at this point.

I find myself doing this in my relationship with Jesus as well. Some days I wake up ready to go, ready to serve, ready to live this faith thing out loud. But a few weeks or months later, I find myself not caring like I used to. Have you ever felt the same? In our Scripture we are encouraged to "show the same diligence to the very end."

Listen to *The Message* paraphrase of this passage: "God doesn't miss anything. He knows perfectly well all the love you've shown Him by helping needy Christians, and that you keep at it. And now I want each of you to extend that same intensity toward a full-bodied hope, and keep at it till the finish. Don't drag your feet. Be like those who stay the course with committed faith and then get everything promised to them" (Heb. 6:10, 11).

Maybe serving others has become a tedious task that you dread. What can you do about that? How can you continue to serve with an active strength to the very end? Pause today and remember the great God you serve. Recall the times your loving heavenly Father has worked in your life and heart. Are there areas in your life that need the refresh button? Perhaps there are activities to cut back on so that you can spend more time with the Lord? Don't serve until you drop. Find a way to serve with active strength that comes from Him. Pray each day that the Lord will guide you in what He wants you to accomplish in that day.

About author



Captain DJ James

Central Territory



Archive Service Programs

February 2019 — Celebrate Love

February 1, 2019 By Major Julie McDowell



Service Project

Prepare and serve a meal or desserts at a local shelter, nursing home or Ronald McDonald House.

- Make the dining experience special with tablecloths, dinnerware and centerpieces. Try to find a location that would not normally be able to provide this kind of setting.
- Put on dinner music during the meal—preferably music that would be familiar to those present.
- Provide a Valentine’s Day gift for each person.

Table Games

- Famous Couples Match Game (check the Internet for names).
- Valentine’s Day Trivia Game: <http://www.perfect-partygames.com/valentine-trivia-quiz.html>
- Other printables: <http://webfunnel.net/pdf/valentinesprintableactivities.pdf>

Songs

Sing some simple love songs and then worship songs before the devotions.

Devotion for the Shelter/Care Home Visit

Luke 6:27-36 – We Are Called to Love

Introduction: God calls us to love. St. Valentine was a man who understood love (share a little history).

From our scripture we learn three things:

- God wants us to love, even when people are not easy to love.
 - There will be people who don’t like us.
 - There will be people who treat us unfairly.
- We don’t grow or please the Lord by just doing what’s easy.
 - It’s easy to love people who love us.
 - It’s easy to give when you know you will get a reward in return.
- We are to be like our Father in Heaven.
 - He is kind even to the ungrateful and wicked.
 - He promises our reward will be great.

Summary: During this month when we think about showing love to our friends and family, it is a good time to stretch ourselves. How can we show love and mercy to others who might not

deserve it so that we can be more like God?

Devotion for the Women

"If you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. The Lord will guide you always; He will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame" (Isiah. 58:10, 11. NIV).

According to Bloomberg News, Americans spent \$19.6 billion on Valentine's Day in 2018. When averaged out, the amount came to \$143.56 per person. Valentine's Day is big business. A couple of other interesting statistics: 14% of women buy themselves flowers for Valentine's Day, and 53% of women said they would end their relationship with the other person if they didn't get a gift for Valentine's Day. When the day is done, I have to wonder how much satisfaction is really found for all the money spent.

I like that the NIV Bible uses the word "spend" in verse 10 to describe what we do for others in need. We certainly understand that term in America, don't we? Think for a minute what we spend our resources on, whether money, time or energy. I'm afraid too often it is on things that are insignificant or worthless—things that are far from God's eternal view.

God looks at His people and says, "if you will spend yourselves" – if you will give from what you have in your own resources, even those things that you use to live on yourself ... on behalf of the hungry and [to] satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness." God says, "Look around you! Who is hungry? Who is hurting? What can you give to lift the yoke? What can you give to meet the need?"

The first result of spending our resources on the right things—things that help others and please the Lord—is that we shine for the Lord. This was the will of Christ for us when He said, "You are the light of the world ... let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:14, 16). When we help others, we bring glory to God. In Isaiah, He says to His people, "... your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday" (Isa. 58:10).

Another outcome will be that we will see what really matters. Instead of spending our resources on what does not satisfy, we will invest "where moth and rust cannot destroy" (Matt. 6:20). The Lord says, "... your night will become like the noonday" (Isaiah 58:10). Things will be seen clearly.

Finally, we will be blessed in return. In Isaiah 58:11, we read, "The Lord will guide you always; He will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail." Even in the bleakest times of life, God will meet the needs of those who have been kind and generous to others. He will never fail or forsake you.

About author



Major Julie McDowell

Central Territory



Archive Service Programs

March 2019 — Pay It Forward

March 1, 2019 By Lieutenant Erin Metzler



Related Scripture: Philippians 2:1-4.

Service Project—Invest in a Young Person

Perhaps a Sunday school teacher invested in you as a young person. As a direct result of this investment, you were able to develop a deeper relationship with the Lord. Maybe it's time to

pay it forward by investing in a mentoring relationship with someone at your corps or taking on a leadership position.

Pay It Forward

The next time you go to a drive-thru, pay not only for your own food but for the person behind you too. Don't stick around to see their reaction. Just say a prayer for that person.

Craft—Catch Some Kindness

Needed:

Mason jars

Decorative ribbon

Paint/markers meant for glass (an use permanent marker)

Instructions: Decorate a mason jar with the phrase "Catch some Kindness." Fill the jar with slips of paper containing attributes that you admire about people around you. Every month, empty the jar and anonymously find a way to deliver these slips of paper to the people about whom they are written.

Activity

Place a chair in the middle of a circle and invite a woman to sit on it. Ask everyone around the circle to say one nice thing about that person. Once everyone has said something, another person sits in the middle and receives the compliments. Follow this process until everyone has had a chance to sit in the chair in the middle.

Refreshment Ideas

A week before the meeting, pair up the women. Ask them to share with each other their favorite snack or refreshment. They are to bring that item to the meeting. For backup have cookies, fresh fruit and veggies and punch available.

Fellowship Together

How many of you consider yourselves to have great relationships with at least one other person? You might be married to your best friend or have a special relationship with a girl friend. What makes the relationship work so well? Why do you consider that person your closest companion or friend?

Paul writes to the Philippians as Christ followers regarding relationships with others. "Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from His love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate? Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose" (Phil. 2:1-2). We immediately answer Paul's questions in the

affirmative. Of course, there is encouragement from belonging to Christ. Of course, there is immense and complete comfort in His love. Of course, there is fellowship together in the Spirit. With all these things our hearts are tender and compassionate.

But Paul's point with these questions is to say that these qualities should be an obvious part of the Christian life and experience. He follows up these verses with further instructions: "Don't be selfish; don't live to make a good impression on others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't just think about your own affairs, but be interested in others, too, and in what they are doing" (Phil. 2: 3, 4).

All of these commands are well connected. Our naturally sin-filled hearts are riddled with selfishness. Many things that we do are to help us on our road to success or help others see us in a better light. However, Christ's example clearly shows a selfless life. If we are living a selfless life, we will not be trying to impress others. In thinking of others before we think of ourselves, we find holy humility.

Conceit is defined as thinking too highly of oneself or "an excessively favorable opinion of one's own ability, importance, wit." When we put ourselves in our rightful place and look at ourselves in comparison with the Lord, we will quickly find the humility that Paul is calling for.

The commentator Matthew Henry states, "There is no greater enemy to Christian love than pride and passion." If we do things according to the instructions laid out for us by Paul, we will quickly see the good in our brothers and sisters, easily forgive their faults, while seeing the flaws in ourselves much more easily. This will in turn help us find ourselves at the feet of Jesus seeking His forgiveness, instead of finding fault with our brothers and sisters.

Our greatest relationships should be with our brothers and sisters in Christ. The best way to develop these relationships is to follow Paul's instructions.

Take a minute to think of a way that you have been blessed by someone in the past. This may have been financial support, a helping hand to accomplish what seemed like an impossible task, or just an encouraging word at the right time. This week I encourage each of you to "pay it forward" by doing something unexpected for someone with no thought of any reward. It need not be something that costs money, but something that demands a little bit of yourself.

About author



Lieutenant Erin Metzler

Central Territory



Archive Service Programs

April 2019 — Serve Enthusiastically

April 1, 2019 By Major Angela Wandling



Introduction

April is the perfect time to tackle spring cleaning. Sometimes it is even better to help someone else with their spring cleaning. It is said, "many hands make light work." So let's put our hands together to serve those who need our help.

Service Idea — Senior Spring Cleaning

Ask the women to donate various cleaning supplies (glass cleaner, trash bags, paper towels, furniture polish, and buckets). From these supplies create cleaning supply buckets. Divide the women into teams of 2 to 3. Arrange for each team to go to a senior or shut-in's home to do some basic cleaning tasks: wash windows, declutter closets, clean the kitchen, weed the yard.

Have the women bring a meal or some goodies to leave with the senior. Maybe place a fresh bouquet of flowers on the kitchen table. If you have no seniors in mind, you could assist a single parent in the same way.

Spring Cleaning at the Corps

Put a group together to tackle a spring cleaning job that is needed at the corps building. This could be a thorough cleaning of the corps kitchen, the refrigerator, the Women's Ministry closet or the Sunday school supply closet. Another possibility would be to clean the corps social service food closet checking for outdated food items and sorting the donated canned items.

