

Women's Ministries Resources



THE SALVATION ARMY WOMEN'S MINISTRIES RESOURCES

Hope for the World

2021-2022 PROGRAM YEAR



“ For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Jeremiah 29:11



Women's Sunday



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Women's Sunday

Women's Sunday 2021 – Enrollment Ceremony & Leaders' Recognition

October 1, 2021 By Major Rhonda Lloyd

A Fragrant Offering

“Here a dinner was given in Jesus’ honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus’ feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume” (John 12:2-4, NIV).

Occasion

A women’s luncheon and leaders’ recognition to be held following the Sunday morning service. The lunch could be a pre-prepared lasagna (one meat/one vegetable), salad and garlic bread to be cooked during the morning service. The final preparation to be handled by the Girl Guards, which is a way for them to earn a badge and serve the women. Dessert could be flower cupcakes purchased from a bakery or made by someone in the group who does cake decorating. The alternative could be that the women make them as a project the previous week.

Set-up

For a centerpiece, cover a small round table with a white cloth. Place a large bouquet of multi-colored roses or carnations on the table with a Bible opened to John 12.

Set up round tables with white tablecloths, a bud vase and one flower—each a different color—around the room. Make large paper flowers to adorn the walls. You can find a tutorial on YouTube to make these flowers.

Place questions on the tables to stimulate table talk. Ask one woman at each table to lead the discussion.

- What is your favorite flower? Why?
- My favorite perfume is ...
- The last time I got flowers was for _____ (occasion).
- If I were to describe myself as a flower or plant, it would be ...
- The person I would like to give a bouquet of flowers to is _____ because _____.

Introduction

Good afternoon and welcome to our women's ministries luncheon. Today we celebrate women and women leaders of our congregation. Please find a seat at one of the tables and we will open our time together with a word of prayer and thanksgiving for our time together. Please be sure to save a seat for one of our Girl Guards who will be serving us so they can join us for lunch once everyone is served.

Women's Ministries or HL Secretary opens in prayer.

Lunch and Table Talk

Recognition

In John 12:2-4 we read about Mary, Martha and Lazarus who are good friends of Jesus and who often host Him in their home. But this time was a little different as they were giving a dinner in Jesus' honor. Mary took her prized possession—her very best, most expensive and most fragrant perfume—and poured it out on Jesus' feet as a lavish offering. I am sure most of you have heard of the squabble Mary and Martha had another time when Jesus was visiting. Martha was miffed that Mary just sat at Jesus' feet and didn't help her with the meal. Well, Mary is at it again and has upstaged everyone by pouring her perfume all over Jesus' feet and wiping them with her hair. The fragrance was so beautiful and so aromatic that it filled the whole room. No one could help but notice her sweet sacrificial offering.

There are women among us today and within our congregation who have given offerings just like Mary through women's ministries activities last year. Some gave behind the scenes with no notice at all (much like Martha) and others gave more recognizable gifts (like Mary). Each one gave sacrificially of their time and talent and I would like to recognize them today.

Would the following women please stand up at your tables:

- WM Secretary/Leader
- HL Secretary/Leader
- WM/HL Treasurer

- WM/HL Program Leader

(Recognize each woman who serves in a leadership position even if it is just coordinating snacks or taking attendance and call them by name.)

I want to personally thank you for helping me to minister to the other women in our group. As a token of my appreciation, I would ask that you take one of the bud vase flowers at the end of our time together. (If there are not enough, have extra bud vases available and take a flower from the center bouquet.) Yours has been a fragrant offering and I thank you for the individual gifts, talents and time you have given to our women's ministries. You are each appreciated for what you add to our lovely garden of women.

Will you join me in a round of applause in appreciation for their service?

Enrollment Ceremony

Like any garden, each plant or flower brings a special aspect and interest to the overall landscape. Some of the flowers in our garden are big and bold, while others are smaller and more delicate. Some have a spicy or heavy fragrance and others have little to no aroma at all. But it takes new shoots and new seeds to grow a garden and today, our garden is growing. We have several women who have been meeting with us in our various women's ministry groups that would like to officially join our women's ministries garden today.

I have asked a number of current members to assist me in welcoming these new women. I invite those volunteers to join me along with those who wish to be enrolled.

As an illustration of the differing talents, gifts, and personalities that are represented here already as well as among those who are joining us, I invite our current members to each pick a different color flower from our arrangement here at the front and present it to the new member along with their membership card and pin.

As you do, would you greet the new woman with the following greeting:

"I welcome you and look forward to the beauty and fragrance you will add to our garden known as _____ Women's Ministries." I would now ask that you introduce these women to the rest of us.

Thank you, for joining us and we do indeed look forward to tilling the soil of our garden together, as we each blossom and grow while giving the Lord our fragrant offerings of service and fellowship through our women's ministries programs here at _____. Let's give them a warm applause of welcome!

Recruitment

And now, will you turn to our Girl Guards who have served us this afternoon and thank them for their fragrant offering. Young ladies, you are the future of our women's ministries and we look forward to the day when we can bring you into the fold of our garden as well. We would like each of you to take a flower from our bouquet as we give you a big round of applause.

Thank you all for coming today and celebrating with us! What a beautiful garden we have here at _____ Corps. I can hardly wait to see how our garden grows in the coming year.

Let's pray together as we close.

About author



Major Rhonda Lloyd

USA Western Territory



Women's Sunday

Women's Sunday 2021 – Holiness Meeting Outline

October 1, 2021 By Major Rhonda Lloyd

Call To Worship – “Thy Will be Done”

(Responsive Reading Song #727, *The Salvation Army Song Book*)

(Leader and Response—each line of the song)

Opening Prayer

Scripture Reading: Jeremiah 29:1–13 NIV

Time of Worship and Praise

Suggested Songs from *Hallelujah Choruses*

#225, “Hosanna”

#65, “God will Make a Way”

#91, “Fan the Flame”

#92, “I’m Gonna’ Praise the Lord”

Announcements and Offering

Song #662, “My Hope is Built on Nothing Less” *The Salvation Army Song Book*

Children’s Message

Relate the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego from Daniel 3. Emphasize their trust and hope in God as well as His deliverance. (Dismiss for Junior Church)

Song #892, "Simply Trusting" *The Salvation Army Song Book*

Message

"Hope for the World"

Closing Prayer

HOPE

"May you know the HOPE of **His Omniscient** (all knowing) **Plan Embraced** in your life and leave today trusting that He is true to His Word as found in Romans 8:28 as we say together: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose."

Closing Song #893, "All the Promises of God are Sure" *The Salvation Army Song Book*

Benediction

About author



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USA Western Territory



Women's Sunday 2021 – Hope For The World – Sermon

October 1, 2021 By Major Rhonda Lloyd

Scripture Reference: Jeremiah 29:11

Introduction

Hope is a quality to which we all aspire. Hope is what enables us to get out of bed in the morning and go to school, work or whatever the day holds for us. Hope is also the strength in our backbone that allows us to withstand storms of trouble and pain. In short, hope is what keeps us going! Only when hope is absent do we truly understand its importance.

If ever anyone had the right to lose hope and not want to keep going, it was the Jews who were the original recipients of the letter from Jeremiah (Jeremiah 29:1–11). The key to really understanding this passage is the time when it was written and the historical significance. The estimated date of writing is shortly after the people of Judah have been taken into captivity by the Babylonians in 597 BC. They were ripped from their homeland, displaced and brought together with a people who did not follow their God or the customs of their culture. They were desperate to hear a good and encouraging word, which made them very vulnerable to the false prophets who predicted a quick and easy fall of the people of Babylon and therefore, a victorious return to freedom for them. They wanted something positive to hang their hats on and to restore their hope. They latched on to that hope and were expecting things to turn around quickly so they could go home and live out their lives as they wished.

Lest we judge them as unholy and unwise, we must stop and ask ourselves how many times we have wanted something so badly that we have believed when someone assured us we would get “it,” whatever “it” was, that we deserved it, and that it was indeed God Himself who would give it to us. This sounds an awful lot like the prosperity doctrine we hear so frequently from televangelists who have quite a following.

Just like the Jews of that day, we have been guilty of trying to determine what God has in mind for us and of using any means to discover it. When was the last time you looked at your

horoscope or took one of those silly tests on Facebook to see what your future held? We laugh when we are 50 and Facebook tells us we are going to have a son by the end of the year. But what if we have a daughter who is hoping to be married—could that be the son? Or maybe when it tells us we are going to get that house we have been dreaming about; or come into some money if we will only forward a picture of a wad of money. Or maybe you are dissatisfied with your job and take one of those tests to see what you were really meant to do. These may be silly examples that we might not take seriously, but they illustrate how much even we as Christians want to know the future. How much we want God to reveal His plan to us.

The Jews of Jeremiah's day turned to so-called prophets and heard what they wanted to hear, but then they received the first recorded letter of the Old Testament from a true prophet. Let's read together what Jeremiah has to say. (*Read Jeremiah 29:1-11, NIV*).

The Plan

According to Jeremiah, they were to get comfortable where they were because they were in for a long stay. They were to build houses, expand their families and even support the foreign government that was holding them captive. That couldn't possibly be God's plan—or could it?

Just like the Jews when we don't like the Lord's plans we cry out: "But God! That is not what I had in mind. I don't want to work for this guy who is so rude and mean. I don't want to live in a house in this city. My family is from the country, and I want to raise my children over there where there is a good school district."

Nevertheless, God has a plan and it isn't just about you or me as individuals, but a plan to give hope to the entire world. Some of the very first words of Rick Warren's book, *The Purpose Driven Life* are, "It isn't about you!" What?! Of course, it is! And yes, in some ways it is, but it's not *only* about you or me.

We really love it when we personalize John 3:16 and say, "God so loved (Susie or Mike) that He gave His one and only Son, so that (Susie or Mike) shall not perish but have eternal life." And yes, He did. He loves each of us as individuals that much. But the truth of the matter is that God so loved the WORLD that He gave His son so that WHOEVER believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. That is a big task. He has been at work planning it out and bringing it to pass since the beginning of time. And yet, we can be assured of His care for us based on Romans 8:28: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose."

The Purpose

The scholars tell us that the dispersion of the Jews to various countries and at various times in history was intended to accomplish several things:

First, to show other nations that the Jews were different because they were God's people. And therefore, to show others what God's people were to be like. Secondly, as discipline for not following God's plans in His way. And additionally, to show God's love and faithfulness throughout all time and in all circumstances.

Many Christians today don't look at the Old Testament or they view it as antiquated or irrelevant in light of the new covenant recorded in the New Testament. However, a thorough study shows us that God is true to His word and faithful in fulfilling His promises in both the Old and New Testaments—throughout all time and eternity. We can trust in Him.

Psalm 22:4-5 says, "Our fathers trusted in You; they trusted, and You delivered them. They cried to You, and were delivered; They trusted in You, and were not ashamed." Each time Abraham, Moses, and Aaron saw God fulfill a promise they built an altar of remembrance and encouraged the people to tell their children and grandchildren all that their God had done, so that they too could believe and be confident in relying on and trusting in Him.

Each of us has read the scriptures and heard modern day stories of how God has answered prayer and revealed the truth of the Gospel to individuals who have come before us. In the time of the Old Testament, they only had stories that had been passed along verbally. Once people started writing those stories and histories down for us, we began relying on the written word to reinforce the truth. That is why orthodox Jews memorize so much of the Old Testament as a reminder of what God has done and will continue to do.

Psychologists today tell us the best predictor of future behavior is past behavior. Of course, that is not completely true, because we know God redeems us and changes us and makes us new creations. But left to ourselves, we will indeed repeat the mistakes, sins and behaviors of the past. In contrast, God in His wisdom and might has shown us He is the same today, yesterday and forever. He alone is trustworthy because He has repeatedly delivered the nation of Israel and each of us from our difficult circumstances, our sins, and those who have sinned against us. David wrote in Psalm 57:2, "I cry to God Most High, to God who fulfills His purpose for me." Jeremiah reminded the people of Judah of God's love and purpose for them in chapter 24 of Jeremiah. Let's read together Jeremiah 24:1-7.

The Promise

The people of Judah needed to be reminded how much God loved them and that He had not forgotten them. They needed to know without a shadow of a doubt that God was watching out for them and had a plan and purpose not only for their exile but for their future. How easy it would be to feel forgotten and neglected in a foreign land among foreign people who worshipped foreign gods. They were to hope in the true God despite being in exile for 70 years. That is nearly two generations. How easy it would be to feel forgotten and therefore forget to share the hope of God with the next generation. Their people had already wandered in the wilderness for a generation; it was the second generation that finally entered the Promised Land. Once again, they needed to hold out hope and share the confidence of past

deliverance for the next generation to believe there was a God who loved them and looked out for them.

In chapter 24, God tells Jeremiah, "I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the Lord. They will be My people, and I will be their God, for they will return to Me with all their heart." And in chapter 29 He says, "'When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill My good promise to bring you back to this place. For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart. I will be found by you,' declares the Lord, 'and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you,' declares the Lord, 'and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile.'"

There is a promise and an expectation. The promise of a successful future, a hope, a return to their homeland, and a relationship with a God who listens and answers prayer. The expectation is that they will put their hope in Him and Him alone. That they will be obedient to Him and seek Him with all their hearts.

Conclusion

We like to focus on the promises of God but must remember the expectation as well. Just like the exiles of Judah, we are asked to live faithfully with God in a land where people do not understand or appreciate our commitment to Him. We need to seek Him with all our hearts and put all our hope in Him and His promises rather than in this world or our own strength and abilities.

Jesus used everyday examples to teach His disciples. If you have ever tried to remove ivy from a wall or garden, you know that the tendrils of ivy climb and grip the surface so tightly that only the most determined effort can dislodge them. Ivy is also capable of weathering the extremes of both heat and cold without withering and falling away. When you place your hope in God, you are clinging to Him in the same tenacious way that ivy clings to brick and mortar. When the sun is warm and the rain is gentle, grow like the ivy—strong and hearty, reaching and moving as you strengthen your grip on God's never-failing love. When the strong winds of life blow and storms beat on you, have confidence in God who is strengthening you and equipping you to hold on to the promise He gives of watching out for you and giving you the promise of a hope and future in Him. *May His Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.

*Adapted from the Devotional *Moments of Peace in the Presence of God*, Bethany House, Minneapolis, 2004.

Closing Prayer

And now, may you be strengthened and encouraged by sharing in the prayers of the women of our congregation:

1 – Thank you, God, for the gift of faith that brings me hope and drives my fears away.

2 – Lord God, hold tightly to the hope that anchors my heart to yours, for my hope is ever and always in You.

3 – God, I thank You for restoring hope to my heart and peace to my mind. You are my Savior and my God in whom I trust.

4 – God, please fill me with hope as I speak often with You. Remind me that You are always by my side, helping me to see through the tears to the promise.

5 – Thank you, God, for the words of Psalm 31:24: “Be of good courage and He shall strengthen your heart, all who hope in the Lord.” Will you do that for each one of us here today?

6 – Jesus, when my future seems to be clouded by the fog of daily living and filled with the stony paths of this world, I will place my hope in You—in Your strength and faithfulness.

7 – And we end with this affirmation from Psalm 71:14: “As for me, I will always have hope; I will praise You more and more.” And all God’s people say, AMEN!

*Some of these are adapted from the prayers included in the devotional *Moments of Peace in the Presence of God*, Bethany House, Minneapolis, 2004.

About author



Major Rhonda Lloyd

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Education Programs



THE SALVATION ARMY WOMEN'S MINISTRIES RESOURCES

Hope for the World

2021-2022 PROGRAM YEAR

“ For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Jeremiah 29:11

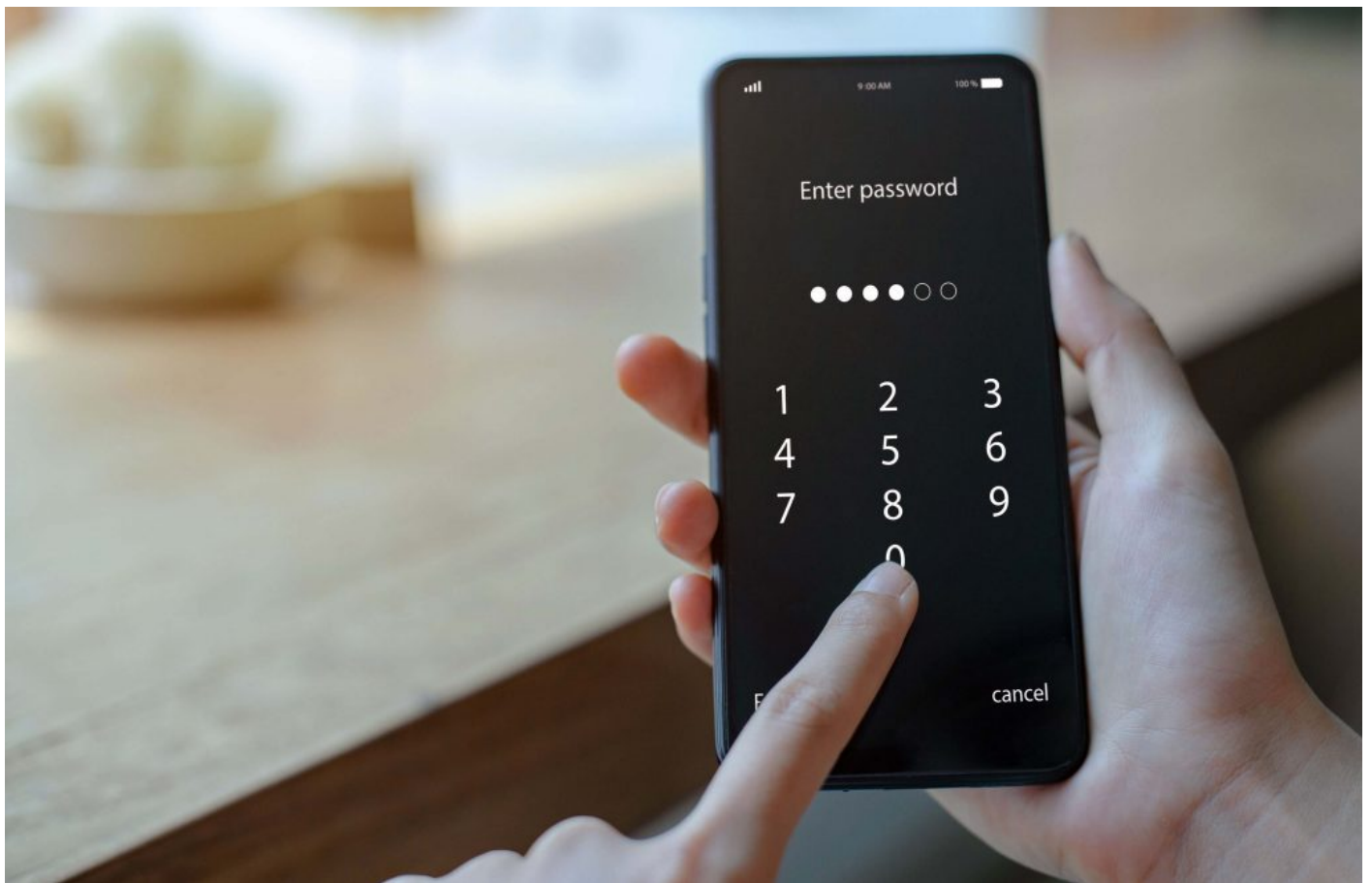




Education Programs

October 2021 – Secured Hope

October 1, 2021 By Captain Crystal Birks



Introduction

Happy National Cybersecurity Awareness month! I bet you didn't know there was such a thing. If you are like me, you shrink just hearing the word "cybersecurity," yet it is such a vital part of our society. What is cybersecurity?