Refreshments

Make up snack packs to send with the women while they clean. Items you could include: water bottle, granola bar, trail mix, apple, cheese and crackers, or sandwiches.

What Does the Lord Require of You?

Read Deuteronomy 10:12-21

Creating ways for children and youth to serve has always been an important goal of my ministry. I think most people would agree that it is very beneficial for our young people to have these opportunities. We know it helps build character and develops caring values. It also helps counter the "give me" mentality of our culture and to develop relationships with others who are less fortunate than they are. We know it helps curb the overall human nature to serve self. Service empowers them to know how their lives can make a positive difference to others and helps them see their role in bringing about societal change.

We all need these opportunities for the same reasons, no matter what our age may be. The added benefit for us as adults is that we can more fully understand that we are serving the Lord as we serve others. Matthew 25:31-46 echoes this same thought. (*Read this portion of Scripture.*)

We know that serving others develops our character and honors the Lord. This portion of Scripture tells us that when we serve others it's the same as serving Him. What should our attitude be while serving? We see we are to love Him and serve Him with all our heart and

soul. Our service should not be out of duty or obligation. Our service to God and others should be an exhilarating experience that does not seem like bondage or slavery. We should serve enthusiastically knowing we honor the Lord with every ounce of who we are.

This week lets activate our skills, time and energy into service for others. We will find a renewed blessing in knowing we have loved the Lord our God and loved our neighbor as ourselves.

About author



Major Angela Wandling

Central Territory



Archive Service Programs

May 2019 — If You Can Read This, Thank A Teacher!

May 1, 2019 By Major Judy Tekautz



Introduction

Most of us agree that teachers play a very important role in the development of our children and young people and therefore, our communities. However, the appreciation shown in their wages is low compared to other professions. Let's take an opportunity to show them appreciation for all that they do to encourage, teach, challenge and protect the younger

generation. Whether you have children or grandchildren in the schools in your community or not, your life will be affected by the success and encouragement of teachers.

When Is Teacher Appreciation Week 2019?

Teacher Appreciation Week is celebrated during the first full week of May each year. In 2019, it's May 6-10.

When Is Teacher Appreciation Day?

Also called National Teacher Day, it falls on the Tuesday of Teacher Appreciation Week—May 7, 2019.

Project Ideas—Be a Book Buddy

Many teachers welcome adults into the classroom to give kids another audience, to listen to them, read to them and encourage reading skills. It also gives the teacher a break from doing it alone. Contact the elementary school so that you can work through any security issues the school has in place.

Many libraries also have a similar reading program and welcome adults who can give time to assist in helping others—adults as well as children—to read.

Encouragement Card Shower

During teacher appreciation week many teachers receive gifts and cards from their current students and their parents. While this is good, cards of encouragement from other community members would be a wonderful way for them to see that their work is appreciated by all in the community. Adopt an elementary, middle and high school close to the corps and obtain a staff roster. Many can be found online on the school's website. Invite the women to write notes of thanks to the staff and deliver them during appreciation week. If doing individual staff cards is too large a task, do a large card addressed to the staff signed by the corps members. Delivering the cards along with a supply of snacks is sure to be appreciated.

Appreciation Reception

Work together with the corps youth program participants to invite their teachers and parents to a reception right after school. Have the corps leadership and parents share with the teachers how they appreciate the influence they have on the lives of the church's children. Take a moment to pray for the teachers present as well as the other staff and local schools. This would give the teachers a better understanding of The Salvation Army's ministry.

Supplies Basket

Many teachers purchase items for their classrooms at their personal expense. Contact them to discover what supply items they need that are not provided by the school or brought by the children. For example, bulletin board or classroom decorations, snack items, teachers' lounge needs. Ask the women to donate these items, which can be delivered to the teachers.

Encouragement

As a child with a difficult family life, I remember how much I loved and appreciated my teachers and their involvement and influence on my life. Not all my teachers were encouraging, but enough of them were and I loved going to school because that is where I felt safe and worthy. My favorite teachers were, of course, those who praised my good work and encouraged me to continue to do my best. Even though I may not have realized it at the time, I wouldn't be what I am today without their love and encouragement.

Merriam-Webster's dictionary defines the word "encourage" this way: "to inspire with courage, spirit, or hope." Adults need encouragement and praise as well. As you read through Scripture, you will notice how often God wants us to build others up and appreciate each other. "So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing" (1 Thess. 5:11). "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" (Heb. 10:25).

Many times throughout Scripture the Lord commands us to, "Be strong and have courage," or "be filled with His Spirit," which brings victory. He also reminds us that He keeps His promises, and that gives us a hope for eternity. He encourages us because He knows we will face difficult times.

Teachers today need our affirmation. They face many obstacles as they go to work each day. They need to know that members of our church are here to bring them courage as they face the task of instilling knowledge and life skills into our young people. Theirs is a high calling and yet many feel discouraged by less than visible perfect results or by low support from some students, parents or community members. We need to be Christ's encouragement to them.

We need to share the spirit of Christ and His care and the hope He brings to all situations. If you can read this, do more than thank a teacher. Share some words and actions of encouragement.

About author

Major Judy Tekautz

USA Central Territory





Archive Service Programs

June 2019 — Serve One Another

June 1, 2019 By Major Joyce Gauthier



Introduction

The purpose of this program is to reach women who are recovering from addictions. Contact the Harbor Light Center, the women's program at the ARC, an AA or Al-Anon group. Inquire how the women's ministries group could be supportive and come alongside the women.

Welcome to the Family

Organize a program emphasizing friendship. Make it special by decorating with bright colored tablecloths, napkins and centerpieces. Cut circles of netting, place wrapped candy in the middle and tie them with ribbon for table favors. Intersperse the women's ministries women with the women from the outside group, making them feel welcome.

Games

Musical Gift

Wrap inexpensive gifts in multiple layers of paper. Have the women form a circle and pass the gift. When the music stops, the woman holding the gift unwraps a layer of paper. The game continues until the last layer is removed and the prize belongs to that woman. A variation would be to include a small inexpensive gift in each layer.

Getting to Know You

Give each person two or three pieces of paper. Ask them to answer the following questions:

- 1 I grew up in ...
- 2 My favorite color is ...
- 3 My favorite kind of candy is ...
- 4 I have _____brothers and/or sisters
- 5 I'm afraid of ...
- 6 I've always wanted to ...
- 7 What you don't know about me ...

Fold the papers, place them in a bowl and mix them up. Each person draws a paper and reads it. They are to guess whose paper they drew.

Refreshments

Provide light refreshments of cookies and punch, or small sandwiches and veggie sticks.

God Has Given You a Gift

In 1 Peter 4:10 we read, "God has given each of you a gift from His great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another." That means that each one of us is so special to God that He gives us a special gift or ability. Sometimes we think that because we can't do something as well as someone else, we are not worth anything. Nothing could be farther from

the truth. The Scripture tells us that we are given just the right gifts so that we can serve each other.

You would not want to hear my husband sing a solo, but he is a really good preacher. Does it mean he is not worth anything because he cannot sing? No. I like to cook and I feel I do a pretty good job at it, but if that's not one of your strong points, does that mean you are of any less worth to God? No. Some have been given the gift of encouraging others—a wonderful gift.

When my oldest granddaughter was only three, she was in the bathroom with me when I was getting ready for church. I was putting my panty hose on. I happen to wear the support kind, so they are a challenge to put on at times. I didn't think anything of it. It was just something I did because it was expected of me. When I got them on and in place, my granddaughter clapped her hands and said, "Yea, Mimi! You did it!" Those words didn't take much effort at all, but God used them to brighten my day.

Don't listen to Satan's lies when he says, "You really blew it this time. You'll never be any good." Each one of us is special in God's eyes and He has a plan for each one of our lives. Sometimes we fail and we go the wrong direction, but He is right there to help us get back on track and stay on the course when we ask Him.

Let's Pray

Heavenly Father,
Thank you so much for Your love and Your grace. Thank You for never giving up on us. Continue to work in our lives to help us be the women of God You want us to be. In Jesus' name. Amen.

About author



Major Joyce Gauthier

Central Territory



Archive Service Programs

July 2019 — Celebrate His Goodness in Creation

July 1, 2019 By Major Katie Pinkston



“The heavens are Yours, and the earth is Yours; everything in the world is Yours—You created it all” (Psalm 89:11).

Introduction

Throughout the world, The Salvation Army Worship and Community Centers are unique in their architectural structure and grounds. However, in most corps there is a portion of the property that needs a little extra TLC (trimming, labor, compost). This offers the women's ministries group an opportunity to provide service through beautifying the grounds of the corps.

Games Ideas

Check on the Internet for quizzes, crosswords or matching games, which help identify plants and flowers versus weeds and invasive plants. The following are helpful sites:

Weed Science Society of America: <http://wssa.net/wssa/weed/weed.quiz>

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service: <https://plants.usda.gov>

Speakers

Contact any of the following individuals or groups to describe which plants thrive best and what weeds or invasive plants are in your area: Master Gardener, College Extension Program Office and/or your area Garden Club.