National Cybersecurity Awareness Month (NCSAM) began in October 2004 as a joint effort of the National Cyber Security Alliance (NCSA) and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to make Americans more aware of how to stay safe and secure online. In society today, we can get online almost anywhere—in airports, in businesses, in our car, in church and on many devices—our phones, our tablets, or our computers. Just as the list is endless, there are endless ways that people hack into our accounts, steal information and use it for their own benefit. So what can we do to protect ourselves? Print and review the information on these resources with the women:

<https://security.berkeley.edu/resources/best-practices-how-to-articles/top-10-secure-computing-tips>

<https://www.govtech.com/security/5-Ways-to-Protect-Yourself-from-Cybercrime.html>

<https://www.theamegroup.com/network-security-threats/>

Program Ideas

The following site has games put out by Texas A&M Division of Information Technology: <https://it.tamu.edu/security/cybersecurity-games>. They produce a new game every year during National Cybersecurity Awareness Month. Invite the women to play some of these games together. Or have each person write what they think is the right answer and give a prize for the one who has the most correct.

The site https://wordmint.com/public_puzzles/94718 has free worksheets you can print for the group to work on. There is also information on the Internet for creating crossword puzzles or word searches using words associated with cybersecurity.

Password Madness

Another idea is to discuss passwords. There are many resources online to help with creating a secure password. Help the women to understand what a good password looks like simply by creating words (passwords) with letters and symbols. You can make this into another worksheet/game for individuals or groups. A couple of examples would be as follows:

Feelings! – F331ing5!

Jesus loves me forever! – J35u5<35m343va!

Speaker

Contact the police department to see if someone on their staff could speak on the subject of cybersecurity or the latest scams.

Share

Ask the women to share incidents of attempted cybersecurity breaches or scams. Some common ones are:

- 1 You owe money to the IRS and if you don't pay you will be arrested.
- 2 A child/grandchild has been arrested and they need money for bail.
- 3 Kidnapping of loved one—pay the ransom or else.
- 4 Your Social Security card has been linked to criminal activity and can only be reactivated for a fee.
- 5 The individual is getting a cost of living increase, but they must provide their name, Security Security number and date of birth via an email.

Other Resources

<https://niccs.us-cert.gov/>

This is the main website for National Cybersecurity. A lot of information shows how to get training and education, and even provides a link for National Cybersecurity Awareness Month. In 2019, a link to play a Jeopardy type game about cybersecurity was available.

There Is Hope

Cybersecurity was created to keep us safe from online predators. However, sometimes these criminals still find a loophole and can steal our information or create a bug or virus. While it is supposed to be secure, it is not always secure.

Unlike cybersecurity, we have secure hope in God. Scripture states, "You will be secure, because there is hope; you will look about you and take your rest in safety" (Job 11:18, NIV). This hope is not the kind where we cross our fingers and "hope" something will happen. This is a confident hope that **knows** God **will** fulfill His promise, even when we cannot see it right in front of us.

One of God's promises states, "'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future'" (Jer. 29:1, NIV). Does this promise mean that our lives will always be easy or bright? No—it means that even when we are living in the dark times of our lives, we can be assured that God will make something new of it in the future because He has a plan. We may not see the light at the end of the tunnel in the moment, but hope believes there **is** a light at the end of the tunnel. Hebrews 6:19 (NIV) says, "We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure."

Hope is security. Hope is an anchor. Hope will help us get through the dark times. Secured hope is far more important than cybersecurity. What is keeping you from having secure hope in God?

About author



Captain Crystal Birks
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Education Programs

November 2021 – Bridge of Hope

November 1, 2021 By Major Anya Henderson



“

“Oh, Aslan,” said Lucy. “Will you tell us how to get into your country from our world?” “I shall be telling you all the time,” said Aslan. “But I will not tell you how long or short the way will be; only that it lies across the river. But do not fear that, for I am the great Bridge Builder.”

By C.S. Lewis, The Voyage of the Dawn Treader: The Chronicles of Narnia

Making Disciples

Jesus' method of carrying the message of salvation to the world was the making of disciples. He included this as a command in His last words before His ascension to heaven: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always to the end of the age" (Matt.28:18-20). This was His command to us also. We are to spread the Good News of salvation.

How To Share the Good News

Sharing the Good News can be as simple as sharing what the Lord has done in your life. Show the video, "How to write your testimony of faith." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8g4LY8ngQew>

Once the women have viewed the video, encourage them to write their story. When they are comfortable with what they've written, record it and share it (with permission) on social media. If they choose to volunteer in the social service office or food bank at the corps, they may have the chance to share with clients their story of the difference God has made in their lives.

Be Prepared to Give An Answer

Show the trailer from the movie "[Grace and Gravity](#)," that was released in 2018. This film is about an American Christian who is travelling for work in UK when he encounters a minister who has lost his faith and is about to leap off a bridge. In the course of the movie the conversation on the bridge becomes a test of the Christian's own faith. He realizes that the knowledge he has about God has not produced the result of a holy and content life. We never know when we will be called upon to share our faith with someone who is in crisis. It is in those circumstances that we must rely on the Holy Spirit to guide us.

Suicide

Spend some time talking about suicide prevention. The National Suicide Prevention life line is 1-800-273-8255, which is manned 24/7. There is a lot of helpful information on the Internet that can be shared with the women.

Making Disciples

When we became a Christian we were instructed to "go and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28). But for many of us this is a scary thought. We feel inadequate and don't know what to say. We hope that God has planted someone in our corps with the unique and

unmistakable gift of sharing the Good News with others. We are unsure about our own abilities, and think it's better to stand back and give others a chance to shine with the brilliance of their gift of evangelism. But according to Scripture we all are the branches and called to bring "fruit that lasts" (John 15:5). If we are honest, it is not a strong belief in the ability of others, but our deep-seated insecurities and fear of rejection that keep us from sharing our stories of transformation and Jesus' saving grace.

First Peter was likely written between AD 62–64, during the persecution of Christians under the reign of Nero. Peter seeks to encourage believers to stay strong in their witness in face of undeserved suffering. In a short couple of verses in chapter 3 we find some important principles of witnessing with courage. "Do not fear ... do not be frightened. But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. For it is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil" (1 Peter 3:14, 15, 17).

In his book *Just Courage*, Gary A. Haugen notes a very sobering truth: "Many of us say that Jesus has rescued us from judgement and sin and death—but actually we are quite busy trying to save ourselves. What sometimes looks like confident hard-charging activity in the world is frequently just nervous energy generated by what terrifies us." That reminds us that the first important step in preparing to testify effectively is to explore honestly our deep-seated fears and to welcome Holy Spirit to walk alongside us and to disarm them. This step is best done by prayer. Remember, that through our life we've become masters of justifying our fears and overlooking them all together, so we can stay on the "safe" side of ministry.

We should find time to write down our testimony as many scholars suggest. It reminds us that our rescue was from God and not of our own making. Yet, as the movie "Grace and Gravity," points out, our testimony carries more weight when we are willing to be vulnerable with others and to admit that there are parts of our stories that we don't understand and still wrestle with.

Hope That You Have

We need to examine our hope and understand how it helped us in the past to overcome our own fear and confusion. If we stay faithful to our calling, we will be reminded that it was a seed of hope that continues to grow through our whole life.

"Our hope is a point-blank confrontation carried out by Christians who refuse to compromise with the ways of hatred and unrighteousness, and who insist on living holiness of radical compassion, righteousness and justice. Living in the hope is living the hope now!" writes Commissioner Phil Needham in his book [*Christmas Breakthrough*](#).

With Gentleness and Respect

Is God challenging you to move beyond your comfort level? We come together to study His Word. We nourish our souls when we worship together and bring our needs before God in

prayer. But we need to remember that transformation happens not when we say what we could do, but when we actually do it. Peter reminds us that when we encounter others who ask us about our faith, we need to share with gentleness and respect. Why? Because each one of us carries broken pieces of our stories. As we read in John 12:24, "Jesus said, 'Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.'" The birthplace of our true faith is often found when we come to the end of our own self and happiness as we've envisioned it. When we learn to understand the pain and scars that marked our way to Jesus, we will learn the deep meaning of 'gentleness and respect' for the brokenness of others.

Additional Resources:

- "Grace and Gravity" – movie trailer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C8OKoC8jtrl>

- How to write your testimony of faith:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8g4LY8ngQew>

- Gary A. Haugen *[Just Courage: God's great Expedition for the Restless Christian](#)*. IVP Books, Downers Grove, Illinois 2008
- Phil Needham, *[Christmas Breakthrough: Finding the Real Gifts of the Season](#)*. Crest Books, Alexandria, VA 2019

About author



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Education Programs

December 2021 – Gift of Hope

December 1, 2021 By Lt. Aline Posner



Introduction

Have you ever been stuck between a bad place and an even worse place? During this time have you wondered what God is doing and why He hasn't intervened in the situation? When He doesn't act as we expect, it's tempting to lose hope, to give up, and start down the path of distrust. We often forget that God's timing is different than ours. To experience the gift of

hope, we must embrace it and the situations that God allows in our life. The beautiful gift-wrapped present of hope is right in front of you. Have you taken the ribbon off, torn away the paper and opened it? Let's look at what this gift means, and how The Salvation Army offers it to the community.

Program Elements

Ask the women to bring shoe boxes and a small gift to be placed in the boxes. This could be hand lotion (fragrance free), box of nice chocolates, a gift card to Wal-Mart or the local grocery store. These decorated boxes can be handed out to the women who come to the corps for assistance this Christmas.

The Box of Hope

Supplies needed: shoe boxes of any size, acrylic paints, ribbons, plastic table covers, paper plates, small cups, paper towels, medium-sized paint brushes, artificial flowers, hot glue, blank cards, and crystal clear acrylic coating.

Paint the outside including the top and bottom of the shoe box with white paint and let dry. Add color and other decorations—silk flowers, ribbon, buttons. Spray the box with crystal clear acrylic coating and let dry. Place the gift inside along with an encouraging note, including appropriate Scripture verses. Some suggested verses: Ps.33:20, Ps. 33:22, Ps. 42:5, Ps. 62:5, Romans 12:12, Romans 15:13. Tie the box with a ribbon.

Gift of Hope for the World

Take one of the gift boxes and use it to collect monetary donations for World Services or the Child Sponsorship program. Share with the women how even the smallest amount of money can bring hope to those in great need. Contact your DHQ or THQ for information on these programs.

Decorations

Cover tables with red or green tablecloths. Invite the women to bring their favorite ornament to share. These could be placed inside clear vases and used centerpieces. Or place pinecones and small round ornaments inside the vases.

Gift Christmas Poppers (Kid-Friendly)

This fun craft could also be handed out at the Christmas social service office. The women could also take them home to share with their grandchildren or those children who come to the corps for Sunday School or an after school program.

Supplies needed: wrapping paper, clear cellophane wrap, ribbons, recycled cardboard (center of a paper towel), mini M&M bags, printed M&M Christmas story, paper and scissors.

Cut the cardboard tube into three pieces. Cut pieces of wrapping paper large enough to fit around the cardboard. Cover the tubes with the paper. Print the M&M Christmas story on 3x5 pieces of paper that will fit inside the cardboard tube. Place a mini bag of M&Ms inside the tube. Cut the clear cellophane and wrap it around the tube leaving extra room on both ends. Tie the cellophane with ribbon.

Check the following website for the M&M Christmas story:

<https://www.scrapbook.com/poems/doc/7528.html>

His Indescribable Gift

In the last verse of 2 Corinthians 9 Paul declares, "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!" In the earlier verses in this chapter Paul appeals to the Corinthians to go beyond supplying the basic needs of the people so that their actions and deeds would be an overflowing expression of thanks to God. It is certainly important to thank God for the abundance He has given us. Our giving graciously leads others to also praise God. Second Corinthians 9:12-15, MSG reads, "Carrying out this social relief work involves far more than helping meet the bare needs of poor Christians. It also produces abundant and bountiful thanksgivings to God. This relief offering is a prod to live at your very best, showing your gratitude to God by being openly obedient to the plain meaning of the Message of Christ. You show your gratitude through your generous offerings to your needy brothers and sisters, and really toward everyone. Meanwhile, moved by the extravagance of God in your lives, they'll respond by praying for you in passionate intercession for whatever you need. Thank God for this gift, His gift. No language can praise it enough!"

Paul's instructions to the Corinthians and to us are to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and spread the gospel through word and deed. With Christmas before us, God did just that for His creation. He gave generously, He gave cheerfully, He gave His son Jesus Christ to all who would accept Him.

In Mathew 2:1-12, we read about the Magi who came from the East to visit Jesus. When they met Him, they fell down and worshipped Him, acknowledging His lordship and kingship. Thus, they presented to all those around the gift of testimony. They also brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. These treasures were significant as they testified of the hope that was before them that day. Gold, which is symbolic of Christ's kingship and deity, frankincense, representing His purity as Priest, and myrrh, which points to His atoning work as a prophecy of His death, and resurrection, the culmination of this gift of hope.

This ties in with The Salvation Army's mission. As the wise men gave of their treasures, talent, and time, we Salvationists believe we should give these same things to a world that feels hopeless. The Salvation Army believes that through our actions, we give others the gift of testimony of who Jesus is. We bring them the gift of hope by showing them His love and faithfulness. When we testify of His holiness and faithfulness and all He has done for us, we

speak hope in unspeakable situations. We too become wise men. Let us give the gift of hope this season and spread it cheerfully and generously.

Discussion Questions

- 1** Why is it important that those who confess Christ as Lord and Savior continually give the gift of testimony?
- 2** How can we share the gift of hope to those we encounter on a daily basis in a way that shares God's deity/kingship, purity as Priest, and sacrifice (through His death and resurrection)?
- 3** Share moments in your life when you gave generously of your time, talents, and/or money. What happened?
- 4** Why does Christian generosity so clearly reflect our Savior?

About author



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USA Western Territory



Education Programs

January 2022 – God's Plan Is Best

January 1, 2022 By Lt. Denise Litreal



Introduction

I love shoes. In my younger years I had many different types and styles in a variety of different colors. I enjoyed the hunt for a good pair of shoes to match my outfits. Having a variety made me happy. As a child I was taught to look at people's shoes as "they told a story." This was the way my family taught me to not stare at people while waiting for an appointment. Little did

they know that later this would grow into a hobby. How much more does God love all of His different children? So much more than my love for shoes that I eventually grew out of. God never grows tired of His creation. He loves us so much that He plans our future for us, and this is no ordinary future. His Word declares, "'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future'" (Jer. 29:11).

Program Ideas

Show a PowerPoint presentation of God's creation.

God has given us so many great things to enjoy. We can look around our world and see the many unique designs by our Creator God. He carefully hung stars that light up uniquely at night for our enjoyment. The vast number of plants tell us a story of our Creator's mighty design. Taking a look at the plants and flowers from everywhere can allow us to experience what it might be like to live in another part of the world. Making flower arrangements can allow a bonding time while showing us how beautiful things are when we come together for a specific propose.

Sharing our Culture

Invite the women to bring in their favorite food dish or favorite fruit to share. They may want to bring an item that is unique to their culture. Sharing through food brings the senses alive and helps us to relate to other cultures.

Tips for International Fruits

Purchase some different international fruits for the women to try. The following website shows images of these fruits and a description of how they taste:

<http://everintransit.com/exotic-fruits/>



Dragon Fruit

Service Project

Ask the participants to purchase flip-flops and take them to a women's recovery facility, ARC, or homeless shelter.

Decorations

Decorate each table with a specific country's theme based on the women in your group. For Mexico use a piñata with a bright colored table cloth. Another table might have Chinese New Year decorations, while another might contain an English tea pot.

Made In The Image Of God

From the beginning God had a perfect plan. He created heaven and earth, sky and sea. He created a wonderful variety of plants and animals. He designed them with intricate detail. In the night sky He hung the stars, the moon and sun so that they would light up the sky. Then in the East He planted a garden where He put His special creation, Adam and Eve. God's plan was always good. However, man's disobedience and sin changed His plan.

We read in Genesis 1:27, "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created them; male and female." All humankind was made in the image of God. But sin came into the world because man wanted to be like God. *"God created them [Adam and Eve] in a state of innocency, but by their disobedience they lost their purity and happiness, and that in consequence of their fall all men have become sinners, totally depraved, and as such are justly exposed to the wrath of God"* (The Salvation Army, Doctrine #5). Because of Adam and Eve's sin we are all sinners. "For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:22:23). But the good news is recorded in Romans 3:24 "and all are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus." Because God loves us He made a way for the whole world to be saved. He demonstrated His love in the most sacrificial way by sending His precious Son, Jesus Christ to die for all our sins. John 3:16 tells us that because He loved the whole world ... (the **whole** world) that He sent His son to die for us. God's love is for the whole world, and because of that love we are to love one another.

Our God takes broken, worn-out, hurting people and restores them. He takes all of us who have been hurt by other broken people and He changes us, redeems us, rebuilds us, and restores us. When we allow God's power to take over our lives, we can experience His love and we can love others through Him. When we surrender, we are able to experience hope for reconciliation, unity, the power of God and a surrendered heart, which changes our lives.