Service Project Idea

Have the women's ministries group chose a spot at the corps to maintain for a year or more. This will need to be done in stages following the suggestions below:

- Pull out all the invasive plants and weeds
- Provide the spot with fertile and tilled soil—possibly garden soil or compost
- Plant best-thriving plants, both perennial and annual
- Maintain the weeds, plants and soil by checking on them every two weeks during the growing season
- Provide corps with planters or raised garden beds. Specific suggestions below:
 - Choose a large spot or medium size planters to begin this project
 - Choose seeds, bulbs, vegetables or flowering plants to grow in the beds or planters
 - Provide correct soil (for seeds a light seed starting soil) possibly a simple potting soil
- Label each planting by name, date planted and weather conditions it thrives in
- Maintain growing plants and seeds throughout the season
- Use the vegetables grown for corps meals; use the cut flowers as indoor decorations or simply enjoy the beauty each flowering plant provides

Flowers—God's Creation

There are few creations more beautiful than a purple tulip, yellow iris or white peony flowering in the spring. In summer, we can see and smell red roses, blue hydrangeas or annual orange zinnias in bloom. All flowers and vegetables can provide beauty and grace to the spaces they inhabit. Each season of the year God shows us that even the smallest snowdrop flower can provide just a glimpse of His beautiful creation. Looking closely at an iris you can see for yourself the intricate detail of lines, spots and colors the Lord created in His repertoire.

As part of our stewardship to the Lord we need to care for the property God has provided. We need to spend time physically removing weeds and other invasive plants. It takes time and hard work to weed a garden.

As we weed the garden, we also need to weed out the things that inherently take over our lives even when we do not realize it. Is there anything you might need to weed out from the choices you've made in your life? Just as God allows well-cared-for plants to thrive, He does the same for us when we acknowledge we need Him to make us beautiful on the inside just as He does with flowers during the growing season.

In Psalm 89:11 we read, "The heavens are Yours, and Yours also the earth; You founded the world and all that is in it." It is our special calling to worship and praise God for all His creation and it's our duty to enhance that beauty in the places He has called us to worship.

About author



Major Katie Pinkston

Central Territory



Archive Service Programs

August 2019 — His Goodness Through Good Deeds

August 1, 2019 By Major Karen Johnson



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“Everyone will share the story of Your wonderful goodness; they will sing with joy about Your righteousness” (Psalm 145:7)

Introduction

Those who live in the southern states may not recognize that you regularly have something that many of us northerners don't always see, especially during the winter—sunshine. Sunshine is a necessary part of life, not only providing light but Vitamin D. Sunlight is also thought to release serotonin to the brain. Too little sunlight and we may even suffer from something called “Seasonal Affective Disorder” (SAD), which manifests itself in sadness, depression and loss of energy. Plants can't grow without some amount of sunshine. Vitamin D is another important component of sunshine helping us to absorb calcium and to prevent disease.

Service Idea—Visit

Identify someone in the group who is going through a difficult time and may benefit from a visit or a phone call. This may be a shut-in, the primary caregiver to a loved one, someone who has recently suffered the loss of a loved one or who is going through a long-term illness. Before visiting or making a call, pray that God will give you wisdom in how you can best share words of encouragement. If visiting is a new concept for the women, take some time to discuss some basic etiquette. Here are some questions that might give more meaning to their visit: How has this experience affected the way you look at God? Can I share with you something that has helped me when I've gone through difficult times? Have you ever come to a point in your life where you trusted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Lord? May I share with you how I came to that point?

Box of Sunshine Care Package

Along with a visit, take care packages as another way of encouragement. Use a yellow box, pail or basket. Attach a label to the container that says “Box of Sunshine.” Ask the women to bring in items that are yellow in color and small enough to put into a gift box. Some suggestions are: Banana chips, lemon drops, Juicy Fruit Gum®, Lays Potato Chips®, M & M Candy®, yellow soap. Several gift boxes can be economically put together in this way.

Sun Light

The Bible also makes reference to the sun and light: “For He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matt. 5:45,ESV). This verse reminds us that God is fair in His treatment of all of us. Kindness is a component we should express in our lives every day and pass on to others. When someone is kind to you, pass it on. When someone is unkind, return that behavior with kindness.

When I was young and had been rude to my mother, my father would say, “You can always be kind.” Those words have stayed with me for many years. I can always be kind. We can spread sunshine by the way we act. We can choose to fill someone's day with light or we can bring in the darkness by having a bad attitude. But while God allows His sunshine to fall on the just and the unjust equally on this earth, there is a place of sunshine reserved only for those who are followers of Jesus Christ. That place is heaven, and there are several verses that give us an

idea of what it will be like. "There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light" (Rev. 22:5 NIV). Imagine that! Light that comes not from the sun, but from God Himself.

Today we still face cloudy or dim days. For those of us who live in larger cities the sun may even be blocked by smog or pollution. In December of 1952, a terrible smog covered the city of London. By December 7, the smog was so thick that you could not see more than five yards in any direction. This caused a halt in transportation. The chemical components in the smog also contributed to the death of thousands of Londoners. Today we now have the blessing of streetlights and pollution warnings. We know that such a smog or fog is very dangerous, and we are encouraged to be cautious in exposing ourselves to its dangers.

However, sometimes we allow the circumstances of our lives to dim or block the light that God wants to show us. How can we be an encouragement to others when they are going through difficult experiences? We can share the word of God. "But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint" (Isa. 40:31). And, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze." (Isa. 43:2, NIV).

Hanging on my wall is a special prayer stitched by my grandmother during a very difficult time in her life. She was a Salvation Army officer whose husband died unexpectedly in his early fifties, leaving her with an 11-year-old daughter and the responsibility of running a corps. Times were hard and my mother recounts having "just enough to eat." This prayer is a constant reminder to me that God's faithfulness is what brings me peace and sunshine: "Let nothing disturb you, Let nothing frighten you, All things are passing; God never changes."

About author



Major Karen Johnson

Central Territory

Worship Programs



Celebrate

HIS GOODNESS

*"They celebrate your abundant goodness
and joyfully sing of your righteousness."
Psalm 145:7*

2018 - 2019 Program Year





Archive Worship Programs

September 2019 — Wind Beneath My Wings

September 1, 2019 By Major Lolita Sanchez



Introduction

Show the trailer of either version of the movie *Beaches*. The song “Wind Beneath my Wings” sung by Bette Midler is the original soundtrack. Play the four-minute music video of this 1980’s movie, which can be found at <https://youtu.be/cd8uolaL5FE> or the updated version of the movie starring Idina Menzel and Nia Long, with the song sung by Idina Menzel.

Worship Together

There is a Christian lyric version of “Wind Beneath my Wings” posted on YouTube. Print the lyrics and invite the women to sing this Christian version together:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TWnlu5dyWv4>

Scripture

Read Proverbs 16:1–3 from both *The Message* and the New Living Translation.

Commit to God All That You Do

The “Wind Beneath My Wings” is an iconic song from the soundtrack for the 1980’s Bette Midler movie *Beaches*. The Lifetime Channel did a remake of the movie starring Idina Menzel and Nia Long with Menzel doing the soundtrack. The movie and the song will bring back fond memories to many of us. *Beaches* is about two women who are unlikely friends but meet and become lifelong friends sharing lots of ups and downs. The song is one friend (CC) singing to the other (Hillary). The words are, “It must have been cold there in my shadow. To never have sunlight on your face, I was the one with all the glory while you were the one with all the strength.” CC loves her best friend Hillary but at times seems to love the spotlight more. CC has big plans for her life and career and chooses to put them ahead of Hillary and their friendship.

We too make lots of plans. We plan vacations. We plan our gardens. We plan for our kids’ educations. We plan what our husbands should wear to a party. We plan meals. We plan events and gifts. We plan when to start our families. The planning list goes on and on. However, we read in Proverbs 16:1 (*The Message*), “Mortals make elaborate plans but God has the last word.” Sometimes, in making those plans we leave out the most important aspect as women of God. We sometimes forget and leave God in the shadows like the song from *Beaches* suggests. We leave Him behind. We love Him but still leave Him out of what we perceive are our perfect plans.

“Did you ever know that you’re my hero? And everything I would like to be? I can fly higher than an eagle, you are the wind beneath my wings.” Do we remember to put God first in all situations? When we do what Proverbs 16:3 says and “Commit to God whatever we do,” the result is that “our plans will succeed.” We need to commit our ways to the Lord. We need to commit everything we do to the Lord. Whether it be planning a vacation or preparing a worship service, we need to commit it to God. In so doing, our lives can be a song that praises and says, “God, You are my hero.” Your life can be a testimony to our desire to be like Him with His grace, love, and hope. It will be as if we are flying high.

Celebrating Solomon’s School of Wisdom—Solomon’s wisdom was given to him by God. When God asked him what he wanted, Solomon could have asked for anything. He could have asked

for what the world sees as important like money or fame. Instead of asking God to make him rich or powerful, he asked to be made wise. He used that wisdom to lead his people well. God's wisdom means knowing Him and realizing that His Word shows us how to live a worthy life. Having God's wisdom brings peace and satisfaction. His wisdom is available to all who ask for it. If we live a life using Godly wisdom, we will experience great blessing.

Think about that situation that you had all planned out and that didn't turned out the way you thought it would. Maybe your marriage is suffering. Your preparation for this partnership hasn't turned out as you hoped. Maybe your children aren't on the path that you've prayed for them. Maybe your work life is not fulfilling or purposeful. Maybe your health is declining. Stop trying to make the plans successful by sheer force of your will. Stop trying to force the situation. Commit it to God. And the Word of God promises "your plans will succeed." Regardless of the outcome, your plans will be successful because God has been at the center of it all. We have God as "the wind beneath our wings" when we've committed our ways to Him.