We all need to be restored so that we can love and forgive those who have hurt us. Jesus told us "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another" (John 13:34). When we realize how He has loved us, how can we not forgive those who have hurt us?

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, the reality is that we are all sinners. Today we stand broken before you and confess our sins. We hold onto the promise that, "If we confess our sins, He [God] is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Father, heal our brokenness and help us to forgive those who have hurt us because You forgive us. In Jesus name, Amen.

About author



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Education Programs

February 2022 – Legacy of Hope

February 1, 2022 By Captain Amber West



Show and Tell

Invite the women ahead of time to bring a small heirloom or memento from their family. Have the women share with the group what that item means to them and why.

Video

There are many videos on the internet about foster care and testimonials from families. Here is one example: <https://sw-ke.facebook.com/Proj127/videos/10155179252241652/>

Project 1.27 is a local nonprofit in Grand Junction, Colorado that helps prepare families for foster care and matches children with families.

Foster Care Information

Contact a local foster care agency to invite a social worker to talk to the women about what is involved in becoming a foster family. If this is difficult, the Internet can provide information about foster care that can be shared with the women.

Duffle Bag Drive

Often when children are removed from their homes and are transitioned into a new family, their few possessions are thrown into a trash bag. Invite the women to look through their closets and see if they have any garment bags or small suitcases that they are not using. Ask the women to donate some basic items to be put in the bags. The following website gives ideas for assembling baby bags, kids bags and teen bags.

<https://www.fosterloveproject.org/bag-drives.html>

Donate the collected bags to a local nonprofit that helps with foster care placement.

[How to hold a collection drive with your social circle.](#)

My Family

I grew up in a very tight knit family. Every holiday we had big family get-togethers. I used to joke with my friends about having four Christmases. We had Christmas morning with my immediate family. We had a Christmas party with my Dad's side of the family. We had another Christmas party with my Mom's paternal side of the family. And we had yet another celebration with my Mom's maternal side of the family. I cherished all of them, and not just for the presents. But sharing each tradition was precious to me. Every time a grandparent told a story of what it was like when my ancestors immigrated to America, I always thought to myself, "I hope I can make my family proud like this one day," or "I hope I can live up to the legacy of my family." However, I quickly found out that my family wasn't as perfect as I thought. I was still proud to be a member, and I have never doubted the fact that I am loved and am worthy of their love. Although things aren't picture-perfect, I knew that I belong and was wanted.

While I grew up with unswerving love in my household, there are so many children who don't have that experience. I'm reminded of all the children without families of their own. On any given day in the United States of America, there are 443,000 children in the foster care system. These children have had their worlds turned upside down. I think about the legacy that I want to live up to and wonder, what legacy do these children have? Where have they

come from? What examples have been set for them? Abuse? Sorrow? Neglect? Broken homes? Pain and suffering? Some will be separated from their siblings. Some will get bounced from house to house not knowing the consistent love that so many of us grew up with and that every child deserves. Psalm 68:5, 6 says, "A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in His holy dwelling."(NIV).

I remember when I truly surrendered my life to God. I was so overwhelmed with love and hope from the Holy Spirit that I almost didn't know what to do with myself. I just sat there and cried. I felt complete for the first time in my life. I felt "good enough." I don't have the answer on how we can help all these children who wonder if they're worthy of love, but I know we can start by praying for them. We can pray that these children will understand how God sees them. We can pray that God will call more people to foster and adopt. We can pray that God will strengthen those already involved in foster care and adoption. We should pray for God's comfort to be with these children in the most difficult time of their lives. We should also pray that God will show us how we can get involved.

While we didn't all grow up in loving homes or with families that adored us, when we enter the family of God, we inherit a new legacy to live up to. Lamentations 3:24 says, "I say to myself, "The Lord is my inheritance; therefore, I will hope in Him!" (NLT). Despite where we've come from or what we've experienced, we can find hope in God's perfect love.

Resources

<https://www.fosterloveproject.org/resources-for-fosteradoptive-caregivers.html>

About author



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Education Programs

March 2022 – Celebrate Women's History!

March 1, 2022 By Lt. Meagan Ruff



Featured Image: The First Lady Mrs. Barbara Bush and General Eva Burrows of The Salvation Army

Introduction

March is National Women's History Month. We take time this month to recognize the hard work and accomplishments of so many women across the globe and throughout history. It is

a great time to remind ourselves and those around us how strong, resilient, brave, gracious and intelligent women have been in the past and continue to be today.

As believers, we get the privilege to look at how Jesus treated women while he was on earth. In a time where women were usually considered chattel and less than a man, Jesus continually chose to act in ways that were counter-cultural. He elevated women, bringing justice to them individually and as a whole so that we can be encouraged, inspired and followers of Him.

Décor Ideas

- Frame photos of prominent women throughout history, The Salvation Army, and your own community to use on the tables as centerpieces.
- Using Canva or another online creator to print out famous quotes or scripture verses fitting with the theme. These can be framed for table decorations or printed as bookmarks for women to take home.
- If you use multiple tables in your ministry, each one can have a theme based on a different woman. For example, a table with Catherine Booth could include a Salvation Army flag, stack Salvation Army books or biographies, a Bible, or a timbrel. A table featuring Amelia Earhart could include toy airplanes, aviator goggles, and a tied handkerchief like she often wore in photos.



Commander Evangeline Booth and Aviator Amelia Earhart.

Program Ideas

Create and Inspire

This activity is meant to be simple, quick and easily adaptable for any group size. The goal is to get women to engage in conversation with each other, and to recognize ways that they can inspire and encourage each other and those outside of their usual circle.

*Distribute coloring sheets and provide colored pencils or fine tip markers for women to create. For each group, provide a basket with 'inspire' prompts. Have women draw a prompt from the basket and answer the question. Invite them to draw something that represents their answer. This should provide meaningful and inspiring conversation in an informal setting.

*Prompt ideas:

- What woman has inspired you in your life? In your ministry?
- What is your go-to Bible verse when you need hope?
- Is there a time that God used you to inspire or give hope to someone else?
- In what ways do you hope to inspire other women in their faith?

Reach Out

This activity is great for groups that are interested in serving and reaching out to the community. It can be organized in a way that is quick for those with short meeting times, or a more adventurous group can turn this activity into an outing.

- Using greeting cards or scrapbook paper, have women create encouragement cards for women who may be going through a difficult time. This would be a great opportunity to include scripture, but they can also use other resources as inspiration (quotes from books or articles, drawings, or music lyrics would also be great). Once completed, these cards should be distributed to women in the community—those who are homeless, women who come to the corps for social services, or to a local domestic violence shelter.
- A second option for this activity is to create thank you/encouragement cards for women who serve in your community—women firefighters, police officers, emergency medical technicians, teachers, or doctors. You can make a list ahead of time for women to choose from, or you can select a destination and deliver the notes as a group to a local hospital, fire station, or school.



Ensign Signa Saunders serving the troops, 1918.

A Legacy

There is no question that many of the women we honor this month worked hard and endured much for their accomplishments and recognition. Many women we recognize as pioneers did not live to know the legacy they left behind. Certainly, God has put so many women ahead of us to leave legacies of accomplishment, restoration and hope, but He has also left us another resource in our journey toward holiness—His Word.

Sometimes, I feel like the only way I can accomplish anything great is to work so hard at a project that it consumes me. Hours of study or physical training, extreme focus on my goals and hopes, and in the end, I'm left feeling let down, because even if I accomplish what I was working toward, I'm left with the feeling that it isn't quite "enough."

In 1 Timothy 4:8-10 (NLT), Paul gives Timothy a reminder that most days I also need. He says, "Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come. This is a trustworthy saying that everyone should accept it. This is why we work hard and continue to struggle, for our hope is in the living God, who is the Savior

of all people and particularly of all believers." We can physically or mentally train ourselves all we want, but what is really important is to train ourselves for godliness. We should be striving above all for holiness, because our hope, the hope of all people, is in Jesus.

Additional Resources

[Five Women Who Shaped Salvation Army History](#)

[Amelia Earhart Guest at Annual Event in the Salvation Army camp](#)

[Book Review – Aggressive Christianity](#)

[ENSIGN MABEL BROOME](#)

[GENERAL EVA BURROWS](#)

[A Helmet Full of Doughnuts](#)

[womenshistorymonth.gov](#)

[Smithsonian American Women's History](#)

[juniaproject.com](#)

About author



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Education Programs

April 2022 – Hope Eternal

April 1, 2022 By Major Regina Shull



“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3).

April is National Humor Month. Help the women to celebrate because we have an eternal hope and can experience joy even in dark times.

Decorations

Yellow is a bright, fun, color that seems to bring happiness and excitement to any day. Use yellow table clothes, with Baby's Breath in mason jars with laughing emoji cutouts to help set the tone for the night. Place a banner with the words "The sun will come out tomorrow" in a prominent place in the room.

Refreshments

Ask the women to bring dishes to share that brighten up their day. Some ideas: fruit salad, lemon bars or cakes, cheese and crackers. Serve lemonade or fruit drinks. Below are photos for inspiration on ways to use yellow.



Activities

It is said that laughter is the best medicine during dark times and can brighten up everyone's day. Following are some games to get the women laughing.

- 1** Tongue Twister Game: Pick some tongue twisters for the women to try. Have them start out slowly and then do it faster and faster. The following website has many examples: <https://www.mondly.com/blog/2019/08/23/71-best-tongue-twisters-to-perfect-your-english-pronunciation/#funny-tongue-twisters>.
- 2** Play **Telestrations**: This game mixes the childhood telephone game with Pictionary. The first player picks a word from a basket and draws a picture depicting that word. The drawing is passed to the woman on her left. That person then tries to guess the word based on the drawing. She writes that word on a new piece of paper and passes it to the next person. That person sees neither the original word nor the drawing but just the new word. Then they try to draw it and pass it to the next player. After it makes it around the table the players review the pictures and guesses. Award a prize to any table participants who ends up with a picture of the original word.
- 3** That makes me laugh: Have each person write five things that make them smile and five things that make them laugh.



The Sun Will Come Out Tomorrow

You have probably heard the quote, "Laughter is the best medicine." Well it is very true. Here are some quotes about laughter:

"A cheerful heart is good medicine ... " (Prov. 17:22)

"Laughing is literally the cheapest form of therapy and by far the most pleasant one. It has the power to heal not only your soul, but also your body."-Flavia Medrut

"As soap is to the body, so laughter is to the soul."- Jewish Proverb

"Laugh my friend, for laughter ignites a fire within the pit of your belly and awakens your being." – Stella McCartney

"Trouble knocked at the door, but, hearing laughter, hurried away."- Benjamin Franklin

What would the world be like without laughter? I cannot imagine, because I love to laugh. I remember as a child doing silly things in front of my family just to see and hear them laugh. There is a sense of joy and happiness that is brought out by laughter. What is more contagious than hearing the giggles of a sweet baby. Just thinking about it brings a smile to my face.

But what about those hard, tough, days when laughter seems to be so far from your mind. Every thought brings tears to your eyes. You feel that you will never be able to laugh again or find hope or joy in those times. The song that comes to mind when thinking about how to find hope when you are facing such troubles and struggles is the song from the musical "Annie," "The Sun Will Come out Tomorrow," by [Alicia Morton](#). Some of the words of that song are:

"Just thinkin' about
Tomorrow
Clears away the cobwebs
And the sorrow
'Til there's none!

When I'm stuck with a day
That's grey
And lonely
I just stick out my chin
And grin
And say

The sun will come up tomorrow."

As you sit watching a sunrise, it brings with it promises of new beginnings and hope. Which is also a reminder of what God gives to us each morning: "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (1 Pet. 1:3). Because the "Son of God" has risen, we are given the hope of a new day to start afresh and renewed by His grace and mercy. It is that hope that we can cling to even on the toughest of days, because we know that tomorrow the Son will rise again with promises from the Father. So allow God to heal your heart on those dark days, so that you can find a way to laugh and share in the joy of who He is in your life.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for being a God who not only shares in our laughter and joys, but also in our hardship and sorrows. Help us Lord to remember Your Son, Jesus, who has given us the hope of a new day and a new life. God, we thank you so much for these beautiful reminders of Your mercy and love from the rising of the Son to the joy of laughter, we give You praise. Thank you, Father for Your promises in our lives today. Amen.

Resources

[Telestrations](#)

[Annie Movie](#)

About author



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Education Programs

May 2022 – Creative Ways to Improve Your Prayer Life

May 1, 2022 By Captain Harryette O'Brien



Scripture: Romans 12:12

I can remember when I prayed for some of the things that I now have. When I was younger, I prayed for my future spouse. I prayed that he would be handsome, funny and love God. After marrying the man that I had begged God for, I can remember those painful days of praying that He would give us children. I can remember the days of praying that I would be strong enough to follow the calling God had placed on my heart. As I watch my two kids run around and my husband chase after them, I am overwhelmed with gratitude for how God has

answered my prayers. He is such a good gift giver. One of His greatest gifts is prayer. He wants an intimate relationship with us, for us to communicate with Him daily.

Prayer is our way of talking to God. We don't have to go through a middle man, put in a request, or adhere to some policy and procedure. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ who covers the gap, you and I can talk to God whenever we want. What a blessing! Let's take advantage of this beautiful gift we have been given.

Don't worry about finding the "right words," doing it the "right" way, or messing up. God isn't picky about the specifics of your technique; He wants to talk with you. Whether you are chatting with God on the drive to the office, writing in a prayer journal, singing songs of praise, or praying scripture, God is interested in what you have to say.

Romans 12:12 tells us, "Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer." Pray faithfully, friends! Need help getting started? Here are some creative ways that can help add variety to your prayer life. Who knows, you may find your favorite among this list.

- 1 Prayer Journals—There are plenty of options to choose from, between the Christian Book Distributors Club and Amazon. Google different things that you like. I prefer a blank composition notebook. I make lists (of those needing prayer), write letters to God, and copy songs, poetry and scripture. This is a great place to put those picture cards you receive during the holidays, for announcements and invitations. My prayer journals are a continued conversation with God that has lasted over seven years.
- 2 Praying scripture—Get your Bible out, pick scripture (the book of Psalms is a great start), find some space, and start walking and reading. Feel free to read out loud or silently. After you finished a few sentences, let God speak into your life.
- 3 Music and Reflection—Find some worship music that speaks to your soul. Sit back and sing the songs to God. If you love creativity, grab a coloring book and create art for God as you sing Him praises and prayers.
- 4 Social Media requests—Get on social media and ask people how you can pray for them or celebrate with them for answered prayers. Write those prayers down and go before the Lord. You can add these to a prayer journal.
- 5 Prayer Walk—Pick a building, a community, or specific streets in town. Walk along that area and pray for the people you pass. Pray blessings and safety over them. Speak words of transformation over the buildings, for the people who work and visit there, and for the business that is conducted in them. Pray for that space.

Activity: Prayer Journals

Supplies:

- Composition notebooks

- Pens/Pencils/Markers
- Stickers
- Photo cards (Holiday cards, announcements, invitations)
- Resources: Bibles, Songbook, Poems

Instructions and Ideas:

- Start writing! Be creative with stickers, colors and pictures. There's no pressure if you want to stick with the classic ballpoint pen. Write "Volume 1" and the date on the inside.
- Give each family member or close friend a page. This will be where you write or draw your prayers for them.
- Find a song of praise, scripture, or poem that speaks to your heart and copy that into your journal. Turn those words into your prayers to the Creator of the universe.
- "Dear God"... Write a letter to God. I love writing letters to God. This avenue provides me a space to feel comfortable and talk to God as my friend and confidant.
- Ask others for prayer requests and make a list. Pray for those individuals, and then in a separate color make a note when those requests are answered. It is beautiful to look back and see what a good gift-giver God is.
- Keep this going throughout the year. Try to fill up an entire journal during the year. At the end, put the completed date on the inside cover next to the start date.

Activity: Group Prayer

Supplies:

- Writing utensil
- Scraps of paper to write on
- Container

Instructions:

- Have each woman write a topic on a piece of paper.
- Gather all the topics together in a container.
- Pass container around and have each woman pick a piece of paper.
- After every topic has been chosen, open in prayer, and allow for each member to pray for the subject they picked.

Topic Suggestions:

- The President
- Political leaders around the world
- State/City/Community
- Friends
- Family
- The Salvation Army (organization and leadership)
- Future generations
- Christians around the world
- Individuals who are not saved
- What you are grateful for

King David penned many of the chapters in the book of Psalms. They are prayers of thanksgiving, joyfulness, profound grief, brokenness, shame, overwhelming peace and assurance. Let's take a note out of David's playbook and be as authentic with God as we can. *"I waited patiently for the Lord; He turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; He set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord" (Psalm 40:1-3).* Allow God to put a new song in your mouth, a song of prayer that is continually on your lips.

Prayer Resources

[PRAYERS FOR WHEN EVERYTHING IS TOO MUCH](#)

[Prayer Journal for Women](#)

[THE PRIVILEGE OF PRAYER](#)

About author



Captain Harryette O'Brien

USA Western Territory



Education Programs

June 2022 – My Faith Has Found a Resting Place

June 1, 2022 By Major Kathy Merritt



Decorations

Use a black and white color scheme and anything to do with music— sheet music, music stands, instruments—and hang music notes from the ceiling. Have Salvation Army brass music playing as background music.

Snacks

For a fun little snack purchase some Bugles.

History

There's nothing in the world like the sound of your favorite song. It just gets into your head and your body and makes you move. Or maybe it takes you on a journey to a faraway place and time, where you languish in a memory gone by and people who are no longer present. Our favorite songs can lift us out of depression and make an otherwise horrible day suddenly seem not so bad. **World Music Day** celebrates music in all its forms and the impact it has had on the world and the human spirit.

History of World Music Day – June 21

Music has existed for as long as mankind has found its voice. Every culture of the world has its own form of music, as distinct and unique to its area as its language and cuisine. World Music Day started 37 years ago in France. In 1982, France's Ministry of Culture dreamed up an idea for a new kind of musical holiday. They imagined a day where free, live music would be everywhere—street corners and parks, rooftops and gardens, store fronts and mountaintops. And unlike a typical music festival, anyone and everyone would be invited to join and play music or host performances. The event would always take place on the summer solstice, June 21. Amazingly this dream came true. France shuts down on the summer solstice and the musicians take over. Three decades later, the holiday has spread throughout the world and is now celebrated in more than 120 countries, including the United States. (makemusicday.org)

How To Celebrate World Music Day

The best way to celebrate World Music Day is to spend the day listening to all your old favorites, and if you're truly feeling adventurous start exploring YouTube for music from different cultures. You can explore Finnish and Hungarian, Italian and Mongolian, and then start digging into the local music of other cultures. With sources like these, it's easier than ever to explore the panorama of musical experiences the world has to offer, and you can do it all from the comfort of your own home. Of course, you could always pick up an instrument and start adding your own voice to the choir

Play the following YouTube videos and discuss the memories that come to mind as you listen to these hymns. Investigate the date and the reason behind each song.

"In the Garden" (Medley) – Sandi Patty https://youtu.be/0u17k750_CA

"Because He Lives" – The Gaither Vocal Band https://youtu.be/2Oz_caE8oQE

"I Surrender All" – CeCe Winans <https://youtu.be/rfkzzG2wAdc>

A Resting Place

Play the Hymn: "My Faith Has Found A Resting Place" by Lidie Edmonds, which is available on YouTube.

Has your faith found a resting place? Saving faith is much more than a commitment to a creed, a church, or a doctrinal system. It must be a commitment to a person—Jesus Christ. Doctrinal statements and creeds are important in defining and delineating truth, but they must never replace a personal relationship with "The Truth." We can get so caught up in the religiosity of credal statements, interpretations and arguments, or church traditions that we lose the sense of simple, child-like trust in Christ and His written Word.

This was the concern of the apostle Paul. "I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ" (2 Cor. 11:3). Again and again we must take inventory and determine what is the real foundation of our spiritual lives and the source of our resting place. Is it in Christ or merely a creed?

Little is known about the author of the hymn "My Faith Has Found A Resting Place" or the source of the tune other than it is an old Norwegian melody. The hymn in its present form first appeared in the hymnal *Songs of Joy and Gladness*, published in 1891. It has become increasingly popular in recent years as a testimonial hymn in church services. May it testify of your faith in God.

Verse 1: My faith has found a resting place—not in device or creed; I trust the ever living One—His wounds for me shall plead.

Verse 2: Enough for me that Jesus saves—this ends my fear and doubt, a sinful soul I come to Him — He'll never cast me out.

Verse 3: My heart is leaning on the Word—the written Word of God; Salvation by my Savior's name—salvation thru His blood.

Verse 4: My great Physician heals the sick; the lost He came to save; for me His precious blood He shed; for me His life He gave.

Chorus: I need no other argument, I need no other plea; it is enough that Jesus died, and that He died for me.

Discuss each verse of this hymn and the meaning of each. Share with one another the faithfulness of God as we find Him to be our resting place.

Read the following verses: Job 19:25,27; Psalm 31:19; Isaiah 32:17; John 14:6; 1 John 5:13.

Prayer Time

Pray as a symphony! Lift your voices together and pray for the person next to you all at the same time. This wonderful chaotic time of prayer will make a musical symphony to the Lord on behalf of each of you.

Resources

<https://www.facebook.com/makemusicday>

[The Power Of The Arts In Sharing The Gospel](#)

<https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/music-and-creative-arts/music-resources>

He Lives - featuring musicians from The Salvation Army's USA Western Territ...



About author



Major Kathy Merritt

USA Western Territory



Education Programs

July 2022 – Grounds for Hope

July 1, 2022 By Lt. Felecia Pederson



Introduction

With seemingly never-ending tasks—families to take care of, work and other demands on our time—we often wonder how we can find a good balance in our daily lives. Being well grounded comes from reminding ourselves of Christ's never-failing protection in all circumstances.

If possible, host this program outside. Consider meeting at a park or a nearby hiking trail. If this is difficult, host a virtual walk by putting together a PowerPoint presentation that features God's creation.

Welcome

Gather together and take a moment to reflect on the beauty of creation and the Creator. Have everyone breathe deeply and recognize the importance of being grounded at this moment. Following is a link for grounding techniques:

<https://www.healthline.com/health/grounding-techniques>

Activity

For outside

Ahead of time, scout out where you go for the hike. Familiarize yourself with the level of energy needed and what is best for the women attending.

Set up several spots along the hike to stop and focus on how to ground ourselves. At each spot, 1) share a portion of the devotion); 2) focus on the beauty around you; 3) eat a snack, drink water and rest.

For inside

Prepare various spots around the corps where the woman will stop. Print beautiful pictures of mountains, trees, and rivers, and post them at each spot for the women to focus on. Have a nature soundtrack playing softly in the background. You can have multiple grounding stations. Plan on doing a part of the devotion at each spot.

Favors

Print the scripture and paste onto water bottles to hand out during your hike or have sitting on the tables if you are inside.

Decorations

Focus on nature and decorate the tables with tan or beige tablecloths with plants, candles and rocks. Include printouts of beautiful scenery and scatter them on the tables.

Refreshments

- Have the women bring healthy snacks and water to share, or bring a sack lunch to eat on the hike.

- Create a healthy trail mix. Here is a link to a healthy trail mix recipe:
<https://www.thehealthymaven.com/how-to-build-a-healthy-trail-mix/>

Sharing

When we are on a hike, we can often experience times of weariness as we navigate difficult paths and encounter unexpected trials (branches, bugs, rain). These things can stretch our endurance. When we face challenges in life, our faith can be tested as well. We need to take time to ground ourselves in the assurance of our salvation and in the hope of reaching our destination. Invite the women to share some current trials and difficulties that they are facing. Have the women stand in a circle and pray for the person on their right.

Grounds of Hope

Read Psalm 46:1–3 NIV.

- Be Grounded in the Word—have a sure footing.

How many of you have tripped over something on the ground? There have been times when I placed my foot incorrectly and hurt myself. There are many things in life that can trip us up. We must have the ability to recognize the truth from lies. We read in Psalm 46:1 “God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble.” We also know that we do not need to fear anything in this life because we have hope, knowing that this life is not the end of our story. If God is our Lord and our Father, we will live with Him for eternity in the place He has prepared for us.

- Grounded in Prayer—we are not alone.

Do you go hiking or for a walk on your own? There are times when we long for the solitude that comes from being by ourselves in nature. Even during these quiet times, we can have hope remembering that we are not alone. God is our refuge. He is the One we can run to; He is our strength. When we go to Him in prayer, He is with us on our journey. We are then free to enjoy life fully!

- Be Grounded in Fellowship—help others along the path.

Was there a time when someone gave you hope in the middle of a difficult circumstance? These are the times that helps us keep going. Sometimes we need to rely on someone to help us on a particularly difficult or steep trail. We need to accept help as well as offer help to others. God is our ever-present help and is always there for us. As we recognize this truth, we have a purpose and are able to continue on even when times are hard. Take time for fellowship with God and with fellow Christians.

Prayer

Dear Lord,

Thank you for the beauty of the nature you created. What a blessing to be a part of your many beautiful creations. Help us today to have hope as we are grounded in Your Word, in prayer and in fellowship. We read in Matthew 7:24-25, (Amplified), " So everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, will be like a wise man [a far-sighted, practical, and sensible man] who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods and torrents came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock." Help us to look to You as our help and our protector and to build our life on You, our solid rock. We trust You with all that concerns us today. Amen.

About author



Lt. Felecia Pederson

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Education Programs

August 2022 – Hopelifters

August 1, 2022 By Captain Shawn Keoho



When we get bogged down by life's problems and heartaches, it can be difficult to find hope, let alone be a hopelifter for someone else. I have experienced many painful situations when I wondered where God was. I felt so utterly alone in the darkness of my own pain. There's a saying: "God won't give you more than you can handle" or "This is a time of great learning through His great stretching." To be completely honest, sometimes that wasn't what I wanted to hear.

According to the dictionary, "Hope is commonly used to mean a wish: its strength is the strength of the person's desire." But in the Bible, hope is the confident expectation of what God has promised, and its strength is in His faithfulness. I have learned to live my life grounded in faith and driven by the biblical definition of hope.

As women, we feel deeply, we love deeply and sometimes we hurt deeply. Our love for our children, spouse, family members and friends can sometimes be painful. God created us with the ability to love so deeply that there are moments when we feel as though we might break. And there might be a season when we just feel broken. Life can be very difficult. Financial problems, employment problems, family problems feel like they will overwhelm us. How do we find hope in these moments? We need to remember that hope is the confident expectation of what God has promised, and its strength is in His faithfulness. We find Hope in God's faithfulness and promises. We read in 1 Thessalonians 4:17-18 (NIV): "After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so, we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words." Paul's reassurance is that we will be together with the Lord forever. We will suddenly and powerfully be brought together in the presence of God.

Imagine millions of beautiful butterflies rising together in the sky. That's what it will be like. We will be reunited with those who have fallen asleep before us. As deeply and as strongly as we love, the Lord's love for us is even deeper and stronger. Imagine Paul speaking to you, as he has seen the many hardships and heartbreaks you and I have endured. "We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess.1:3 (NIV).

There are four stages in the life of a butterfly. At what stage are you now? The first stage is the egg similar to when we first hear about the message of God's great love for us. As we feed on His Word, we mature as does the caterpillar. As we grow, God surrounds us with His continued love and changes us to be more like Him. For the butterfly this is the chrysalis stage. When we are fully mature, we become a beautiful butterfly. He is waiting for us to become one of the million butterflies that rise to the sky to spend eternity with Him. With eyes focused on God, hearts and hands dedicated to His work, we can be the example of grace, mercy and forgiveness towards others. We can live our lives grounded in faith and driven by hope. When we live in this way, we can become *Hopelifters* to all we encounter daily.

Activities

The Four Stages of a Butterfly

Put together a PowerPoint presentation of the four stages of the life of a butterfly. Information can be found on the Internet.

<https://www.thebutterflysite.com/life-cycle.shtml>

<https://www.joyfulbutterfly.com/life-cycle-of-a-butterfly/>

www.natgeokids.com/nz/discover/animals/insects/butterfly-life-cycle

Word Search

Create a Word Search using words associated with butterflies: Check the Internet for help in putting this together.

Crafts

For easy butterfly crafts check [Pinterest](https://www.pinterest.com).

<https://www.crayola.com/search/?category=coloring-pages&searchText=butterfly>

<https://www.instructables.com/DIY-Butterfly-Wings/>



A composite of various views of a Leopard Lacewing Butterfly emerging from it's chrysalis

About author



Captain Shawn Keoho

USA Western Territory



Education Programs

September 2022 – Whispers of Hope

September 1, 2022 By Captain Susan Cassin



Scripture: “Anxiety weighs down the heart, but a kind word cheers it up” (Prov. 12:25, NIV).

Did You Know?

Using the fact sheets regarding anxiety found at <https://adaa.org/about-adaa/press-room/facts-statistics>, put together a trivia game for the women to play. Prizes might include

candles, essential oils, facemasks, blankets, or adult coloring books.

Breathing Exercise

Many types of breathing exercises that can help control anxiety can be found on the Internet. Share the following simple exercise with the women:

Five Finger Breathing—Ask the women to hold out their hand. Starting at the outside base of their thumb, inhale and use the index finger of their other hand to trace up to the tip of their thumb. When they reach the tip of their thumb, have them hold their breath for a few seconds before moving their index finger down the other side of their thumb, exhaling as they do. At this point their index finger should now rest between their thumb and index finger. They'll repeat this process for each finger on their hand, and at the end they will have "taken five" breaths.

Tips

When experiencing anxiety in your life or observing it in others, here are some tips. For more information on these steps go to: <https://psychcentral.com/lib/9-ways-to-reduce-anxiety-right-here-right-now/>

- Take a deep breath
- Accept that you are anxious
- Question your thoughts
- Use calming visualization
- Be an observer—without judgment
- Use positive self-talk
- Focus on right now
- Focus on meaningful activities

Help for Today

We've all been there. After a long or difficult day, you've braved the busy grocery store. The line was miles long, the cashier extra chatty and the pin pad wasn't working correctly. You're finally home and it's time to unload today's purchases.

If you're like me, you don't relish the idea of taking multiple trips up and down the stairs between your car and your house. So, you roll up your sleeves, look critically at the bags in the trunk, and like a general directing their troops, you strategically begin loading up. Bags in hand, you somehow manage to shut the door to your car and begin the walk to your front

door. At first, the weight of the bags doesn't seem heavy, but as you approach the stairs and begin your ascent, gravity hits and your arms begin to feel fatigued.

You grit your teeth determined to make it and not drop a thing. You continue climbing the stairs and eventually, fearful your arms are going to give out, you arrive at your front door. You've made it! Except now you're standing before the locked door mystified as to how you can get it open without losing your cargo. After a few tries, you realize it's hopeless and with a sigh, you let go of the weight and unlock your door. Finally, inside and unpacked, you hope to take a quiet moment to recover from the day's events. We've all experienced something like this. We all know what it's like to carry a load so heavy that we're not sure we can get from point A to point B without something falling apart.

This scene is reminiscent of anxiety in our lives. When we don't manage our moments of anxiety, it can be like loading our arms up with these grocery bags. At first the weight might not seem too difficult to carry, and you may be managing it all just fine. Eventually, though you may soon find yourself staggering under the weight of all the old and new cares you carry from day to day.

God's Word talks about why we shouldn't worry. (*Read Matthew 6:25-34.*) We know that we serve a God who can handle anything. However, we can easily experience tunnel vision—able to see only what's directly in front of us. As a result, we can lose perspective and sometimes our confidence and hope too.

In moments like this, it can be helpful to send out a mayday signal to a friend. Proverbs 12:25 tells us that "Anxiety weighs down the heart, but a kind word cheers it up." When we are faced with weighty moments of anxiety, we may need to reach out to our friends, family, therapist, officer, or other individuals that we trust to speak into our lives and share our burdens.

God didn't intend for any of us to do life alone. He knew that we would need others around us. In fact, God says, "It is not good for man to be alone" (Genesis 2:18 NIV). Thus, He made a companion for Adam in the form of Eve.

Who are the companions that God has placed in your life? Who are the people who can help you find perspective and encouragement? To whom can you be a friend, helping to release the burden that anxiety can be? Let's pray for His guidance in these situations.

About author



Captain Susan Cassin

USA Western Territory

Fellowship Programs



THE SALVATION ARMY WOMEN'S MINISTRIES RESOURCES

Hope for the World

2021-2022 PROGRAM YEAR

“ For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Jeremiah 29:11





Fellowship Programs

October 2021 – Hopeful Beginnings

October 1, 2021 By Major Mary Ann Wood



A Few of My Favorite Things

Introduction

This program will help women get to know each other better at the beginning of the program year.

Program Ideas

Ask the women to come to the meeting prepared with a few of their favorite things. Give them a list before the meeting of items you would like them to bring or share. The list might include:

- Wear your favorite outfit. It can be as casual as your pajamas or as fancy as a ball gown.
- Bring your favorite scripture verse on an index card. If they don't do this in advance, have cards and a Bible available for their use at the meeting.
- Provide a favorite fall snack to share.
- Bring something that reminds you of a favorite women's ministry memory.
- Bring something that reminds you of favorite childhood/family/school memory.
- Bring your favorite book other than the Bible.
- Bring a copy of a favorite hymn or Christian song.

Favorite Items

Designate a table to display the items the women brought—favorite scripture verse, photos, books. Number each item. Ask the women to try to identify who brought which item. After the reveal, give that person time to explain why it's their favorite.

Favorite Books

If they brought a favorite book, ask them to share what they love about it. If they are willing, they may offer to exchange the book with another woman so they can read each other's favorite.

Favorite Outfits

For those women who wore their favorite outfits, have a brief fashion show. Invite the women to walk the runway and explain their ensembles. Or ask someone to narrate the fashion show.

Favorite Songs

For those who brought a copy of the music for a favorite songs, try singing a couple of the favorites. Or locate them on YouTube and play them for the group, encouraging everyone to sing along.

Snacks

For fall snacks, make a smorgasbord of the favorite fall snacks brought by the women. You may want to ask a few of them ahead of time to be prepared to bring items to share. After everyone has helped themselves, direct the conversation around their favorite food memories.

Other Favorite Things

Ask the women to make up a question that solicits a one word answer. For example: favorite color, movie, holiday.

The Sound of Music

Show a clip from The Sound of Music in which Julie Andrews sings "My Favorite Things."

My Favorite Things

In "The Sound of Music," Maria's strategy for coping with life's fears, hardships and sadness is to remember her favorite things. If she focuses her mind on these things, she doesn't feel so bad. During this time together we shared some of our favorite things. What makes something a favorite? It could be that we associate it with good feelings, positive experiences, comfort, security or enjoyment. It is our favorite for personal reasons. Like Maria, thinking about your favorites things can put a smile on your face and change your mood.

Beyond merely thinking about favorite things to get into a better mood, Christian women will look to God to make a difference in our lives. We know that what we think about, what we dwell on, what we meditate on has a powerful effect on us. Scripture tells us, "And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right and pure, and lovely and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise" (Phil. 4:8, NLT).

What we allow into our minds influences our beliefs and behavior. The world bombards us with so many things that are contrary to God's plan. We must guard our minds in order to grow in our faith. The enemy tells us lies, and we have to combat them with the truth. Better than "whiskers on kittens or bright copper kettles" are the promises and the truth found in God's Word. The Father pours out on us His good and perfect gifts every day. But sometimes we miss them because the world crushes in on us. He give us His favorite things to us to help us through difficult days and to add blessing to our lives. James 1:17 explains, "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."

During this time together, we shared some of our favorite scriptures. It is good for us to share these treasures from God's Word. This is how we can come along side one another and encourage each other. These treasures help us when life is challenging. The Word of God affirms that He is with us and He is for us. When we don't know what to do, God's Word gives

us direction. When we are afraid, when we are hurt, when we are sad, we need our favorite scriptures to draw us near to God.

Did you learn anything new about someone today? Does anyone have some of the same favorite things as you? Knowing someone's favorite will help to bring them to mind when you see them. Let's commit to pray for one another and continuing sharing God's Word with each other.

Closing prayer.

About author



Major Mary Ann Wood

USA Central Territory



Fellowship Programs

November 2021 – Hope In Christ

November 1, 2021 By Danielle Moushey



Introduction

This program is a fellowship tea where the women will discuss questions and inspirational scriptures about who we are in Christ.