Ponder and Pray

God, You give us the freedom to choose who and how we will serve. Even if we choose darkness, You allow us that freedom. The song from *Beaches* has some deep thoughts for us to consider and honestly ask ourselves. Are we doing things in our own strength? Are we seeking our own glory? Are we seeking our own praise? Are we more concerned with earthly praise and rewards? Do we want to be more like God? We acknowledge today and always that, as the songs says, "I would be nothing without You." Everything good we have is because God has blessed us. We thank You Lord, because You are the wind beneath our wings.

About author



Major Lolita Sanchez

Eastern Territory



Archive Worship Programs

October 2018 — Welcome Me Home

October 1, 2018 By Captain Darlene Means



Decorations

Place on the tables pictures of people who haven't been to women's ministries or other corps programs for a while. In the center affix a sign reading "Welcome Me Home."

Program

Send a special invitation to those women who have been absent two weeks in advance and offer transportation to the women's ministries meeting. Arrange for childcare for those with young children. Make sure to welcome those who accept the invitation; tell them they have been missed and that everyone is glad to see them once again.

After the devotional, take time to pray for the women whose pictures are on the tables. Sign cards to send to the absent members indicating that they are missed and were remembered in prayer.

Project

Plan a day for the women's ministries group and other corps members to prepare a meal for a local homeless shelter or a group of veterans. The meal can either be taken to the shelter or have the clients come to the corps. After the meal spend time talking to the guests in order to learn their stories. Share a short devotional message to assure them that God always wants to welcome them home to Him. Give each guest a small gift emphasizing that they are important and loved.

Another project would be to cook a meal for the parents staying at the local Ronald McDonald House. These houses are usually found near children's hospitals and offer housing to the parents of children who are in the hospital for an extended period of time. Contact their administrator to find out when the group could prepare a meal and their guidelines for meal preparation.

Introduction to the Devotional

The following elements will help set the stage for the devotional. Sing the chorus: "There's a Welcome Here." The words and music can be found on YouTube. Read Luke 15:11-31, which is the story of the Prodigal Son. Play the song "Celebrate Me Home" by Kenny Loggins. You can find this song on YouTube.

Welcome Me Home

We all have someone in our lives who has been away from us for a period of time. It could be a college student, veteran, or someone who moved out of town and has recently returned. Whether it is for a few weeks, months, or even years, we are filled with joy when they come home. We often throw a party to welcome them back, just as the father in the story of the Prodigal Son did when his son returned home.

The story of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15:11-31 begins with the younger son asking his father for his share of inheritance so he can find out what it was like to be on his own. He did not want to wait until his father's death to get his share. He wanted it immediately while he was young so he could enjoy it.

So the father divided the inheritance: one-third to the youngest and two-thirds to the older son, as was the custom of this time. The younger son packed his belongings and left his father's home. Each day while his son was gone the father looked for him to come home. Day after day, week after week and month after month the father kept watch. This is how God is when one of His children wanders away from Him. He keeps watch hoping and longing for their return.

The younger son quickly wasted all of his money on food, drinks and friends. But once all the money was gone, so were his friends. He was broke and alone. He said to himself, "What am I going to do? I can't go home; I've disgraced myself by asking for my inheritance and then squandering it. My father won't accept me back because I'm a disgrace." Isn't that how we feel when we do something we know isn't right in God's eyes. It might be lying, stealing, or just not doing what we know is right. We know that we failed God and we think that He does not want us back. We think that there is no way that He would want anything to do with us after everything we did.

As the prodigal son pondered his situation, he realized that his father's servants were better off than he was. He reasoned that if he went back as a servant at least he would have a place to sleep, food to eat and clothes to wear. So, he headed back home. On the way he probably rehearsed his speech. "Father, I have sinned against heaven and you. I do not deserve to be called your son. Take me on as a hired servant." That is how we often feel when we realize that we've done wrong and want to come back to God. We feel as if we do not deserve His forgiveness or His grace.

Now while the prodigal son was still a long way off, the father saw him and was filled with love and compassion. He ran to his son and embraced him. He kissed his cheek and hugged him. When the son tried to say his speech, his father did not listen. He told his servants to bring the best robe, the finest sandals and rings for his son's finger. He told the servants to kill the calf they had been fattening. He said, "For tonight, we will celebrate my son who has come home."

Isn't this how we feel when a family member, corps member, or a friend that has been gone for a while comes home? We want to celebrate. This is also how God feels when one of His lost children comes home to him. When we ask God to forgive us of our sins and return to Him, the angels, God and all His children celebrate and rejoice for His child has come home.

But not everyone in this story is happy. The older brother was upset because his father welcomed his brother back home and had a celebration. The same is true with Satan. He is not happy when one of us returns to God because he has lost the battle.

Play the song "Your Heart Will Lead You Home" by Kenny Loggins. (Found on YouTube.)

If you are still trying to figure out what you want to do and it seems nothing is going right, maybe you should return home to God and let Him take care of everything. The song we just heard says, "Your Heart Will Lead You Home." Just listen to His voice saying "Come Home."

In closing sing the song #436, "Come Home" from *The Salvation Army Song Book*.

About author



Captain Darlene Means

Eastern Territory



Archive Worship Programs

November 2018 — Give Thanks to the Lord

November 1, 2018 By Captain Kathleen Ashcraft



Scripture

“

“Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! His faithful love endures forever” (1 Chron. 16:34).

Introduction

We've all done it—forgotten to say thank you. We've all reminded our children to do it. As sad as it is, the world we live in is one that keeps us constantly on the go, moving from one activity to the next, pulling us in five different directions. And sometimes we allow a careless attitude to creep into our relationship with God. We don't take the time to stop and worship in His presence or spend time saying "thank you." This program will focus on slowing down and saying thank you to God. It will remind us to worship God for the glory of who He is.

Decorations

Decorate as you would for a harvest party with fall foliage, pumpkins and gourds. Also have a small bag of goodies or treats for each woman.

Activities

Blessing Tree

Using brown construction paper cut out a tree trunk with branches. Cut out leaf shapes from colored construction paper and give each woman a leaf. Invite them to write on the leaf things they are thankful for or people who have blessed them. Attach the leaves to the tree branches. Make sure pens or markers are available.

Blessings Jar Craft

Provide each participant with a small glass vase or mason jar, ribbons and labels to decorate the jar. Write the word "Blessings" on the jar. Encourage the women to write something they are thankful for on a slip of paper each day and place in it the jar. On Thanksgiving Day they can read through what they have written and see how blessed they are.

Thank You Notes

Encourage the women to write out a prayer of thanks to God for His faithful love. Play "Worthy is the Lamb" as they write out their prayer. This song can be found on YouTube.

Just One More Little Treat

Halloween has recently passed. I hope that you all enjoyed it. My kids and I really had a great time dressing up and having fun in our community. Does anyone else love taking kids trick or treating or giving out candy at Halloween? If you do, you know how excited kids get at the prospect of receiving candy. In most instances, the kids will run to the front door, ring the bell, and then jostle for position—pushing their friends out of the way so they can get the candy first. Then when the door opens, the kids excitedly yell "trick or treat!" And then as soon as

they get the candy they'll turn around and start over to the next house for more candy... that is until the parent or adult with them stops them and says, "What do you say? You forgot to say thank you!"

Sometimes we go through life, treating our Heavenly Father a lot like a house on Halloween. We run up to Him and start yelling for Him to come out. We ring the bell, make a lot of noise, we push other things and people out of the way as we wait for Him to answer. And then when He opens the door we cry out for Him to give us some treats—to fix whatever is bothering us. We wait with our bags open, fully expecting Him to just pour out the treats and answer prayers like candy on Halloween. We move on, go about life without God until another problem or concern comes into our lives and we beg for one more little treat to make us happy.

There are two really big problems with this: First, when we act this way, we treat God like a genie in a bottle instead of as our loving heavenly Father. It's like running up to Him in the middle of crisis or when we have a strong desire for something, but otherwise we spend our time running through the streets with our friends. Much of the time we ignore the Father's desires because we are so fixated on the treats in our Halloween baskets. We change Him into a wish granter, rather than a Father who desires a deep relationship with us—a loving God who wants to be a part of our lives.

Do we stop to praise God for who He is? Do we remember His faithfulness, His kindness, His great love for us? When King David united Israel, he didn't forget God's role in all of it. In fact, one of the first things he did was to bring the Ark of the Covenant—the place where God's glory dwelt—to the new capital. In doing this, he wrote a song of praise declaring the power and goodness of God. "Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good!" he writes. "His faithful love endures forever" (1 Chron. 16:34).

We shouldn't worship God because of His gifts. We should worship God because of who He is. When we make worship our priority, the way King David did, our hearts start to beat to the rhythm of God's heart and we find our lives in alignment with His character. We realize that He is good and His faithful love endures forever! This realization then changes us from the inside out and permeates our lives. Don't forget to say thank you. Don't forget to worship God for who He is.