Scriptures: 1 John 1:7, Ephesians 2:10, Romans 8

Refreshments

For a larger group have a potluck meal. For a smaller group serve warm beverages and light snacks.

Activity

Who Am I? Guessing Game

Invite each woman to write down something interesting about themselves that most people in the group are not likely to know. This game can be played in two ways depending on the size of the group. For larger groups, split the women into two teams who guess the identity of the woman whose fact is shared. For smaller groups, have a designated reader. Whoever thinks they know the identity of the woman must be recognized before giving the answer.

Who Am I Collage

Invite each person is to write one word that describes the other people in the group. At the end of the activity each woman will have a list of positive personal qualities to help reinforce a positive self-identity. To make a take home memento for each woman, collect each list and put it into "Word Cloud" online and print. This can be accessed at: <https://wordart.com/create>. Or have the women write the words in calligraphy style on thick paper using a variety of colored pens.

Visiting the Scripture

At the end of the program, print the scripture verses which explain our identity in Christ. Invite each woman to choose one to read to the group.

Prayer Time

Ask each woman to claim one positive identity trait about themselves to focus on in the weeks ahead.

Who Are You?

Did you learn something new today about someone in our group? We often spend time with friends but don't learn the important details of their life. Did you learn anything that helped you to understand our group members better?

Matthew 16 records a conversation that Jesus had with His disciples. By this time He had been with the disciples for a considerable time. They had seen Him perform miracles. They had sat under His teachings and probably felt that they knew a lot about Him. But that day He asked them an usual question. (Matthew 16:13, 14): "Who do people say the Son of Man is? To which they replied, 'Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah and still others, Jeremiah or one of

the prophets.” He then went on to ask them (vs 15): “But what about you? Who do you say I am?” Peter was quick to answer, “God’s Messiah, the Son of the Living God” (Luke 9: 20). Jesus was pleased with Peter’s answer: “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven” (Matt. 16:17).

Today Jesus still asks that same question: “Who do you say I am?” It’s not enough for us to know what others believe about Jesus. What do we believe? Jesus wants us to take a stand and declare that He is the Messiah, God’s Son, who takes away the sins of the world.

Sample Closing Prayer

God, thank You for Your Word that tells us who we are because of who You are. I ask that You continue to remind each of us who we are and whose we are, Lord. The world will try to tear us down and force us to take on identities defined by our sins, our past, our mistakes. Help us to remain strong and stand firm in the promises You have for us. We are loved, forgiven, known, cherished, chosen, light, saints, citizens of Heaven and children of God. We are wonderfully made by a loving Creator. Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to die so that we may live in relationship with You. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.

Scripture Verses

- 1** Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being (Gen. 2:7).
- 2** So God created mankind in His own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female He created them (Gen. 1:27).
- 3** For You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother’s womb (Ps. 139:13).
- 4** I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. (Psalm 139:14)
- 5** So don’t be afraid, you are more valuable than many sparrows (Matt. 10:31).
- 6** You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor (Ps. 8:5).
- 7** Yet to all who did receive Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God (John 1:12).
- 8** I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing (John 15: 5).
- 9** I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you (John 15:15).
- 10** Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:1).

- 11** Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory (Rom. 8:17).
- 12** To you who have been called by God to be His own holy people. He made you holy by means of Christ Jesus, just as He did for all people everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours (1 Cor. 1:2, NLT).
- 13** Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own (1 Cor. 6:19).
- 14** But whoever is united with the Lord is one with Him in spirit (1 Cor. 6:17).
- 15** So then, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; what is old has passed away—look, what is new has come (2 Cor. 5:17).
- 16** For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not be subject again to the yoke of slavery (Gal. 5:1).
- 17** Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms in Christ (Eph. 1:3).
- 18** For He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world that we may be holy and unblemished in his sight in love (Eph. 1:4).
- 19** In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace (Eph. 1:7).
- 20** In Christ we too have been claimed as God's own possession, since we were predestined according to the one purpose of Him who accomplishes all things according to the counsel of His will (Eph. 1:11).
- 21** But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even though we were dead in transgressions, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you are saved (Eph. 2:4-5).
- 22** And he raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6).
- 23** For we are His workmanship, having been created in Christ Jesus for good works that God prepared beforehand so we may do them (Eph. 2:10).
- 24** For you were at one time darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of the light (Eph. 5:8).
- 25** But our citizenship is in heaven—and we also await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:20).
- 26** We know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that He has chosen you (1 Thess. 1:4).

About author



Danielle Moushey

USA Central Territory



Fellowship Programs

December 2021 – Hope Came Down at Christmas

December 1, 2021 By Captain Rachel Irvine



Scripture

“For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.” (Luke 2:30-32 NIV)

Cookie Exchange

A week or so before the program, create a sign-up sheet of those women willing to participate. Print a variety of cookie recipes or encourage the women to make cookies that are special to them or a tradition in their families. The number of cookies each woman will be asked to bring depends on the size of the group. Remember to include enough cookies to sample as part of the refreshments. The goal is for everyone to go home with several dozen cookies in a variety of flavors.

Decorations

Cover the tables with red or green tablecloths. Place festive Christmas centerpieces of glittery Christmas bulbs in glass vases on sheet music of Christmas carols. Reserve one table for the cookies with gold and silver doilies to go under the serving plates.

Activities:

Christmas Carol Pictionary Relay

Divide the women into two or more teams depending on the size of the group. Place the names of Christmas carols in a bowl. The players must identify the song based on the drawings their teammate makes. The teammate then races back to the bowl to grab another carol until they complete three rounds of Pictionary. The team that correctly guesses three songs first is the winner.

Christmas Bingo Game

[Etsy](#)

[Amazon](#)

Name that Christmas Song

Divide the women into 2 to 3 teams depending on the size of the group. The first team recites the first line of a Christmas carol. The other teams must complete the entire verse. Award extra points if they sing the song. The following site provides lyrics for the carols.

<http://christmas-carol-words.com/>

Craft: Make DIY Cookie Boxes

Make boxes for the women to take their cookies home.

<https://housefulofhandmade.com/easy-cookie-gift-boxes-diy/>

<https://www.itsalwaysautumn.com/easy-diy-folded-paper-cookie-treat-gift-box-tutorial.html>

<https://www.ohmy-creative.com/holiday-crafts/christmas/diy-cookie-box-gift-printable/>

Christmas Hope

Read Luke 2:25–38 NIV.

I love Christmas! It is a busy season and there is always something to do, especially at The Salvation Army. But more than the lights, decorations and food is the opportunity we have to affect the lives of people around us for the better. Whenever I think of Christmas Hope, I recall my childhood and one particular Christmas when my parents helped provide hope to someone who desperately needed it.

My parents are Salvation Army officers. One year during a particularly busy Christmas season they got a call about a woman who had just been released from prison. She had been given a train ticket so that she could get home to her family whom she hadn't seen for many years. The train didn't leave until much later that day and she had nowhere to go in the meantime. My parents picked her up and she helped us finish the Angel Tree shopping. They made sure that she had gifts for her family and meals for her trip. What my mother did was very simple and in her view anyone would have done the same, but I know that she obeyed the leading of the Spirit and brought a little Christmas hope into the life of the woman who came into our lives for a little while.

Each day we can encounter people who have very little hope. They have nowhere to turn and can feel very much alone. Will the Lord send such a person into your busy life during this Christmas season? Will you take the time to offer His hope and share that Jesus is the hope of the world?

About author



Captain Rachel Irvine

USA Central Territory



Fellowship Programs

January 2022 – Kenya Fundraising Dinner

January 1, 2022 By Major Melody Hamelund



Women's Ministries Fundraising Dinner Program

Hope for the Hungry: Spotlight Kenya

You can find excellent resources at centralmissions.org. Go to their Family Kits for Latin America North and Kenya, Mali and Tanzania.

Theme Verse: Matthew 28:19-20 "Therefore go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (NIV).

This event could be a fundraising dinner for World Services. Use simple Kenyan recipes that can be found on the Internet. You may want to ask the women to bring an ingredient, then divide the tasks to cook the meal together. Sell tickets ahead of time, or charge for the meal.

Decorations

Use tablecloths in the colors of the Kenyan flag: red, green, black and white. Use the Kenyan flag with explanation of the meanings as a part of the centerpieces. Place toys figurines, posters, pictures of animals native to Kenya around the room. (These can include the buffalo, elephant, leopard, lion, rhinoceros, crocodile, gazelle, giraffe, monkey and zebra.)



Kenya Flag

Craft

African Bead Necklace

Create an African bead necklace (instructions at <http://www.redtedart.com/easy-magazine-beads-diy>) to be given as a prize during the dinner, or include this craft as an activity during the dinner event.

Games

Kenyan Trivia Game

Create 10 trivia questions about Kenya. Each questions should have three possible answers: A, B, or C. Designate three areas of the room as A, B and C. Each person will move to the area they choose as their answer. Everyone choosing the incorrect answer will go back to their seat. Or if it would be more suitable, give the women a set of colored paper strips. If they choose the incorrect answer, they lose a strip of paper. The last one left with strips is the winner.

Mancala

This game has its origins in Africa as "Bao." [Mancala](#) is available at most stores in the United States. You could also make your own version very simply by using an egg carton and counters such as dry beans, marbles or beads. This is a two-player game, so it can be play as the group watches and have someone else come in to compete against the winner. Whoever has the longest winning streak can keep the game. You can find directions for this game on the Internet.

Swahili Phrases

Good morning	Habari za asubuhi!	(hah-bah-ree) (zah) (ah-soo-boo-hee)
Good day	Habari za leo!	(hah-bah-ree) (zah) (lay-oh)
Good afternoon	Habari za mchana!	(hah-bah-ree) (zahm-chah-nah)
Sleep well!/Goodnight!	Lala salama!	(lah-lah) (sah-lah-mah)
May I enter?	Hodi, hodi?	(hoh-dee) (hoh-dee)
Hello, how are you?	Habari gani?	(hah-bah-ree) (gah-nee)
Well, thank you!	Nzuri, asante!	(nn-zoo-ree) (ah-sahn-tay)
What's up?	Vipi?	(vee-pee)
Hello	Habari/hujambo	(hah-bah-ree)/(hoo-jahm-boh)
Hello, I'm fine	Sijambo	(see-jahm-boh)

(response to Hujambo)

Fine	Safi/Poa	(sah-fee)/(poh-ah)
Thank you	Asante	(ah-sahn-tay)
Thank you very much	Asante sana	(ah-sahn-tay) (sah-nah)
You're welcome	Karibu	(kah-ree-boo)
You're very welcome	Karibu sana	(kah-ree-boo) (sah-nah)
My name is...	Jina langu ni...	(jee-nah) (lahn-goo) (nee)

African Music

You can access African music on the Internet to play during the meal.

You may wish to show a video of The Salvation Army's work in Kenya. There are 4 segments in the "[Into the World: Kenya Joy Land](#)" series.

The Meal

One typical meal for Kenyans consists of ugali with a little bit of cooked vegetables or a saucy stew. You may wish to provide this basic meal or to offer other simple Kenyan dishes. Check the Internet or Pinterest for recipes. <https://www.africanbites.com/irio/>
<http://migrationology.com/kenyan-food/>

Food Glorious Food

Read Acts 10:1-22.

Most of us are familiar with the phrase "his eyes were bigger than his stomach." We've been warned not to go grocery shopping when we are hungry. Why this warning? Because we are often tempted to buy food that looks and sounds good even though the items are not on our list and may not be very nutritious. There is definitely a connection between our stomach and our eyes. This connection can apply to our spiritual eyes as well as our physical eyes.

In the scripture portion from Acts 10 that was just shared, we see that when Peter was hungry God gave him a vision about food. But it wasn't about his favorite foods or even food that he considered good for him. It was an assortment of foods that by tradition he wasn't allowed to eat. He was puzzled and asked God what it meant. He had avoided those foods for what he thought were good, spiritual reasons. It was fine for other people to eat those foods, but certainly not him. Yet the voice in his vision answered (verse 15): "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean." To get the point across, this answer came three times.

While Peter was still hungry and wondering what this vision meant, Cornelius' men arrived at his door. When they explained why they were there, Peter understood the vision and went with them. He was to bring the gospel to seekers from another culture. His world was opened, and the kingdom of God was expanded that day. The Great Commission (Matthew 28:19, 20) was revealed to him as something beyond his own set of rules and customs.

Have you ever gone to someone's home for a meal and they served something foreign to you? Maybe they served food from a culture different from yours. How did you react? I was taught as a child that if invited to a meal at someone's home, I was to eat what was prepared and receive it happily and politely, even if it was something unusual. It was a sign of respect.

Later in life, I prepared for those situations by attending the meal hungry. I found I could eat anything if I was hungry. When I was a guest of someone from a different culture, I saw that they watched me as I ate with hopes that I would enjoy the meal. I saw that the meal was an important part of their family life, and I felt honored to be included in such an intimate show of love and unity as we passed the food around the table. Tonight we can imagine ourselves sitting around a table in a Kenyan home as we taste what they would serve each other.

We see in the Scriptures how God used unexpected methods to speak to His people. He gave a donkey a human's voice to instruct the prophet Balaam. He set a bush on fire to speak through the flames to Moses. After causing loud noises of weather through the wind and thunder, He spoke to Elijah in a low whisper. And He used Peter's hunger pangs to get his point across through a vision.

Has God stopped speaking to His people? Certainly not! Unlike our predecessors in the faith, we have the benefit of God's complete Word to speak to us. However, He also still speaks through nature and our senses. He has spoken to me through the songs of birds, the smell of rain, the chill of a cold winter's morning and unexpected visits from His animal creations. And yes, even in my hunger.

I hope you came to tonight's meal hungry. Not only to be able to better appreciate the foreign dishes before you, but in your hunger that people in Kenya and other places who long for the love of Christ will know His love as you do.

In closing, read verse 3 and chorus of "The World for God," *The Salvation Army Song Book* # 933.

Additional Resources:

[Fundraising Ideas](#)

[African Tribal Mask](#)

[Kenya Coloring Page](#)

[YouTube: Cooking Kenyan Food](#)



About author



Major Melody Hamelund

USA Central Territory



Fellowship Programs

February 2022 – Brewing Friendship: One Cup at a Time

February 1, 2022 By Major Lesa Davis



Program Focus

Christ-centered friendships give us hope, trust and love. Jesus is our example.

Scripture

Proverbs 27:9

John 15:13

Atmosphere: Coffee Themed

Set up a coffee bar to create atmosphere and use as part of a refreshment time. Even if coffee is normally served at the meetings, make it different by adding a few special touches—specialty creamers, sugar cubes, flavored syrups, whipped cream. Have some sugar and caffeine-free options for those who need to avoid these ingredients. Provide tea for those who don't drink coffee.

To continue the coffee bar theme, think about the options served at your favorite coffee place. Go sweet with biscotti for dunking, a variety of donut holes and coffee cake. A less sweet, more savory option could be a variety of bagels and toppings. For the finishing touch, add a [chalkboard](#) (or portable whiteboard) with the menu. Use paper cups and write names and drink orders (even if it's just regular or decaf) on the side of each person's cup.

[Mini Chalkboard Signs](#)

Centerpieces

Fill coffee cups with coffee beans and add a votive candle. As the candle warms the beans, the delicious aroma of coffee will begin to fill the room. Or use small mason jars or small bowls as the containers.



Craft Idea

Personalized Mugs

Buy plain mugs from the dollar store or [Michaels](#) and let each person decorate their mug. Permanent markers in a variety of colors are the simplest way to do this, but check Pinterest or other craft sites for a variety of ways to customize a mug.

May I Take Your Order

Match the coffee with the description.

Espresso	1. One shot of espresso mixed with chai tea
Mocha	2. Equal portions of espresso or brewed

	coffee and steamed milk
Latte	3. Three equal parts of steamed milk, foamed milk and espresso
Cappuccino	4. One part espresso with three parts steamed milk, plus a little milk foam on top
Americano	5. A cold espresso drink with sugar, milk and other flavorings to make a drink similar to a milkshake
Café au Lait	6. Black coffee made by forcing steam through pressurized coffee bean. There is no milk in this drink.
Dirty Chai	7. 1/3 espresso + 2/3 steamed milk mixed with chocolate syrup
Frappe/Frappucino	8. A single shot of espresso added to a cup of hot water

Answers

Espresso—6

Mocha—7

Latte—4

Cappuccino—3

Americano—8

Café 'au Lait—2

Dirty Chai—1

Frappe/Frappuccino—5

Prize suggestions: bags of flavored coffee, small bag of chocolate covered espresso beans, cool coffee mug.

Field Trip

If the group enjoys field trips go to a coffee shop for a demonstration and taste test.

Sharing Coffee Together

When you think of coffee, chances are you also think of other people. We often say, "Let's go for coffee." "Come on in, the coffee pot is on." "Let's take a coffee break." Maybe you have that first cup of coffee in the morning alone, in your pajamas, but most people also think of coffee drinking as a social event. You invite a friend to meet you at a local coffee shop so you can talk and catch up. You go to coffee break with a coworker and enjoy a few minutes of conversation in the middle of your work day. You invite a distressed friend into your kitchen and automatically make a pot of coffee while you listen to their story. Even in local or national disaster situations, one of the first things anyone does is start the coffee pot.

Although the phenomenon of a coffee shop on every corner might seem like a modern thing, coffee drinking has been a social event for centuries. There are records of coffeehouses as far back as the 1400s. Because meeting friends for coffee has been so popular over the years, some governments have banned the drinking of coffee for fear that groups would organize rebellions while sharing their steaming drinks.

There is just something about sharing a cup of coffee that brings friends together. Maybe it's because hot drinks take a little time to consume. After all, you can't just gulp down your steaming hot coffee and keep going. Maybe it's because the ritual of grinding beans, waiting for the coffee maker to finish, and stirring in the extras opens time for conversation. Whatever it is, it seems that coffee and friendship go together.

When we share a cup of coffee with a friend, we feel restored and refreshed. And that's not just because of the caffeine. When you regularly sit down to coffee with a friend, like we do in most women's ministries meetings, we share our lives, one cup at a time. Friendships are built, trust grows, hope is restored, love deepens. Even when it's inconvenient or when it requires time we might have used for something else, taking time for a cup of coffee with a

friend is a joy and might also be a ministry to someone who needs a listening ear and a kind word.

In the gospels, we often see Jesus and His disciples sharing that kind of fellowship. They didn't have cups of coffee, but they often paused for a drink or a meal together. In fact, Jesus Himself served them at their last meal together. During the last meal they shared together before Jesus went to the cross, He tied a towel around His waist and waited on the disciples, even washing their feet (John 13:1-5). As they shared that meal, Jesus talked to the disciples about how their lives would be when He was no longer with them. He urged them—in fact, He commanded them to love each other (John 15:12). The love He was describing was self-sacrificial. He even used His own sacrifice of laying down His life for His friends as a model for how His followers must love one another.

Today, as we share a cup of coffee, take the time to really listen to each other. Share words of encouragement around the table. Go around the table and pray for the person next to you. With Jesus as our example, we can brew friendship and share hope one cup at a time.



About author



Major Lesa Davis

USA Central Territory



Fellowship Programs

March 2022 – Restaurant Critics

March 1, 2022 By Captain Dana Cook



Scripture

Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life, he who comes to Me will never go hungry, and he who believes in Me will never be thirsty" (John 6:35 NIV).

Purpose

The purpose of this program is to bring women together by eating at a restaurant they have not had the opportunity to visit. Encourage them to try something new from the menu. Beforehand, check that the menu is affordable and has items that everyone can enjoy. This will give some of the senior women's ministries members the opportunity to share a meal with someone rather than eating alone. For the younger women, this could be an opportunity for an evening out without children and to enjoy a meal and fellowship just for them. If the expense of eating out would be a hardship for some of the women, locate sponsors from within the corps. For those single mothers who cannot afford a babysitter, maybe the corps cadets would take on this responsibility.

Getting to Know You

Ask each woman to share their name, their favorite restaurant and menu item at that restaurant.

Cooking Terms

Use [The Food Network](https://www.foodnetwork.com/food-glossary) website to print off food glossary terms and see which ones the women know.

Name the Restaurant Specialty

Applebee's	Baby Back Ribs
Arby's	Roast Beef Sandwiches
Auntie Anne's	Pretzels
Buffalo Wild Wings	Wings
Burger King	Burgers
Chilis	Ribs
Chipotle	Burritos
Dunkin Donuts	Donuts
IHOP	Pancakes
Jimmy Johns	Sandwiches
Olive Garden	Spaghetti
Panda Express	Chinese

Quiznos	Sub Sandwiches
Red Lobster	Sea Food
Starbucks	Coffee
Swenson	Ice Cream

I Believe

Women have many responsibilities. Sometimes it can feel as though we are wandering through the desert like the Israelites did in the Old Testament. It's as though we are being held captive by the piles of laundry to be washed, the stacks of dishes to do, the never-ending cleaning and dusting. There never seems to be enough time in the day to get everything done. We look at magazines, listen to podcasts and read self-help books to try to become the perfect woman that we think we should be. Sometimes we push ourselves so hard that we miss those vital moments that God has played out in front of our eyes. We can't find enough time to accomplish all that is expected of us, let alone spend meaningful time with God.

We struggle to be what the world tells us we should be and move farther from God's intentions for our lives. We begin to feel empty, hungry and sometimes alone. We question, doubt or even become angry. This can bring us to a crossroad. We can choose to stay lost or seek God's direction.

After the Israelites escaped Egypt and crossed the Red Sea, they ran out of food. They began to look back and question why they had left Egypt. "In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. ³The Israelites said to them, 'If only we had died by the Lord's hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death'" (Exod. 16:2, 3). They grumbled that even though they had been slaves, at least they had food. When they doubted God's plan and provision, He provided manna, the supernatural food God gave the Israelites during their 40 years of wandering in the desert. In Hebrew, the word "manna" means "What is it?" Manna is also known as bread of Heaven, corn of Heaven, angel's food, spiritual meat.

When we find ourselves overwhelmed, wondering if we are enough, Jesus will provide manna for us. In John 6:35, Jesus declares, "I am the bread of life, He who comes to Me will never go hungry and he who believes in Me will never be thirsty." He says it again in John 6:41, "I am the bread that came down from heaven."

Lauren Daigle writes these lyrics in her song titled, "You Say." Play this video on [YouTube](#).

You say I am strong when I think I am weak
 And You say I am held when I am falling short
 And when I don't belong, Oh, You say I am Yours

And I believe, Oh, I believe
What You say of me
I believe.

Close in prayer.

About author



Captain Dana Cook

USA Central Territory



Fellowship Programs

April 2022 – Living Hope

April 1, 2022 By Auxiliary Captain Stephanie Dietrich



Introduction

If possible, get together with a corps nearby and hold a Spring Fling. Encourage the women to bring their kids if they cannot find childcare because all the activities can work for kids too. It can be an opportunity to shake off the gloom of winter and celebrate the new, living hope we

have in Jesus. By promoting friendship, encouragement, and togetherness, we can help those who are struggling to find support, love, faith, and hope.

Decorations

Create a fun, colorful party atmosphere with pastel colored plastic tablecloths. Put together quick, easy table centerpieces using Easter grass, glass votives, candles, ribbon, and jellybeans. Spread some Easter grass in the center of the table. Select a glass votive and pair it with a candle. Put the jellybeans in the glass with the candle on top.

Refreshments

Serve lemon bars and fruit skewers as a refreshing spring snack with sparkling flavored water to drink.

During the refreshment time, encourage the women to tell of a time when they felt God's presence.

Scrambled Eggs Easter Egg Hunt

Fill Easter eggs with a message from the list below. On four of the eggs rather than a message use the letters: H, O, P, E. (These will be used as a part of the devotions.) Encourage the women to find an egg and do the task written inside. You will need one egg per person unless the group is small. These are messages to promote friendship, faith, encouragement, and hope. Have small prizes available for the women who find an egg with a letter. They must bring you the letter to receive the prize.

Messages for Inside Eggs

Tell 2 people, "God loves you." And give them a hug.

Tell 2 people, "God is powerful." And strike a pose that shows all your muscles.

Find 2 people, hold hands, and say, "We're all in this together."

Tell 2 people, "God is faithful" and do a little happy dance.

Give 2 people a high-five, and tell them, "Don't give up."

Tell 2 people, "I'm here for you." And give them a hug.

Find 2 people and say together, "We're going to choose hope."

Give 2 people a high-five and say, "God is in control."

Tell 2 people, "Hope is contagious." And do a little happy dance.

Craft

Hope Boards

Invite the women to create a hope board as a way to manifest and visualize the hope we have in Christ. You will need the following supplies:

- 1 Old magazines
- 2 Markers
- 3 Glue sticks
- 4 Scissors
- 5 Cardstock—one piece per person, any color
- 6 Leftover craft supplies—glitter, ribbon, stickers.

Instructions:

Ask the women to consider aspects of their lives such as: relationships, ministry, career, leisure, physical fitness. Have them think about where they are now and where they'd like to be. The focus of this craft is to help the women to focused and be intentional about moving from anxiety and fear to confidence and faith in Christ.

Invite them to decorate their piece of cardstock to show where having a living hope could take them. They can cut out words and pictures from a magazine. One example would be to write the name of a teenage daughter in the relationship section. The hope could be to spend more time with her by cooking dinner together. Google "vision board images" for additional ideas or look on Pinterest.

Living Hope

It is said that people without hope will not survive long. A spouse who loses hope gives up on their marriage. A parent who loses hope gives up on their teenager. A leader who loses hope gives up on their people. Without hope, feelings of despair, anxiety, fear, and insecurity begin to rule our lives. Hope is critical but not just any hope. Human hope is often just wishful thinking. I hope it rains today. I hope my team wins today. I hope I get that promotion. Human hope tends to get weaker and weaker as time goes on because it runs on human power. We eventually become exhausted. Our human hope begins to flicker and can be easily extinguished. Living hope has its foundation in God and is powered by God.

Living hope is a blessing that God has given to us. First Peter 1:3 tells us, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy, He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Unlike wishful thinking, living

hope is an eager, confident expectation. Biblical hope is based on the promises of God, the work of Jesus, and the indwelling of the Spirit. It is not based on human thoughts and feelings but has its foundation in the resurrection of Jesus. Furthermore, 1 Corinthians 6:14 tells us, "By His power God raised the Lord from the dead, and He will raise us also." Living hope is not based on our strength, but on God's power. Jesus' death and resurrection give us eternal hope for eternal life, and it gives us living hope for the here and now.

If this living hope is available here and now, why does it seem to be so elusive at times? The big question, then, becomes how do we get this living hope? We can look to the word "hope" to guide us:

- 1** H is for Holding on. This means we choose to never give up, to never give in. We don't shrink back in hopelessness but move forward. We are soldiers after all.
- 2** O is for Opening up to others. This means when we feel despair and fear taking over, we choose to talk to others in our Christian family, even if it means we must become vulnerable. We are all in this together.
- 3** P is for Praying continually. This means we choose to lay our burdens at the foot of the cross. We acknowledge that God is good, that He is in control, that He is faithful to His promises, that He is has the needed power. He loves us.
- 4** E is for Encouraging others. This means we choose to demonstrate our trust in God. Encouragement is good medicine for both those on the receiving end and for those on the giving end. As we encourage others to grab hold of the living hope that is available to us all, we strengthen our own hope and faith. Hope is contagious.

Hope is created through the choices we make. We can choose to hold on, to open up to others, to pray, and be encouraged. We can choose to use our thoughts and feelings to minimize despair and actively pursue what is possible. When we grab hold of the living hope, joy replaces despair, faith replaces fear, prayer replaces anxiety and confidence replaces insecurity. Living hope enables us to be a little more like Jesus, to love a little more like Him, even in times of great stress and worry. Let us choose to hope today.

About author



Auxiliary Captain Stephanie Dietrich

USA Central Territory



Fellowship Programs

May 2022 – Recipe Exchange

May 1, 2022 By Major Rachel Stouder



Crockpot Meal Exchange

Invite the women to bring the ingredients (minus the meat) along with the recipe for a tried-and-true crockpot meal that serves 5 people. Each woman who brings these will exchange with another and go home with a variety of meals to put in their freezer for later use.

Recipe Exchange

Ask the women to bring copies of a favorite family recipe to exchange with others. Ask them to share what makes that particular recipe a favorite, what memories are associated with it, or even any funny stories of mistakes that have been made while trying to prepare it. They may want to bring samples.

Taste of the Pantry

Have the women use ingredients from the corps pantry to create easy family recipes. Produce these in a booklet along with a devotion to give out to pantry clients. Include an invitation to attend the corps programs: women's ministries, men's ministries, youth programs and Sunday services.

Fund Raiser Idea

Host a fund raiser evening in support of the social services ministry of the corps. Invite high-profile community members to come and make a dish using typical food pantry staples. Invite these community "chefs" to man their table, give out samples and recipe cards for their dish, and encourage people to support the work of The Salvation Army through the pantry. Provide information on how The Salvation Army is working to impact hunger in the community, and invite attendees to be an on-going part of the work through volunteering, contributing and other means of support.

Outreach Idea

Invite the women to put together kits that could be given out at the food pantry as a means of inviting the women to come to the women's ministries meetings:

- 1 Home Spa Day Kit (bath bombs, facial scrub, body lotion, nail kit, foot soak)
- 2 Good Morning Kit (favorite coffee/tea, mug, devotion suggestion, biscotti)
- 3 Sun Fun Kit (small sunblock tube, after sun gel/lotion, book, water bottle)

Real Hope

When you hear or use the word "hope," what comes to mind? In what scenarios might you use the word "hope"? Some examples might be: I hope we have pizza for dinner. I hope my jeans fit. I hope I don't lose my job. I hope I have enough money to pay bills. I hope my kids know how much I love them.

Most of the time, when we use the word "hope," we aren't using it in the same way it was used by Paul in Galatians 5. The Greek word Paul used was *elpis* (el-pē's) which means, according to Vine's Dictionary, "a favorable and confident **expectation**." Traditionally, when we say we hope for something, we are saying it with some hesitation about whether or not it will

happen, which is not what Paul was saying. To put it in context of some of the recipes you've received today, the difference might sound like this:

Instead of:	Use "hope" the <i>elpis</i> way:
Gosh, I hope this works...	This is going to be great.
I hope this tastes good...	This will be delicious.
I hope I have all I need.	We have more than enough.

Throughout Paul's letters in our New Testament, we can see that he clearly spent a great deal of time helping people understand the grace of God. Out of His great love for us, God sent His Son Jesus Christ to take the punishment for our sinfulness. He died in our place, the ultimate once-for-all sacrifice, clearing the way between man and God, so that we can have a right relationship with God again. We call this grace. We can't do anything to earn it. We can't pay for it. We can't sweet talk God into loving us more, and we can't promise Him our best so that He will forgive our worst. Instead, God has given us what we never deserved in the first place—the only solution that works. His loving grace.

There were false teachers in Galatia who were trying to convince the Christians that Christ's sacrifice wasn't enough, that they still had to follow the Jewish laws in order to be in right relationship with God. Just like they had been doing for years, the believers and the false teachers alike were completely ignoring the fact that God is so much less about *doing* and so much more about *being*.

Paul had been adamant about reminding the people that he had worked hard to develop their faith with the assurance that they were *free* people—free from slavery to the law, free from the need to make sure they are doing all the right things and not doing all the wrong things. They were free to be who God created them to be, first and foremost in relationship with Him. And in that freedom, the rest would come as they and we participate in life with Him.

The lifestyle of freedom was a difficult thing for the early Christians to understand. I believe it's also difficult for us today. Most of us feel we function far better when we have a "job description," clear-cut boundaries, a list of "do this" and "don't do this." However, that's not what relationship with God is all about. It's not what it was designed to be. It's about hope. It's about faith. And it's about love.

In Galatians 5:4-6 (NIV), Paul says it this way: "You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. For through the Spirit we eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope. For in Christ Jesus neither

circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love." We *wait* for the hope of righteousness—we do not *work* for it.

Paul addresses the nervousness-turned-faithlessness, which described the believers' relationship with God, using circumcision as an example. Back then, circumcision wasn't done for medical reasons or for personal choice. Instead, as part of the Jewish Law, it was a definite sign of belonging to God, and the false teachers were causing the Christians to waffle about whether or not some of these outward indicators of relationship with God were still necessary.

Outward signs of the inward grace that takes place are a part of our Christian faith. The biggest outward indicators are the "fruit" that comes from the Spirit's indwelling presence (which naturally includes our obedience to God through loving Him and loving our neighbors), not our adherence to Law that focuses on ourselves instead of on God.

Choosing to follow any part of the Law in order to gain favor with God had become a stumbling block for these Galatian Christians. In some cases, it would seem that the Law was quickly becoming a "just in case" thing for some of them, like insurance in the event that the grace offered through Christ's sacrifice wasn't actually enough to set them free from sin. (Like having the Domino's Pizza "Order Now" button online ready to push just in case one of these new recipes doesn't quite work,)

God did the work of providing a way for our forgiveness so that we could live with Him in freedom. His desire is that we would not only experience freedom, but keep on experiencing it, keep on growing and participating in it. He wants us to settle in with Him, to make our home with and in Him, and for that relationship to characterize our lifestyle. When this is so, we know that one day, we won't have to worry about what's going on around us, what's pulling us this way and that way. We will have the full experience of the righteousness for which we have hoped—life in the full presence of God, being fully known and knowing Him fully.

Are you living in freedom today, living in the hope (the confident expectation) that one day, thanks to the grace of God, you will live in complete righteousness with God? Or are you trying to do good things, be a good person, win points with God, worrying in the background that you might not have done enough? I encourage you to spend some time in prayer, asking God to relieve you of the burden of trying to do enough good to win Him over or to "balance out" your sin. Ask Him to help you to live in the confident expectation available to those who have put their full trust in Him, so that you can freely live in love with Him and others in His name. Keep having that conversation with Him, living more and more in hope.

Close in prayer.

About author



Major Rachel Stouder
USA Central Territory



Fellowship Programs

June 2022 – Craft, Crop, Create!

June 1, 2022 By Major Tammy Whitney



DIY—Shaping our Hope into His Likeness

Scripture Focus

“For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things He planned for us long ago” (Eph. 2:10, NLT).

Suggested Activities

Crop and Craft Day

- Group Scrapbook
 - Snap photos of each of the women in attendance and print them.
 - Adhere the photo to the center of the page that will be used in the scrapbook.
 - Using acid free pens, pass the page around and ask the women to write a word of encouragement or prayer on each of the pages.
- Marbleized Clay dishes
 - <https://abeautifulmess.com/2014/11/marbled-clay-ring-dish.html>
- Field trip to a local potter
- Host a paint party. You can find information on the Internet.



Masterpieces

What are considered “masterpieces” in the art world? What makes art good or bad? Who determines whether something is a masterpiece or not?

Put together a PowerPoint presentation featuring some of these works of art.

<https://www.biographyonline.net/artists/10-greatest-works-art.html>

<https://www.timeout.com/newyork/art/top-famous-paintings-in-art-history-ranked>

Ansel Adams is one of the world’s most renowned nature photographers. In the late 1920s, he began taking photos of many of our national parks. His skill included not only taking the picture but his precise techniques in developing it. Were his photographs art or were the subjects of his photographs art? These are all pictures of things God created. *Put together a PowerPoint accessing some of the photographs from the following website:*

<http://anseladams.com/ansel-adams-classic-images/>

Elohim is one of the names for God. It occurs over 2,500 times in the Tanakh (Jewish Bible). The basic meaning behind this name is strength or power of effect. *Elohim* is the infinite, all-powerful God who shows by His works that He is the creator, sustainer and supreme judge of the world. It is sometimes shortened to “El” and used as part of a longer name. For example, *El Shaddai*, means God Almighty. If we look at Genesis chapter one (*either hand out Bibles or have Scripture passages printed out*), notice that there are two accounts of creation. The first account in Genesis 1 is an orderly step by step account. The second, found in Genesis chapter 2, is a narrative or story.

God–*Elohim*, the creator, is the ultimate artist. He did something no one else has ever done or will do. He created something from nothing.

Let’s look further at the first chapter of Genesis. Count how many times we find the word “good.” It’s seven times! At each step, *Elohim* the creator stepped back, appraised His work and He liked it. When you get to verse 31, you will see that it wasn’t just good, it was very good. He created something that was good, that He loved, and that He still loves. His crowning achievement was the creation of humans. We were created very differently than anything else. We were created in God’s image. Every single one of us was created in the Artist’s very own image. When He was finished, He pronounced it “very good.”