About author



Captain Kathleen Ashcraft

USA Eastern Territory



Archive Worship Programs

December 2018 — Pa-rum Pum Pum Pum

December 1, 2018 By Captain Cynthia Crowsen



Opening Activity

Jesus was born without the traditional fanfare for a king. However, each group that came to celebrate His birth did so in their own way and gave Him honor. Today we are going to look at the reactions of the various participants at the birth of Christ and consider how we might have reacted if we were able to be present at this glorious event.

Pass out sheets of paper and mirrors. As the women look at themselves in the mirror ask them to write down three adjectives to describe themselves. (*An adjective is a word that describes, identifies or further defines a noun or a pronoun. Examples: thoughtful, hardworking, determined, strong, confident, ambitious.*) Ask the women to put their names at the top of the paper, fold it over so that their responses are not visible and pass it to their neighbor. She is to write three adjectives that she feels describe her neighbor. She folds it over so her responses are not visible and hands it back.

Refreshments

Serve birthday cake to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Celebrating His birth is one of the many ways we can worship Him.

I Was There

The gospels reveal how people who came to the birth of Jesus viewed the wonderful event.

Shepherds—The shepherds' account can be found in Luke 2:8–17. Turn off the lights briefly for the first verse and read it softly. Then turn on all the lights for the remaining verses and read in a loud open-air voice. After the passage has been read ask the women how they felt when the lights went dramatically from dark to bright and soft to loud. The shepherds were used to quiet evenings, having to chase off a sly wolf their only excitement. When the angel and the heavenly host appeared, it was out of the ordinary for them. Indeed, if I had been there, I think I would have been afraid as they were. Yet they were also full of excitement as they hurried off to see the Christ child. Their gift to the child was the excitement they brought, which continued as they reported to everyone what they had seen. If we needed to give adjectives as to how the shepherds reacted, what would they be?

Wise Men—Next let's look at the wise men. It is thought that they most likely came to see Jesus when He was about two years old. Matthew 2:9–11 records their visit to the home of Jesus. When a new baby is expected in a family, we often hold a shower to honor the child. As parents or relatives, what gifts do you think are the most valuable? The magi were important men of science. The gifts they brought showed the value or importance of Jesus, but their worship was much more important than the physical gifts. What words do you think best describes the way the wise men worshipped?

Mary—Finally, let's look at the reaction of Mary to the birth of her Son. (Read Luke 2:19.) This is the shortest description of a reaction to the birth of Jesus, yet it is one I'm sure we can relate to. Have you experienced an event in your own life that you had to think about before you could react? The birth of a child affects us profoundly. The love you have for this new little person can be overwhelming. Mary's reaction was similar when she found out she would have a child. "She kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often" (Luke: 2:19).

Celebrations are often accompanied by music and fanfare. The song "Little Drummer Boy" is about a child who plays his drum to mark his visit to the newborn King. The song "Peace on Earth/Little Drummer Boy" by Bing Crosby and David Bowie combines the traditional tune "Little Drummer Boy" and the tune "Peace on Earth." (*Play this song. The words can be found on [YouTube](#)*). After the song ask the women to discuss as a group how they think they would have reacted to the birth of Jesus. Remind them there are many ways to worship as we observed in the reactions of those individuals that we considered today.

Invite the women to discuss the greatest gift they might bring to the newborn king. Would their gifts be like those brought by the shepherds, or the wise men or Mary? Would their reactions and their gifts be different?

Were the adjectives the women used to describe themselves different than those recorded by their neighbor? If so, why do they think this was so? Does using these adjectives help them to come up with an idea of how they would have reacted upon meeting the baby Jesus? (If hardworking, would they have been busy cleaning up the stable?)

In conclusion invite them to share how they plan to worship Jesus this Christmas.

About author



Captain Cynthia Crowsen

Eastern Territory



Archive Worship Programs

January 2019 — Let It Snow! Let It Snow!

January 1, 2019 By Captain Michelle Jones



Scripture

“Purify me from my sins, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow” (Psalm. 51:7).

Decorations

Hang paper snowflakes and white strands of lights around the room. Use clear glass vases of baby's breath for centerpieces. These can be sprayed with silver glitter. Tie a light blue ribbon around the vases.

Refreshments

Serve snowflake covered pretzel pops and homemade hot chocolate. Check the Internet for recipes. Other ideas include: Powdered sugar donut holes (anything dusted with powdered sugar looks like snow has fallen on it), coconut cake or snowflake (coconut) topped cupcakes.

Craft Projects

Snowflake Puzzle Ornaments

These snowflake ornaments take some time to dry, but it is a very quick and easy project.

Supplies

- Scrap of cardboard cut into a circle about 1 1/2" in diameter
- Hot glue guns
- Puzzle pieces (all pieces should be similarly shaped)
- White acrylic paint and sponge tipped brushes
- 6" of thin ribbon to hang the ornament
- Glitter or silver gem decorations

Directions

Glue three puzzle pieces onto the circle, at equal distances, leaving enough space to put another piece in between them. Glue three more puzzle pieces in between the first three. Paint with the white acrylic paint. While the snowflake is still wet, sprinkle with glitter and let them dry completely. If desired, glue on gems to add additional sparkle and shine. Glue pieces of ribbon onto the back to make a hanger. Check Pinterest (Search under "snowflake ornaments puzzle pieces") for detailed instructions and images of the finished craft.

Snowflake Votive Candle Holders

Paint clear votive candleholders with decoupage glue, covering completely. Wait for the glue to become tacky. Pour Epsom salts onto the tacky glue. Finish the project by spraying with a clear gloss sealant. As the candlelight shines through the votive, the salts will sparkle.

Whiter Than Snow

There is nothing quite like a freshly-fallen snow. In the immediate moments after the snow first falls it inspires awe and wonder. It is simply beautiful. It is clean, spotlessly white and untainted by the effects of the world onto which it has fallen. On a clear, sunny day we can hardly look at the snow, as it is so pure, so perfectly reflecting the light of the sun that it is almost blinding. Unfortunately, it doesn't take long for that pristine nature of snow to be soiled. Instead of being pure white, the snow becomes darkened with chunks of mud and dirt. We can hardly look at it because we really don't want this dirty snow around anymore.

In Psalm 51 David acknowledges that his life had become dirty, ugly and tainted with the dark stain of sin. It may have started with the obvious "big sins," but in even less obvious ways David knows just how far he has fallen from the standard of faithfulness, love and purity that God desired of him. In verse 7 he cries out to God. "Purify me from my sins, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow." David pleads with God to do the very thing that only God can do—take his heart that looks like that dirty, muddy snow and remove every trace of impurity so that it would once again be spotless white.

We may not be able to identify with David's sins of adultery and murder, but we all have big and small ways in which we have sinned. Each of us can identify moments in our lives where we did not live up to God's standard of love and purity. We cannot, in our own power, do anything about the stain of sin on our lives. But this is the great miracle of God. He is willing to remove every great stain and every tiny speck of sin so that, in the perfect purity He gives, we are able to reflect His light just as the snow reflects the brilliance of the sun. By reflecting His glorious light, others will see that light and may come to know God for themselves.

In this New Year, let's make it our goal to be like that pure white snow. Remember pure snow has awe-inspiring purity and beauty. When we accept Him as Lord, we reflect His love. When sin comes into our lives, it mars that beauty. When we ask Him, we can receive His forgiveness and He can completely remove the stain of sin. First, thank Him for the truth that no sin is beyond the reach of His grace. Second, like the freshly-fallen snow reflects the dazzling light of the sun, demonstrate His love, goodness and forgiveness to others. Pray that they will see His light in your life.

Closing Song and Prayer

In closing sing song #721, "Whiter Than Snow," from *The Salvation Army Song Book*. Pray asking that the Holy Spirit will do a great work of cleansing in your life, so that you will live in the purity that He desires. Pray that you will shine in purity in your community, especially to those who do not know the Lord, and that through the reflection of His light in your life that they might come to see the light of God.



Captain Michelle Jones

USA Eastern Territory



Archive Worship Programs

February 2019 — Turn On Your Heart Light

February 1, 2019 By Captain Eileen Valverde



Introduction

“There are ‘friends’ who destroy each other, but a real friend sticks closer than a brother” (Prov.18: 24). This program emphasizes celebrating the gift of love between friends and our friendship with God.

Questions About Love

- 1 How should a husband love his wife? *Each man must love his wife as he loves himself. Ephesians 5:33*
- 2 Give the Scripture reference for the following: "For this is how God loved the world: He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life." *John 3:16*
- 3 Who said, "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?" *Ruth to her mother-in-law Naomi. (Ruth 1:16)*
- 4 What two Old Testament characters took an oath of friendship? *David and Jonathan. 1 Samuel 20*
- 5 How should we love our neighbor? *As ourselves. (Luke 10: 27)*
- 6 Jesus gave us a new commandment. What was it? *"Love each other as I have loved you." John 13:34*
- 7 What is the greatest love? *"There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends." John 15:13*
- 8 How is our love measured? *By how we treat others. (Matthew 10:42)*
- 9 What does our love for others prove? *That we are Jesus' disciples. (John 13:35)*

Gift Exchange

A few weeks in advance, organize a "Secret Friend" gift exchange. This is the same concept as "Secret Santa." Small gifts are exchanged anonymously each week until the reveal day. Instruct the women to place their gift, with only the recipient's name on the package, into a basket. During the meeting one of the women can act as "Santa" and distribute the gifts.

Spin the Bottle Game

This is the same concept as the traditional spin the bottle game. However, when the bottle points at someone, the person who spun the bottle says something nice about that person and gives them a Hershey Kiss®.