We often think about this as the creation story, but when we think about us, about our children, we are thinking in terms of men and women creating life. In reality, though, we don’t create;

God does. Let’s look at Psalm 139. (*Read this Psalm*) God knows you inside and out. He created you in His image. You have been created in the image of God to reflect Him. You are a masterpiece created to reflect the supreme artist.

There are two questions for us to consider in light of this information. First, how would your life change if you lived with the constant awareness that God, *Elohim*, created those around you in His image? That means everybody—people who don't believe in Him, people who maybe get under our skin, people who are rude. We are all created in God's image.

The second question is, how would your life change if you lived with the constant awareness that He created you in His image? Would your interaction with others change? Think about this truth today written in Genesis 1:27, "So God created mankind in His own image, in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them." We were created to reflect His glory.

Close in prayer.

Resources

[Painting Class Night](#)

About author



Major Tammy Whitney

USA Central Territory



Fellowship Programs

July 2022 – Celebrate Freedom and our Eternal Hope

July 1, 2022 By Envoy Colleen Corliss



Welcome

Set up a freedom photo booth in a section of the meeting room. Attach a large piece of cloth to the wall for the backdrop. The cloth should be a solid color—red, white or blue. It could be a blanket, a tablecloth, or fabric. Place the area for the photo booth where it will catch the most light. If you meet at night, you may need to use floor lamps for extra light.

Print out 4th of July themed cutouts that the women can use as props. Check online or on Pinterest for examples. Attach them to small wooden dowels or popsicle sticks. You could also buy hats and other items for props from places like the Dollar Store or Party City.

Give the women the option of taking the photos individually or with other women. Also take a group photo once everyone is there. Make sure you have all their email addresses so you can send them a digital copy of their photos.

[4th of July Photo Booth Props – FREE Printables](#)

[4th of July – Photo Booth Props Kit – Target](#)

Decorations

Place runners on the tables made from burlap or a basic solid white color. Cut out blue and red star shapes from fabric or card stock and place them in chosen areas on the runners. Purchase small red and blue candle holders for white candles or take a few white flowers and cut the stems down so they fit in the candle holders.

Favors

Make “Let Freedom Ring” ring pops for the women. Purchase the ring pops and attach a tag that says, “Let Freedom Ring.” The printouts and instructions can be found on Pinterest.

Refreshments

Make patriotic popcorn. Add red and blue M&Ms and mini marshmallows to bowls full of popcorn. You could also add some red, white, and blue sprinkles. A recipe with a special marshmallow sauce to add to the popcorn can be found on Pinterest. Also, make some patriotic fruit kabobs by alternating strawberries, blueberries and large marshmallows on long bamboo skewers. Include a bowl of fruit dip.

Sharing

Invite the women to share 4th of July memories from their childhoods. Do they follow the same traditions with their families?

Craft

Purchase picture frames from the 99-cent store. Print the sheet music for “America the Beautiful,” which can be found online, making sure it will fit in the frames. Emphasize the line “God shed His grace on thee.” The women can spray paint the frames red or blue and decorate them with buttons or strips of fabric in red, white and blue. They can also decorate the song sheet by adding small buttons to the circle areas of the notes or coloring the circles red or blue.

God Sheds His Grace on Me

Read Romans 3:20-24

When we think of the 4th of July, we tend to think of outdoor cookouts and fireworks. It is a time to get together with family and friends to enjoy being outdoors together. It's also a time to celebrate our freedom as Americans. The gatherings and the traditions are available to us because we are free citizens. Many of us regularly express gratitude to those who have fought for us to make that freedom possible.

We can also incorporate expressing gratitude to God for our spiritual freedom each 4th of July. John 8:36 says, "So if the Son sets you free you will be free indeed." Romans 3:24 reminds us that this freedom is ours "by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus."

We are not free from sin because we earned that freedom by being morally upright and following all the law. If that were the case, we would constantly be falling short of how good we must be in order to maintain our freedom. "For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Our God is faithful, so He sent His only Son to die so that we could have freedom from sin. We do not have to fight to be good enough to be in connection with God. God has already made a way for us to stay in His presence by "justifying us freely." We "are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:23).

Romans 3:22 tells us: "This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe." We claim freedom from sin by believing in the work of Jesus Christ to free us from sin. We can be grateful each day for this eternal freedom from sin. Use the 4th of July as another special time set aside to celebrate that freedom. We can express this liberty by extending the same grace God extended to us through Jesus Christ to others we encounter.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank you for the gift of freedom from sin given through your Son Jesus Christ. We praise You for supplying the freedom we could not earn. As we celebrate our liberty as Americans, remind us to give to others the gift given to us by introducing them to the freedom found in Christ. Amen.

Closing

Sing "America the Beautiful." When singing the lyrics "God shed His grace on thee," encourage the women to replace "thee" with "me" as they sing to remind them that God covers each of us with His unconditional grace.

About author



Envoy Colleen Corliss

USA Central Territory



Fellowship Programs

August 2022 – Every Mile Matters: Testimonies of Hope

August 1, 2022 By Major Christie Van Zee



Introduction

Scripture Text: Philippians 1:6 NIV: "Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

Decoration Suggestions

Decorate the room with maps. Invite the women to put a color push pin in a map indicating where they were born or a place of significance in their life. Ask them to share what is special about that location.

Icebreaker

Ask the women to pick a question from a bowl and share their answer to learn about the miles on her life journey. Some suggestions:

- Where were you born? Share a brief story you were told about your birth.
- Describe the family of your origin—the number of siblings, where you fit in the birth order, parents in the home, extended family in your household.
- Share a grade school memory that makes you happy.
- Other than your parents, who did you look up to as a child? Why?
- Share a significant milestone in your teenager years.
- Tell about a road trip you took as a young adult.
- Where is the favorite place you have traveled. What makes it your favorite?
- Recall a time in your life when you endured sadness or pain. How did you overcome that?
- Is there a song that could describe your journey with the Lord? Why does this song resonate with your experience?
- What is the farthest you have traveled from home? Share a reason for this excursion.
- What decision in your life may have changed the course of your journey?

Share The Video Song –“Every Mile Mattered”

In this song Nichole Nordeman says that life experiences can be a place of depth, helping to shape who we are today. The song can be found on [YouTube](#).

Every Mile Matters Game

Each phrase below has the word “mile” included in it. Fill in the blanks with the correct word to complete the phrase.

- 1 A journey of 1000 miles must begin with a single **(step)**.
- 2 Give him an **(inch)** and he'll take a mile.
- 3 When you are traveling by ship, the distance is measured by **(nautical)**

- 4 Having the same word for both blanks is a Mother Goose nursery rhyme that begins: "There was a **(crooked)** man who walked a **(crooked)**
- 5 Traveling on the highway you will find your location by the mile **(markers)**.
- 6 Some people have a "to do **(list)**" that is a mile long.
- 7 A popular tourist attraction in Scotland is called the (Royal) Mile.
- 8 To practice empathy and to understand someone else's experiences, it is said that you should **(walk)** a mile in their shoes.
- 9 Someone who appears to be completely unaware of what you are currently saying may be miles away in their **(thoughts or mind)**.
- 10 If you are charmingly trusting, or easily duped, people might say they see you **(coming)** from miles away!
- 11 **(Eight)** Mile Road is a northern border to the city of Detroit that holds cultural significance. It was also portrayed by a movie and song with the same name starring rapper Eminem.
- 12 "Miles" is a popular male given name that means **(merciful or soldier)**.
- 13 The **(speedometer)** is a gauge that displays the instantaneous speed of a vehicle, showing the miles traveled per hour.
- 14 Someone who understands a situation quickly, or who knows that someone is a phony is said to **(see or spot)** them a mile away.
- 15 To travel by airplane many times might get one enrolled in the **(frequent)** flyer miles club.
- 16 An American R & B jazz musician popular in the 1980s and 90s was Miles **(Davis)**.
- 17 Chicago has a famous shopping area in the loop called the **(Magnificent)**
- 18 Three Mile Island was the site of a disaster at a **(nuclear)** generating station in 1979.
- 19 If you live in the country, your closest **(neighbor)** may live miles away.
- 20 In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus commanded His followers to "Go the **(extra)** mile," meaning to give the extra effort and do more than expected.

More Than Just A Mile Game

Match the words that contain the letters "M I L E."

- 1 Apple scented flavored tea **(Chamomile)**
- 2 The art of preaching **(Homiletics)**
- 3 A resemblance between things of different kinds. **(Simile)**

- 4 An exact copy or reproduction (**Facismile**)
- 5 Shows distance at roadside (**Mileage**)
- 6 Distance measured in miles (**Milepost**)
- 7 Significant event in one's life (**Milestone**)
- 8 A facial expression (**Smile**)

Every Mile Matters

Life is full of ups and downs, good and bad decisions and memories that can make us laugh or cause us to cry. We can't go back and change the course, make a different decision, or hit a button for a 'do-over.' We can't turn back the clock to choose the other option—the one we didn't take. We cannot live our life based on the "what ifs" and be stuck in the realm of sorry regrets. Our lives today are shaped by our past. Every major decision has made an impact.

As I reflect on my own life, where I came from, how I grew up and where I've gone, I am reminded more and more of the faithfulness of God and that not one experience was wasted. Pleasant and unpleasant circumstances occur in each of our lives. While we might want to only experience the enjoyable blessings, we often find our greatest growth in the painful and agonizing moments. Would I want to trade the pain in my life for only beauty? While that might sound nice, if I am honest, I see the value in the pain that led to a greater appreciation of the beauty. There are scores of testimonies of people who have experienced the greatest closeness to God in the darkest valleys of their lives. Patients who endure endless treatments to combat cancer, disease or addiction speak of the hope to which they cling.

A friend of mine for many years has written of her struggles with depression and the pain that accompanies it. She writes: "The gospels are full of accounts of miraculous healing performed by Jesus. Each healing is instant and complete. After each healing account, I ask God, "Why not me? You healed them; why am I left in my own brokenness?" I have to first understand suffering has no expiration date. There's no stamp upon it to reveal that at this time, on this day, I will be healed. Does this mean God does not care for me? Has He abandoned and forgotten me?

Timothy Keller in his book, "The Reason for God" addresses this question. "Why does God allow evil and suffering to continue? As we look at the cross of Jesus, we still do not know what the answer is. However, we know what the answer isn't. It can't be that He doesn't love us. It can't be that He is indifferent or detached from our condition. God takes our misery and suffering so seriously that He was willing to take it on Himself."

How does this help me now? This knowledge does not take this suffering from me. I still carry it day in and day out. It doesn't take it away, but it does give me hope to endure. God reminds me of His deep, deep all-encompassing, ever-enduring love for me—even in the darkest most

painful places in my life. That assurance enables me to place one foot in front of the other day after day and gives me the will to survive as I cling to His love. His own suffering and death on behalf of sinful me is tangible proof He does care for me.

I've discovered within this walk through depression there is still purpose and work to be done. It's the difficult task of becoming. The task of transformation to a deeper, more intimate relationship with the God who loves me with an everlasting love. He uses the tool of suffering to shape and draw and pull me deeper into His arms. He longs for me to plunge deeper and cling tighter to Him. He will use any means necessary to set me apart and consecrate my life and fill me to the measure of all the fullness of God. I must simply stop fighting against Him and no longer believe the lies of the Destroyer. I must surrender and surrender again, moment by moment. I must lay my weary, injured, angry, bitter soul at the feet of Jesus and wait. Wait no matter how long it may take. I must believe He is my refuge and strength, an ever present help (Psalm 46:1) in danger even as the battle rages within and without. I must seek and keep on seeking when He appears absent. I must ask and keep on asking when it appears He is deaf to my cries for help. I will continue to beat at the doors of heaven when they seem bolted shut. He has promised, "He who asks receives, he who seeks finds, and he who knocks the door will be opened to him" (Matt. 7:8). God simply does not reveal the "when," so I wait patiently. During the wait, I must trust, believe, hold on, not give up even when I do not sense His presence. God is in the waiting. He's fighting for our lives and He wants more for us than we can ever imagine."

As my friend has shared her testimony, I recall the miles she has traveled to escape her darkness. I have prayed for her release from this depression, and I have witnessed her tremendous faith in God through the unrest. I claim the words of Paul when he says, "Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Phi. 1:6, NIV).

God's promise is that He will never leave us or forsake us. (Deuteronomy 31:6, Hebrews 13:5). Every mile we travel in life matters. Helen Keller is quoted as saying: "I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to something that I can do." We cannot change our past, but we can determine that from now and moving forward that our choices, decisions and experiences will not be wasted. For it is true: "that He who began a good work in you (me) will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." (Phil. 1:6).

Close in prayer.

About author



Major Christie Van Zee

USA Central Territory



Fellowship Programs

September 2022 – Meet Me in the End Zone!

September 1, 2022 By Major Jennifer Woodard



Subject

Enjoy a tailgate party where the women share fellowship with one another while rallying behind and cheering on their favorite teams. Feature Jesus as our “cheerleader” of hope.

Related Scripture: 2 Corinthians 1:7-9, Hebrews 7:23-25

Decorations

Cover the tables with green grass colored tablecloths. Use white streamers as yard markers and football themed napkins. Place Pom Poms in a vase for centerpieces. Make a welcome sign reading, "Tailgate Zone."

Food Ideas

Serve food associated with a football game—mini BBQ wieners, sweet and sour meatballs, mini sub sandwiches, hamburgers, veggie tray, corn chips with bean dip, and a ice bucket or cooler with bottled water and soda.

Games

Cornhole—Beanbag throw. These are available to [purchase](#) or make your own using a cardboard box.

Football Trivia—Check the Internet for suitable questions and answers regarding football.

Foosball—either life size or a purchased table game. Organize teams and partners to compete.

Football Toss—Create goal posts on the wall using colored tape. Put tape markers on the floor at varying distances for women to throw the ball between the goal posts. Further distances are worth more points. Create as many goal posts as are needed to allow more women to compete at once.

Table Football—partners attempt to flick paper folded triangles through finger goal posts of their partner across a table. First to score 10 wins.

Creative Cheers

The women who do not care to participate in games can be cheerleaders and come up with a team cheer. Award points for the best creative team cheer, with extra points given for energetic presentation.

Craft

Choose a DIY Craft from thesprucecrafts.com – "Football" or check for ideas on Pinterest.

Be a Cheerleader

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 1:7-9, Hebrews 7:23-25

Are you a cheerleader? Do you:

Encourage others,

Claim us as your own, never disowning us?

Are you for us and never against us?

Do you rejoice in our victories and don't beat us up when we fail?

Are you never disappointed in our weaknesses, but encourage us to try again?

Do you see the positive in us and don't give up?

Do you stick around when the future seems bleak or when change seems impossible?

Do you show up every time?

Paul begins this letter to the church at Corinth by reminding them that God is "the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort" (2 Cor. 1:3). This is an appropriate reminder of who God is for all who love Him. Paul is helping the people to understand that they are called to suffer much for the cause of Christ, and to help them understand that God is faithful to provide a level of comfort and hope that is more than the suffering (v. 5). Paul goes on to share about his and his companions' experiences of suffering, and the purposes that it serves.

The Message puts it this way, "All praise to the God and Father of our Master, Jesus the Messiah! Father of all mercy! God of all healing counsel! He comes alongside us when we go through hard times, and before you know it, He brings us alongside someone else who is going through hard times so that we can be there for that person just as God was there for us. We have plenty of hard times that come from following the Messiah, but no more so than the good times of His healing comfort—we get a full measure of that, too. When we suffer for Jesus, it works out for your healing and salvation. If we are treated well, given a helping hand and encouraging word, that also works to your benefit, spurring you on, face forward, unflinching. Your hard times are also our hard times. When we see that you're just as willing to endure the hard times as to enjoy the good times, we know you're going to make it, no doubt about it" (2 Cor. 1:1-7).

As we witness others' endurance and victory through hope in Christ, we are inspired and strengthened when we ourselves are called upon to suffer for the same cause. In the next few verses Paul describes how deep the struggle has been, as well as the comfort they have received. He is preparing them to be ready for the same:

Read 2 Cor. 1:8-11

Paul tells in verse 9 that these things happened, "that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead." He says that "on God" they "have set" their hope for continued

deliverance, as the prayers of the people help them. He continues to encourage the believers with many words, and then in verses 21–22, He caps it off with a refreshing truth:

“Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set His seal of ownership on us, and put His Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.” And what is to come? It is an eternity with Christ that will soon overshadow our brief time on earth. The purpose of Jesus’ life on earth was not to stay, but to accomplish His purpose in securing our salvation by going to the cross, and then defeating the grave.

Our earthly time is short to bring honor to Christ and to help others come alive in Him. Indeed, the days of history itself are numbered and will not go on forever, but we can be completely faithful in accomplishing His purposes for us because of another truth found in Hebrews 7:24-25: “...but because Jesus lives forever, He has a permanent priesthood. Therefore, He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him, because He always lives to intercede for them.” Christ has gone before us in this life, in the physical death that will be required of us, and in the resurrection and eternal life that we have not yet experienced. As we help each other and as we pray and speak to God for one another’s encouragement, Jesus cheers each of us on through His Spirit, and He speaks directly to God on our behalf. How very secure our hope is when it is found in Him.

Close with prayer.

About author



Major Jennifer Woodard

USA Central Territory

Service Programs



THE SALVATION ARMY WOMEN'S MINISTRIES RESOURCES

Hope for the World

2021-2022 PROGRAM YEAR

“ For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Jeremiah 29:11





Service Programs

October 2021 – Pretty in Pink

October 1, 2021 By Major Jessica DeMichael



October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

It is a wonderful time to reach out to women in our group or community to acknowledge and support those suffering with breast cancer. Today we will talk about how the Lord cares for the brokenhearted and bandages their wounds.

Scripture: Psalm 147:1-4

Decorations

Decorate the room with white tablecloths and pink table decorations such as balloons or flowers and pink or white hearts printed with the theme scripture verse. Make a pink ribbon pin for the women as a reminder to support those dealing with breast cancer.

Resources

Put together a report on breast cancer using the following resources:

National Breast Cancer Foundation—nationalbreastcancer.org

Susan G. Komen

American Cancer Society- <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/breast-cancer.html>

Activity

- 1 Invite someone from the American Cancer Society to speak to the group or arrange for a cancer survivor to share her experience. This will make the subject more personal and help the women to connect with others.
- 2 Create a “Do You Know” worksheet or game with information about breast cancer.
- 3 Prepare handwritten notes or cards to send with the comfort pillows.