A Sweet Craft

Chocolate Covered Strawberry Hearts

Supplies Needed:

Strawberries (about 4 per woman)

Semi-sweet chocolate morsels

Red sparkle gel from Wilton

Toothpicks

Vegetable oil

Take the stem out of the strawberries and cut them in half. Place halves side by side to form a heart and insert tooth pick to hold the heart form together. Heat the chocolate morsels and add a tablespoon of oil for smoother consistency. Pour over the strawberry heart. When it hardens, pour the chocolate over the top and drizzle with the red sparkle gel. For further instructions, check Pinterest®.

A True Friend

We find loneliness everywhere. People feel cut off from others. Often being in a crowd just emphasizes the loneliness that we feel. We all need a friend that will accept us no matter what, one who will stick by us in good times and bad times

We often forget that we already have a friend who longs to be closer than a brother, a friend who is better than all others. A friend who is the one and only true friend who sticks with us no matter what we are facing. That friend is Jesus. We read in Proverbs 18:24, "There are 'friends' who destroy each other, but a real friend sticks closer than a brother." We need to acknowledge that Jesus is the one to turn to when we need to talk, vent and connect.

We can spend most of our lives trying to find that perfect friend. We want someone who is a good listener, trustworthy, honest, dependable and loyal. However, instead of wishing for that perfect friend, we should seek to be a perfect friend to someone who needs it. Ask God to reveal to you who that is and take on the challenge of being a true friend.

God is our one true friend. He loves us unconditionally. He loved us before we were even born. He loves us today and will love us tomorrow. That love will never change. We read in Romans 8:37-39, "No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord." God is the perfect friend. We should look to Him and reflect Him in our friendships with one another.

About author



Captain Eileen Valverde

Eastern Territory



Archive Worship Programs

March 2019 — Be Our Guest

March 1, 2019 By Captain Madelaine Dwier



Introduction

This program is designed to celebrate the gift of hospitality. It is divided into three parts: Discussion, Devotion, Prayer. The discussion part guides the women to conversation about their experiences, the stress that opening one's home can bring and the joys of hospitality. The devotion presents Christ as the One pursuing and wanting to extend hospitality to us. The

prayer time should guide the women to accept Christ's offer of paying a visit to them during their time alone with God.

Discussion

Ask the women to answer the following questions and drop their answers into a basket. Pull out the answers and discuss them. Some answers will be funny, but they will be a very close representation of how each person feels about hospitality. (Take about 20–30 minutes in this discussion time.)

- If Jesus tells you He will come visit your home at 3:00 p.m. today, what would be the first thing you would do?
- If you were to plan an afternoon of activities for Jesus and you, what would you plan?
- What is your most embarrassing story about your family or friends coming over to visit you?
- Do you think you are a hospitable person? If yes, Why? If not, Why not?

Read Luke 10:38-42, the story of Mary and Martha, and share your answers to the following questions:

- Which one of the two women was practicing hospitality?
- Which of these two women are you most like?
- Why did Jesus think Mary chose the best part?

Martha was busy with preparations for Jesus and the other guests, but she was being whiny and complaining about it. It seems like all the joy of sharing a meal with Jesus was stolen by her busyness. She might have been a little tired of doing all the housework. Has this ever happened to you when you had guests over? (Share your experience.)

Activity

Lead the women into a personal prayer time. To help each person center their thoughts, have adult coloring pages, crayons, coloring pencils and markers available. Play soft instrumental music and guide the women to ask the Lord to help them understand how He would like to practice hospitality in their lives.

(Printable adult coloring pages with appropriate Bible verses can be found on Pinterest, Bing, or Google. They are also very inexpensive at Walmart and sometimes the Dollar General Stores. Make sure to also provide blank pieces of paper for some of the women who would like to be creative and draw their own art.)

Hospitality and Our Lord

Every gift and ability we have comes from the Giver of Gifts, our Lord. This means that hospitality has its roots in God. We can be hospitable, because we are made in His image. The fact that hospitality has its roots in the Lord means that He practices hospitality with us.

When we think of hospitality, we think of something we give to others. But hospitality is more than setting tables and serving meals. It is a practice of giving and receiving. Let's take the next few minutes to think about hospitality in the context of our relationship with Christ and this concept of giving and receiving.

There are two main components of hospitality: vulnerability and mutuality. When it comes to spending time with Christ it is necessary that we allow ourselves to be vulnerable. Being vulnerable means to present ourselves before Christ as women who are in desperate need of special care and protection. In the last 60 years society has pressed women to show themselves as self-sufficient and independent. But the truth is that standing before Christ we need to come clean with Him, open our hearts and be willing to admit to our loving Father that we are in need. When we do that, when we show ourselves vulnerable at the doorstep of heaven, Christ opens the door for us and invites us into a sweet fellowship with Him. He provides the refreshment for our soul and shelter for our weary feet and hands. "Then Jesus said, 'Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest'" (Matt. 11:28).

When we present ourselves before Him, His response is to show us mutuality. While helping a corps teenager with homework, I recently learned that in biology terms, mutuality happens when two different species come together and exist in a relationship. That is exactly how it is with Christ and us. We are not the same. We are women. He is God. But in His immense love, Christ invites us into a mutually beneficial relationship in which although we are different we can engage in true fellowship. I have nothing He needs, He has everything I need and under that reality He invites: "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me" (Rev. 3:20, NIV).

Would you be willing to be vulnerable before Christ? Would you be willing to accept His invitation and come into a mutually beneficial relationship with Him? He is the One who knows who you truly are and still loves you more than life. Come in, visit with the Savior, be His guest, sit at His feet and receive from Him refreshment for your soul.

Closing

Close in prayer or use the following excerpt from "Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies" poem by Charles Wesley. You can also find videos of this song on [YouTube](#).



Christ, whose glory fills the skies,
Christ, the true, and only light,
Sun of Righteousness, arise!
Triumph o'er the shades of night;
Day-spring from on high, be near!
Day-star, in my heart appear!

Visit, then, this soul of mine;
Pierce the gloom of sin and grief;
Fill me, radiant Son divine;
Scatter all my unbelief;
More and more Thyself display,
Shining to the perfect day."

About author



Captain Madelaine Dwier

Eastern Territory



Archive Worship Programs

April 2019 — Raindrops Keep Falling On My Head

April 1, 2019 By Major Armida Harper



Key Verse

"I will bless my people and their homes around my holy hill. And in the proper season I will send the showers they need. There will be showers of blessing" (Ezek. 34:26).

Decorations

Hang open umbrellas from the ceiling with the handle side down. Cut raindrops from blue construction paper and hang them using fishing line around edge of umbrella. You can find examples on the Internet. Create a bulletin board or poster with large raindrops scattered around using blue and purple construction paper. Paste the key verse in the middle of the bulletin board. (This will be used when women are reflecting on the study and devotional).

Opening

Sometimes we feel like we have a cloud hanging over our heads; that nothing is going right. You might be an EYORE! (Show the YouTube clip at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CQIOE1WCLMU>). It's easy to focus on the negative, especially when the storms of life are particularly nasty. I want you to think about the things that bring you down and that you worry about. Maybe it's ill health, the health of your family, finances, relationships or family concerns. Once you have two or three things in your mind, go to the bulletin board and write these things on the blue raindrops. (*Instruct the women that they don't have to share the names, but rather just record the type of concern.*)

Living the Lyrics

Hand out the lyrics to the song "Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head" by BJ Thomas. You can also play the song on CD, or from [YouTube](#). Today we are going to look a little closer at these lyrics from a Christian perspective. Ask some of the women to look up verses as you go along. Allow time for discussion after each lyric and verse listed below:

Raindrops keep falling on my head—*John 16:33*

I just done some talking to the "Son" (the song says, "sun")—*1 Thessalonians 5:17*

The blues they send to greet me won't defeat me—*Romans 8:37*

I ain't gonna stop the rain by complaining—*Philippians 2:14*

Because I'm free, nothing's worrying me—*2 Corinthians 3:17*

Craft—Scripture Journaling

Make copies of Song #314, "Showers of Blessing," from *The Salvation Army Song Book*. Using markers, highlighters, glue, scissors and card stock invite the women to journal (doodle) their feelings when reading this song. There is no wrong way to do this—the women can do whatever they want based on the words they read and how the words affect them. (*For further information and samples of scripture journaling look at the 2018 issue of WMR, "Declare His Glory," June, Worship "Thy Holy Temple," page 106.*)

Showers of Blessings

As I sat in a small dimly lit chapel in Nagercoil, India, an elderly soldier took the stage to lead our closing song. That part of India had been experiencing a bad drought that summer and many were praying for rain. I listened as the gentleman said without any doubt in his voice, "God will bring the rain we need." As we all sang, "Showers of Blessing" we could hear the tap-tap-tap of raindrops hitting the metal roof. We left the chapel that night in the middle of a rainstorm and we all praised God for His faithfulness.

Sometimes we pray for the rain to quench our thirsty land. Sometimes we pray for the rain to stop, because we need the healing rays of the sun. The amazing thing is that God knows what we need when we need it, and He is powerful enough to use every situation for our good. The problem lies in our response to the situations we are put in. We might not recognize that something hard and painful is what will bring us great blessings. Let's read again our key verse, Ezekiel 34:26 "I will bless My people and their homes around My holy hill. And in the proper season I will send the showers they need. There will be showers of blessing." Are we able to live 2 Timothy 4:5? "But you should keep a clear mind in every situation. Don't be afraid of suffering for the Lord. Work at telling others the Good News, and fully carry out the ministry God has given you." If we keep a clear mind set on Christ we can see the blessings through the storm.

Corrie ten Boom captures this concept in her book, *The Hiding Place*. Her family was persecuted for hiding Jews during the Holocaust. She and her sister ended up in deplorable conditions in one of the many concentration camps. These women kept their faith in Christ through the most horrific situations. In one instance, Corrie's sister encourages her to thank God for the lice in their bunks. Corrie balks at this, but grudgingly does so at her sister's prompting. They were later to find out that the guards avoided their building because of the lice. They were able to hold Bible studies and avoid detection all because of lice. In *The Hiding Place*, Corrie says, "No pit is so deep that God is not deeper still."

Can you trust that today? Those "raindrops" in your life might just be God's blessings flowing over you. As we listen to Laura Story's "Blessings" (YouTube — <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1CSVqHcdhXQ>), I'm going to ask you to meditate on what God has done for you. Especially think of those things you thought would destroy you and ended up making you stronger in the Lord. When you are ready, come to the bulletin board and write your blessings in the purple raindrops. Let's never forget that the "Son" always shines—even in the darkest storms.

About author



Major Armida Harper

Eastern Territory



Archive Worship Programs

May 2019 — He is the Lily of the Valley

May 1, 2019 By Major Carol Duperree



Location

If possible, hold the meeting in a flower garden setting. If held indoors, have a PowerPoint running displaying a variety of beautiful lilies. Decorate a table in the front of the room with a pretty tablecloth and a vase with wild flowers and lilies of the valley.

Choral Reading: #868, *The Salvation Army Song Book*

Woman #1: I've found a friend in Jesus, He's everything to me,

Woman #2: He's the fairest of ten thousand to my soul.

All: He's the Lily of the Valley, in Him alone I see

All I need to cleanse and make me fully whole.

Woman #3: In sorrow He's my comfort, in trouble He's my stay,

Woman #4: He tells me every care on Him to roll.

All: He's the lily of the valley, the bright and morning star,

He's the fairest of ten thousand to my soul.

Women # 1, 2, 3, & 4: "I am a rose of Sharon, a lily of the Valley." Song of Solomon 2:1 (NIV)

Invite the women to sing this hymn. The words and music can be found on YouTube.

Floating Flower Centerpiece

Ask the women to bring a clear glass vase or jar to the meeting. Have available glass stones, small rocks, extra jars, ribbon and water. Use fresh or silk flowers for this activity. Simple instructions can be found at <http://www.shelterness.com/25-floating-flowers-and-candles-centerpieces/> and at <http://www.pinterest.com>.

Door Prizes

Wrap several gifts that have a flower theme to be given as door prizes. Ask the winners to share a way in which they are growing in the grace of the Lord. Allow other women in the group who would like to share in this way to participate.

Celebrating the Garden of God's Grace

May is a beautiful time of the year. Late spring flowers are in bloom across the country. The lily of the valley flower also blossoms during this time of the year. Many beautiful comparisons have been made between the beauty of the lily of the valley flower and the beauty of Christ. In the Song of Solomon 2:1 (NIV), Christ's breathtaking nature is captured. He is pictured as the "Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley." His beautiful, divine essence is also described in His many titles such as "Creator," (John 1:3) "Dayspring," (Luke 1:78, NKJV) and "the Bright Morning Star" (Revelation 22:16).

Garden settings are popular locations to hold celebrations. Flower gardens teem with life. Their fragrance and beauty surpass anything made by man. In Matthew 6:28, 29 (NIV) Jesus spoke of the unmatched splendor of wild flowers when He said, "And why worry about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don't work or make their clothing, yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are."

Do you remember the first time you planted a flower bulb or a pack of seeds and waited for the plants to appear? Bulbs and seeds are ugly, often hard, dead-looking things. This first stage in their development does not resemble in any way the lovely flower it will become. Without God's redeeming grace we too are hard-hearted, dead in our sin. "For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet God, in His grace, freely makes us right in His sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when He freed us from the penalty for our sins" (Rom. 3: 23, 24).

Sin entered the Garden of Eden causing the fall of mankind and interrupting God's plan for His creation. Despite Adam's and Eve's sin it wasn't the end of their lives. We can celebrate because God chose not to leave us hopeless. Instead He made a way for us to be at one with Him by sending His Son to be our Savior. Jesus died for our sins and rose from the grave—not because we deserve it or earned it. It is His free gift to us.

In the July 2014 issue of Premier Christianity magazine, Senior Editor, Justin Brierley, wrote a profile article about the son of pastor and author Rick Warren of the USA Saddleback Church of over 20,000 members. Warren's youngest son, Matthew committed suicide at 27 years of age after battling depression and suffering from mental illness his entire life. Rick describes his son as "a really brilliant kid with a tender heart but a tortured mind." Pastor Warren said that when Matthew died he received 5,000 letters of condolences from around the world. Everyone wrote from rock stars and prime ministers to presidents. "But the ones that meant the most to me," he writes, "weren't from the VIPs; they were the letters from people that Matthew had led to faith in Christ." The letters said, "I'm going to heaven because your son brought me to Jesus." Rick Warren wrote in his journal: "In God's garden of grace, even broken trees bear fruit." Pastor Warren adds, "And we are all broken. God only uses broken people."

We are all dead in our sin—exactly why we need God's grace. "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). As we think of Jesus, the Lily of the Valley, let's join together to celebrate the magnificent reality of God's grace.

About author



Major Carol Duperree

USA Eastern Territory



Archive Worship Programs

June 2019 — We Are Family

June 1, 2019 By Major Patricia Davis



Introduction

“And since we are His children, we are His heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God’s glory” (Rom. 8:17). This verse assures us that we can celebrate our adoption into the priesthood of all believers. Remind the women that we are His children and heirs.

Worship Center

Set up a worship center with a royal blue or purple satin cloth, pearls and other jewels to depict royalty.

Call to Worship—Responsive Reading

Leader: Even before He made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in His eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into His own family by bringing us to Himself through Jesus Christ.

All: God saved you by His grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this: it is a gift from God. For we are God's masterpiece. He created us anew in Christ Jesus.

Leader: And this is God's plan: Both Gentiles and Jews who believe the Good News share equally in the riches inherited by God's children.

All: God sent Him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that He could adopt us as His very own children. And because we are His children, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts prompting us to call out, "Abba Father."

Leader: So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead you have received God's Spirit when He adopted you as His own children. Now we call Him "Abba Father," for His Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children. And since we are His children, we are His heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are a chosen people.

All: For you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result you can show others the goodness of God, for He called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.

*(Scripture taken from: Ephesians 1:5,6; 2:6,10; 3:6; Galatians 4:5,6; Romans 8:15-17; I Peter 2:9)
NLT*

Song: #877/504, "I'm The Child of a King," *The Salvation Army Song Book*

Sharing

In preparation for the sharing time, purchase small cards with birthstones and their meaning to give to each woman. Some Christian bookstores may have them with scripture verses as well as the meaning of each birthstone. These can also be handmade. Research on the Internet the birthstones and their meaning. If you make your own cards, include a scripture promise along with a small gemstone. Check the names roster for birthdates so that you will be prepared with the appropriate gemstones. In advance ask several of the women to share

when they became a child of the King. Give an opportunity for them to share their scripture promise with the group.

Craft

Purchase paper crowns from a party store or dollar store. You also might be able to get these from Burger King®. Buy bags of gemstones from a craft store and have the women decorate their crown with the gemstones. Talk about the fact that they are all daughters of the King.

Cinderella Complex

My favorite childhood fairy tale was Cinderella. I would read her story over and over. My life paralleled Cinderella's in some ways. I was a real "coal miner's daughter." I was one of 16 children and at times my alcoholic stepfather could be very cruel. When my mother became ill after a miscarriage, I had to leave school in my sophomore year to help care for my younger siblings. As a young girl, I would often fantasize about living in a palace, wearing a beautiful Cinderella dress and owning a canopy-crowned bed that was all mine that I didn't have to share with three sisters. Eventually my prince did come, and as God would have it we came from very similar family circumstances. We have been living joyfully in the Lord for the past forty-eight years, well on our way to our "happily ever after." We often tease and say The Salvation Army found us in the Red Box and kept us, although there is an element of truth in our teasing.

Like all childhood fantasies the reality of life took hold as I grew and matured. Through the redemptive love of Jesus, I was adopted into another family—the family of God. The path He chose for my life led me to a tiny Salvation Army outpost where I learned about God's love and gave my heart to Christ. It was there that I found love and acceptance. To this day I can still see the faces of those beautiful home league women who nurtured me in the Lord and also my loving corps officers, with whom I lived for a time. They helped me realize that I was truly a part of the wonderful the family of God.

Scripture reminds us that Christ gave His life to redeem us. Saved by His grace, we receive the gift of a glorious inheritance and we are God's children. We have a heavenly Father, and His Spirit affirms with our spirit that we are His. We have been adopted and as His heirs we have every right to all the benefits of the kingdom of God. It is more than just a Cinderella fantasy. It is a reality made possible through the redeeming work of Christ.

I am going to ask you to put on your crown (the one made during the craft time) signifying that you are proud to acknowledge that you are a part of the family of God and that you are the child of a King. One day we will all experience a "happily ever after," eternal life in Christ and we will receive the glorious inheritance of the kingdom of heaven through Him.

Close by singing Song #878/503 from *The Salvation Army Song Book*, "My Jesus I Love Thee." (Emphasize verse 4: "In mansions of glory and endless delight, I'll ever adore Thee and dwell in

Thy sight; I'll sing with the glittering crown on my brow, If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus 'tis now.")

About author



Major Patricia Davis

Eastern Territory
(Retired)



Archive Worship Programs

July 2019 — Let Freedom Ring

July 1, 2019 By Captain Valerie Hazeldine



“For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” (2 Cor. 3:17).

Program Ideas

- 1 As the women arrive, play the Gaither song "Let Freedom Ring," which is available on YouTube.
- 2 Prepare the following scripture verses on parchment paper tied to represent a scroll: John 1:12; Galatians 3:26; Romans 8:2, Romans 8:14, Romans 8:15, Romans 8:16, Romans 8:17; Isaiah 61:1; Galatians 5:13; Ephesians 3:12; 1 Peter 2:16; 2 Corinthians 3:17. Invite the women to share their scroll throughout the devotional.
- 3 Freedom release. Print an American flag on card stock and give it to the women. Invite the them to write or draw on the back of the card the following:
 - a) Something they would like to be free from.
 - b) Something from their past that the Lord has set them free from.

Invite the women to share what they have written. Place the flags in a basket and pray over them.

Decorations

Tables: Cover the tables in red, white, and blue tablecloths. Use copies of the Declaration of Independence as centerpieces. Use these as table favors for the women to take home. Altar: Completely cover the altar with a blue cloth. Top it with a smaller red cloth. Add a round yellow cloth, napkin or doily in the middle. Or use a Salvation Army flag of an appropriate size. Put a Bible and a framed copy of the constitution on the center yellow cloth. Place a small American and Salvation Army flag to each side of the altar.

Songs

The following songs from *The Salvation Army Song Book* can be sung: 451; 522; 314, 453, 795.

Freedom

In the 1942 movie *Holiday Inn*, Bing Crosby sings a song about American freedom, which we celebrate every year on the 4th of July. The song speaks of the freedom Americans have to travel where they wish; to worship how they choose; to speak and to listen; and not to live in fear. At a time when the world was in the grip of the Second World War, this was very poignant. Freedom was what Americans were fighting for.

Freedom has always been central to the American way of life. The Revolutionary War was really about freedom. It was not, as is usually assumed, started to free the Colonies from British rule. The Founding Fathers did not actually want to separate from England. They just wanted to be treated fairly by the British Monarchy and government. It had to do with taxes and the requirement to ship everything made in America to England before it could be sold back to the colonies at an exorbitant rate. When their request was denied, they felt that there

was no other choice but to separate themselves from such unreasonable restrictions. This required that they fight to gain that freedom.

The Civil War could be said to be about freedom also. Although slavery was not actually the original issue, it became the catalyst that fueled the war and its abolition is remembered as its greatest victory, granting freedom for those unwillingly enslaved. Slavery is perhaps the antonym of freedom, although not definitively. Bondage, captivity, oppression, servitude, suppression, repression—these all limit or control freedom. So does sin. Sin enslaves us, but if we turn to the Lord, the sentence of spiritual death that comes as a result of our sin is commuted. It is replaced by the life-giving grace of our Lord Jesus and the spirit of life that sets us free in Jesus. We are all born slaves to sin, but there is freedom waiting for us if we choose to accept it.

Over the past 242 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence, which gave freedom to the American people, thousands and thousands of people have come to America for that freedom. The National Center for Constitutional Studies describes the US Constitution (which the American Independence spawned) as embodying a unique idea. That is, something the like of which had never been done before. It contains the recognition that the American people's rights are given directly by our Creator, that is, God. The Declaration of Independence contains the phrase, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are *endowed by their Creator* with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." That should be a precious thing to all Americans, but especially to us as Christians. The Declaration, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights together form what is called the "Charter of Freedom." This makes our national freedom unique, for all other governments place the responsibility for deciding what citizens can and cannot have squarely on the shoulders of that government without acknowledging those given to us by God. This uniqueness gives us something to celebrate each year on Independence Day.

As Christians, we are children of God; His sons and daughters; brothers and sisters of Jesus. All humans are creations of God, but as Scripture tells us, only those who receive Him, who believe in His name, have the right to become children of God. This gives us the special freedom that comes with faith in Christ. Not freedom to do whatever we fancy, or anything we might think is fun, or even what the world tells us we should want to do. Rather, we have freedom over sin, evil and darkness. Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah would come one day to proclaim freedom for prisoners. Jesus tells us that He has fulfilled that promise.

Christ has set us free and we are called to be free. It is through faith in Jesus that we may approach God with confidence. We are to live as free people, but it is important that we do not think we can use this freedom as a cover up for evil or to indulge the flesh. Our freedom over sin calls us to be slaves to God, always doing His will and following His ways. Not a slavery of oppression and pain; but one of freedom and joy as we live to serve our Savior. That gives us something very special to celebrate every day of every year.

About author



Captain Valerie Hazeldine

Eastern Territory



Archive Worship Programs

August 2019 — The Long and Winding Road

August 1, 2019 By Major Lolita Sanchez



Welcome and Opening Prayer

Praise and Worship

Alternate the verses of the song "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee" (Song #39 from *The Salvation Army Song Book*) with the following scripture verses: Romans 12:12, Philippians 4:4, Romans

15:13, Galatians 5:22, John 16:24, Proverbs 17:22, Romans 14:17, John 16:22, James 1:2-4, Psalms 16:9, 1 Thessalonians 5:16.

Activity — The Long and Winding Road of Prayer

We can learn to celebrate God's direction through difficulties. In this worship activity, the leader sets up brown paper bags around the room. Each brown bag should be made to look like a brick on our life's walk and will be printed with an area of life—marriage, kids, family, work, finances, friendships, future, past, dreams and spiritual life. Space the bags apart as individual prayer stations. Place paper and pencils at each station. The women are invited to walk the long and winding road of prayer. At each station, they are to take the time to celebrate God's direction through the difficulties and to write the name of a person or situation of concern in each of the areas. By placing them in the bag, they indicate that they are entrusting their cares in that particular area to the Lord.

While the women are walking the road of prayer, have the George Michael updated version of the song "Long and Winding Road" playing in the background. This can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sJifw6Kej2s>. Once the song is completed read Proverbs 3:5, 6. Remind the women that as we walk life's road, we need to trust in God wholeheartedly, believing that we must trust only in Him regardless of the outcome. He will make our paths straight.

Walking Life's Path

How many of you are Beatles fans? Toward the end of the group's time together as a band, Paul McCartney wrote a song titled "The Long and Winding Road." A little known fact about the song is that it was not inspired by a love interest but was written by Paul based on tensions within the band. The first line says: "The long and winding road that leads to your door." We each experience times of joy and times of sorrow in this life. However, if we allow the Lord to take control, those difficult times in our lives can lead us to Him.

We can compare our life to a journey. We can picture ourselves physically walking this journey called life. Walking is an activity that many people enjoy. Walking as a form of exercise has great benefits physically and is also a great stress reliever. There are seasons of our life walk that are enjoyable and smooth, especially when the path is level and predictable. Then there are those seasons of our life walk that are more challenging.

On our journey, there are days when we are on top of the world and it feels like nothing can go wrong. Everything is great at work and all your co-workers are all getting along. Everything is smooth at home also. Then there are other days where everything goes wrong at work. The house is a mess and it seems everyone has conspired against you. Have you ever had one of those days? No matter how hard you work, nothing seems to get better? Or even worse than a few bad days are months or even years of sorrow. Perhaps your loved one is facing an illness or you experience a sudden loss in your family. Life can be unpredictable and hard to

endure. Unexpected difficulties can be draining. Sadly, we all will have those days, but it is important that even in the midst of these we remember to go to God with our concerns.

Proverbs 3:5,6 says: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and he will make your paths straight." These verses give us three important steps to apply during difficult times: Trust in Him. Lean on Him. Submit to His will. And the result is He will lead you on your journey.

One of the lines in that Beatles song says: "Crying for the day, why leave me standing here? Let me know the way." During those difficult times in our journey, we ask God why? Why did You allow this to happen? Why have you left me all alone? He knows when we are walking through those difficult roads in life. He even knows when we are about to give up and feel that we just can't take any more. In those moments, we need to trust, lean on Him and seek His will for our lives. As the Beatles sang, "Let me know the way." The Lord will always teach us the way and make our paths straight when we turn to Him.

Maybe today you feel as though you are on this long and winding road and you're beginning to lose your sense of joy. We can be happy or sad but our joy need never be lost. Joy is our inheritance as believers. Sadness and happiness come and go, but even amid a difficult situation we can keep our joy. Joy comes from a confidence in knowing that God is in control of your life. Joy comes when you have made the choice to praise God regardless of the situation.

Prayer

Lord, you didn't promise us a life without troubles. We read in John 14, "You will have many trials and sorrows, but take heart..." Today we claim the promise that You are with us and will not leave us alone. You lift us up in the midst of our pain. We know that we can trust in You.

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