Craft: Comfort Heart Pillows

These pillows are meant to be used to ease pain for people recovering from mastectomies. They can be used under seatbelts and to lean against to alleviate pressure and soreness. For complete instructions visit: **Ashleycrafted.com** and click on the service projects in the scroll down menu or <https://ashleycrafted.com/2019/03/27/comfort-heart-pillows-for-breast-cancer-patients/>. Click on “Breast Cancer Pillow” to find a pattern, instructions and a supply list, as well as printable tags to add to the pillows. There are other patterns on Pinterest.

These pillows could be made for specific individuals whom the women know, or call a local hospital and ask if they could be distributed to patients recovering from mastectomy surgery. Spend some time in prayer over the women who will receive the pillows.

[Pillow Pattern](#)

[Comfort Heart Pillow Instructions](#)

The Brokenhearted

Read Psalm 147: 1-4 from The Message.

Did you notice the phrase in the middle of this portion of scripture? "He (The Lord) heals the broken hearted and bandages their wounds."

Many of us have been affected by cancer. Either we have had it, or we know a family member who has. Cancer sucks! It sucks the life out of a person. It can suck the joy out of our heart. It can suck the peace out of our minds and can lead to depression and anger. But the Bible reminds us that our joy is in the Lord. Listen to the words of Nehemiah 8:10 (NIV): "Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength!"

Even if we have not been affected by cancer, we have all had our hearts broken and experienced wounds. Some of us today are carrying around wounds from years ago. We have trouble praising God because we are still licking those wounds. When we are angry or focus on the bad around us, we have trouble praising God in our present situation.

Praising the Lord when we don't feel like it is offering a sacrifice of praise. The writer of Hebrews talks about this: "Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise" (Heb. 13:15). It doesn't say to offer praise only when things are going well. We are told to continually offer a sacrifice of praise.

The writer of Psalm 147 reminds us to let it go, to remember who God is, and what He is capable of doing. This is the same God that counts the stars and names each one. He goes on to remind us how great our God is and that His strength knows no limits. "He heals the broken hearts and bandages their wounds. He counts the stars and assigns each a name. Our Lord is great, with limitless strength; we'll never comprehend what He knows and does" (Ps. 147: 2-6, MSG).

So often we hold onto the bad—bad situations, the bad break-up, the past hurts. All of this begins to eat away at our hearts. Sometimes we feel that life hasn't treated us fairly. We have been dealt a bad hand. We have family and friends who are sick, or maybe you are living with a serious illness. We allow our resentment to make us angry and bitter, and we blame God. This keeps us from becoming what God wants us to be.

We read in Proverbs 4:23, NIRV: "Above all else, guard your heart. Everything you do comes from it." When you're feeling low or defeated, don't let those feelings steal your joy. Go to the scriptures and cling to the promises of God. "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble" (Psalms 46: 1, NIV). "The name of the Lord is a fortified tower; the righteous run to it and are safe" (Prov. 18:10). "Do not grieve, the joy of the Lord is your strength" (Neh. 8:10 NIV).

So whatever hand you have been dealt, "guard your heart." Cling to the promise that God can heal the broken hearted and bandage your wounds.

About author



Major Jessica DeMichael

USA Eastern Territory



Service Programs

November 2021 – Grateful Hearts

November 1, 2021 By Captain Jin Lee



Discussion

- 1 What are you grateful for today, this week and this year?
- 2 What makes you grumble?
- 3 How has God blessed you this year?

4 Would you be willing to help others who are in need? Why? Why not?

Make a Blessing Basket

God's abundant blessings in our lives must flow to others. Christians are called to be the hands and feet of Jesus Christ. As we love others with actions and in truth, people can find the love of God in us and through us. Making a blessing basket is one of ways to share the love of God with others. There are many ideas to do that on a limited budget.

Cupcake Blessings

- Ask the women to bring one ingredient for a cupcake recipe
- Make the cupcakes together as a group
- Place small signs on the cupcakes that read: God bless you, Happy Thanksgiving, Many blessings, Jesus loves you.
- Distribute these to the police or fire departments, neighbors, corps members and their families.



A Bag of Kindness

- Choose a target group, such as seniors, the homeless, shelter residents, cancer patients, veterans, local volunteers, neighbors. Pray over the bags.
- Make a list of needed items according to the target group.
- Seniors—cough drops, snack items, canned food, hygiene items
- The homeless—socks, sanitizers, toothbrushes, toothpaste, granola bars, tissues.
- Shelter residents—Bible, Christian magazine/mini booklet, keychain, pouch, hygiene kits.
- Cancer patients—hat, sanitizer, word search, Chapstick, stuffed animal, blanket.



Deliver Food Baskets

- Invite corps members to donate canned/boxed food for a month.
- Put together food baskets, including a card with message of encouragement and invitation to attend the corps.

- Deliver the baskets to families in need and include a prayer and information about Sunday services and programs for children.

God's Abundant Blessings

Read Psalm 8.

It is an undeniable truth that God is the Creator of the universe and the Governor of all things. We read in Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." He created everything, and everything is His. Psalm 8 is a beautiful song of praise confirming that God is the Creator. Listen again to verses 3 through 6: "When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them? You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor. You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet."

Why does God care for human beings? Why is He mindful of us? Verse 5 tells us that it's because He values us more than anything else in the world, so much so that He appoints us to rule over all His creation. God values us more than anything else and because He does, He provides all we need. Whatever we may have on earth, we have not achieved on our own. It is a gift from God. James 1:17 "Every good and perfect gift is from above ..." It should be our natural response to give thanks to Him and to share His blessings with others.

Jesus often taught the people in parables. In Matthew 5:35-40, He told them, "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me. Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'" When we feed the hungry, take care of the sick, spend time with a lonely neighbor and share what we have with people in need, we are following the Lord's instructions, and He is pleased and glorified through our good deeds.

In this beautiful month of harvest, won't you spread the love of God with others by sharing what you have? It can be a blessing basket, your musical talents, or just spending time with someone. The more you give, the more you are glorifying God. and the more He will fill you with His abundant blessings.

About author



Captain Jin Lee

USA Eastern Territory



Service Programs

December 2021 – Christmas Stockings For Those In Need

December 1, 2021 By Major Norma Moore



Ask each woman to wear a Santa hat to the program, which could also be worn when they deliver the Christmas stockings to the local women's shelter.

Fill-a-Christmas Stocking

Prior to meeting, invite the women to bring items to fill the Christmas stockings. This could include, soap, body wash, hair products, gloves, cozy slipper socks or a gift card. The corps could supply the stockings to be filled. Assemble the stockings during the meeting and set a date for them to be distributed.

Bake and Decorate Sugar Christmas Stocking Cookies

Bake and decorate Christmas stocking sugar cookies to accompany the stockings. Place the cookies in a clear bag and tie with a red ribbon. Attach a decorated Scripture card.

Pass the Christmas Stocking Game

Place a gift inside a stocking. Play Christmas music and have the women pass the stocking around the table. Whoever is holding it when the music stops will be out. The last woman holding the stocking wins what is inside.

I Bring You Good News

“Do not be afraid, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people” (Luke 2:10).

I love to receive good news, don't you? I remember the first time I heard the good news that I was going to be a grandmother. That brought great joy to me. Good news can come in many ways. It could be news that you were hired for a job or that the tests for cancer came back negative. It could be that you are expecting a child. What good news have you received lately? *(Ask the women to respond.)*

In the scripture from Luke, the good news was given to shepherds who were out in the field watching their sheep. It seemed like an ordinary night but it was about to change. Suddenly, while they were watching the night sky, an angel appeared to them.

I love that the first words the angel said were “Do not be afraid.” Can you imagine lying out in the field and seeing an angel appear? I know I may have rubbed my eyes to take another look. I may have looked around at the other shepherds to see if they were seeing what I was seeing. When reality hit me and I realized it was really an angel, I am sure I would have been terrified.

It's interesting that anytime an angel appeared to someone in Scripture, the first words spoken are “Do not be afraid.” Remember when the angel appeared to Mary? How about when the angel appeared to Joseph? God must know that our first reaction to seeing an angel here on earth is fear. Therefore, His messengers always begin with those four strong words, “Do not be afraid.”

Once the shepherds got over the shock of seeing an angel, they were able to hear the rest of the news. They heard the angel say, “I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all

people." This news was not only for the shepherds on the hillside that night; it was for all the people. You and I are included in "all the people." The angel had good news for you and me.

So, what was the good news? "Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the Lord" (Luke 2:11, NIV). Not only did God send one angel to bring this good news, He sent a multitude of angels to continue the message saying, "Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased" (Luke 2:14). In other words, there was a party in the sky announcing the good news that Jesus, our Messiah, was born.

The greatest message that you and I can share with those around us this Christmas is the good news that a Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord, has been born. His name is Jesus. He is a Savior who loves us and wants to be a part of our life. Are you ready to hear the good news today? Are you ready to accept the good news? Are you ready to share the good news with those you meet?

As we read the story of the angels appearing to the shepherds, may we never forget that you and I are included in "all the people." May we be reminded that those who will receive our Christmas stockings and cookies are also included in "all the people." I pray that you will go out this week and share with "all the people" that a Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has come.

Let us pray

Thank you, Lord, for the reminding me that I am included in the good news delivered by the angels. The good news of a Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord, came for me! A Savior who loves me and came to save me from my sin. A Savior who can set me free so that I no longer need to live in bondage. Yes, Lord, that is good news. May I be willing to share this good news with others this Christmas season. Amen.

About author



Major Norma Moore

USA Eastern Territory



Service Programs

January 2022 – Blankets For Babies

January 1, 2022 By Major Lois Guest



No-Sew Blankets for NICU

The purpose of this program is to provide soft blankets for the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Check with the local hospital regarding any special requirement for these blankets and adjust the materials to fit this requirement.

Refreshments

Cake or cupcakes, finger sandwiches and punch.

Program

Making No-Sew Fleece Blankets.

You can find easy instructions on YouTube.

Materials needed:

- Two complimentary pieces of fleece 1 to 1¼ yards of each material. Choose a baby type print for one side and a solid 'baby' color for the back of this project. There are precut packages of fleece no-sew blankets available that can be purchased from area fabric stores or [Etsy](#).
- Good fabric scissors
- Flat table surface area for each blanket
- Optional ribbon to attach a note to parents

If desired, roll or fold the blanket and tie with a ribbon. Add a card or note for the parents.

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

Many hospitals are equipped with a neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). Newborns who need intensive medical care are often put in this unit that is equipped with advanced technology as well as healthcare providers specifically trained to work with these tiny patients. Most babies admitted to the NICU are preterm (born before 37 weeks of pregnancy), have low birth weight (less than 5.5 pounds), or have a health condition that needs special care. In the U.S., nearly half a million babies are born preterm. In addition, babies with health conditions such as breathing trouble, heart problems, infections, or birth defects are also cared for in the NICU. Team members work together with parents to create a plan of care for high-risk newborns.

Have you ever held one of these little ones? Some are so tiny that they fit into the palm of your hand and yet with the technology of the NICU, these preemie babies can survive and thrive. I am reminded of the words of the psalmist in Psalm 139:13-15 praising God because He cares for us even before the day of our birth:

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.

When the baby is still a twinkle in the parents' eyes, God was present. As shown in the detail of sonograms, when the baby begins to develop, we can see the tiny hands, feet, eyes and legs in this secret place, the mother's womb. We are woven together and made as part of God's design. The Psalmist reminds us that even in this place, without the assistance of the sonogram, God saw us. We were not hidden from Him. We mattered to Him. Knowing that God takes notice of the baby in the mother's womb, we can begin to understand the treasure God sees in His creation and how He knits the human body together. It is not by accident or chance, but by His design—God's workmanship.

In the New Testament we read that Jesus cares for all children. In Luke 18:14-16 we are told that "People were also bringing babies to Jesus for Him to place His hands on them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. But Jesus called the children to Him and said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.'" When the crowd tried to keep them away, Jesus told them to bring the little ones to Him. "I want them to sit on My lap, I want to smell their baby smells. I want to see their baby smiles." The creator, who knew them when they were formed in their mothers' wombs, wanted to see His creation. He wanted to touch, hold, listen, laugh, love His little ones.

Today as you are preparing warm blankets, think about these little ones. Some are no bigger than your hand, some weigh less than a bag of sugar, some fingernails have not even formed yet. As you think about this gift of love and warmth, remember it is not just the baby we are surrounding with God's warmth, but also the parents who will need the comfort and love that this blanket brings. As you cut the fabric, tie the strips and wrap the blanket up to take to the NICU, I challenge you to pray for the whole family that will receive this act of warmth from your hands.

Prayer: Father, we commit this blanket into Your hands. Even before we made the first cut of fabric, You knew the family that will receive this gift from us. We pray each of these blankets will be Your arms around the baby and the parents. Hold them close, love, comfort and encourage them. We know that days ahead of them can be difficult as they experience ups and downs in the NICU, but You, Lord, love these babies more than their parents. You, Lord, love their parents. We ask for your love to surround them. May they experience the joy of this tiny life in their arms.

Resources:

[NICU Gifts for BABY](#)

[How to Make a Tie Blanket from Fleece](#)

About author



Major Lois Guest

USA Eastern Territory



Service Programs

February 2022 – Sock Drive

February 1, 2022 By Captain Jessica Berkhoudt



Decorations

Have a small tree or stand set up with silly and fuzzy pairs of socks hung on it. Hang a clothes line across the room and pin socks to it. At each table have a small laundry basket for each woman in the group. This will be used later on in the program.

Introduction

Colder weather is here and we find ourselves digging out our favorite comfy socks. Socks provide comfort, warmth and a protective layer over our feet. The absence of socks make feet susceptible to bacteria and fungi, which cause skin infections and blisters. Socks are an important article of clothing in our wardrobe that we often take for granted.

Service Project: Organize a Sock Drive

This project can be done in two meetings. The project is hosting a sock drive for individuals who are in need this season. At the first meeting introduce the project and decide on a deadline when it will conclude. This could be two weeks from the start date.

First Meeting

- Distribute the sock baskets and invite women to decorate them. The basket will be used for the women to collect socks from family, friends and neighbors.
- Create a flyer and an announcement for Sunday that introduces the community and corps members to the sock drive effort and encourage them to participate.
- Share interesting facts about socks—Happy Toes
https://www.happytoes.com.au/Sock_facts_s/88.htm
- Craft: Tube Sock Heating Pads- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xVbvcLmYXwE>

Second Meeting

- Gather the collected socks. Prepare them to be delivered. Wrap a pairs of socks in ribbon and attach an encouraging note. As a group, pray over the socks and for those who will receive them. Then take your beautiful feet and deliver them to the veterans/shelter/ARC while sharing the Good News of Jesus!



How Beautiful Are the Feet of Those Who Bring Good News!

Read Romans 10:15.

How many of you like feet? How they look or how they smell? If I took off my socks right now, would you want to smell my feet? Of course not! Feet usually are not acknowledged as beautiful parts of our body. I have lots of feet in my household that come in all different sizes and smells. Taking care of their feet is not what I would call a beautiful task. Feet can smell, they can be dirty and sometimes have fungus!

But do you know who likes feet? God does. Paul says that some people's feet are beautiful. In Romans 10:14-15 we read "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" Paul didn't come up with this idea by himself. He was quoting from Isaiah 52:7: "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news."

God declares that the feet of those who bring people the Good News about Jesus are beautiful. It doesn't matter what those feet look like. He doesn't care if they have long

toenails, are smelly or yellow. God says those feet are beautiful when they are used to bring the good news of His love to others.

Have you told anyone about God? Have you prayed with someone recently? God loves when we do this. He wants us to share the Good News about Jesus and show His love to those we meet. The feet that carry us to such opportunities are precious, and God says they are beautiful.

This week look for opportunities where can use your beautiful feet and share the Good News of God's amazing love.

Resources

[Socks – Trade South](#)

[Southern Spirit Online](#)

[Caring for Homeless Individuals with Shoes, Socks, and Toys](#)

[Precise Kit 2020](#)

About author



Captain Jessica Berkhoudt

USA Eastern Territory



Service Programs

March 2022 – Car Clinic

March 1, 2022 By Captain Rachel Moore



Subject

Car Clinic for Single Moms, partnering with Men's Club.

Scripture Reference: "Be still and know that I am God! I will be honored by every nation. I will be honored throughout the world." (Psalm 46:10 NLT)

Introduction

This program addresses creative opportunities for service to single moms and their children.

Program Purpose

According to a 2018 U.S. census, more than 80% of 11 million single parent families with children under the age of 18 were headed by single mothers. That's 8,800,000 households. We don't have to think very long to recall the single mothers we know. Maybe our own mother was a single mother. Maybe you are yourself. Being a mother is a tough job. For mothers who must take on this task alone, who have to be both mother and father to their sons and daughters, there are days that probably feel impossible.

The church is uniquely positioned to provide ministry to the single mothers in our communities. We need to not only be sensitive and understanding but creative and practical as well. Single mothers need a support system and a community to come alongside them. Through this program, both the men's and women's ministries can partner to support these single moms.

Ahead of time, reach out to some of the single mothers that might not normally come to the women's ministries and invite them to attend.

Decorations and Set-Up

Decorations could include racing themed plastic disposable table covers with a simple orange cone in the center with the theme, "Ladies, Start Your Engines." Use checkered [flag napkins and plates](#). Printed excerpts from a vehicle owner's manual or car repair book could be used as placemats. Printed road signs attached to sticks could be fun accessories for a photo opportunity.

Activity or Game

- Have the group assemble a Hot Wheels race track and race one another in elimination rounds. Award the winner a prize.
- Purchase plain mugs. Print stickers with car-themed phrases, such as "Pedal to the Metal!" "Driven" or "A Smooth Race Never Made A Skillful Racer") or car pictures. Adhere the stickers to the mugs. For washable mugs decorate using oil based sharpie pens.
- Ask the women to build a simple model car or put a Lego structure car together with only one hand. This will emphasize the experience of being a single parent, trying to complete a task that would be easier if you had two parents (two hands).

Service Activity/Opportunity

- Have the men's ministry group assist a single mother with a project she has been unable to accomplish on her own—maybe a home improvement project, raking leaves, or car trouble.
- If there is an opportunity to pair a member from men's ministries with a single mother and her children as a father figure mentor, try to foster that relationship.
- Take up an offering to provide for a specific needs for one or more single mothers. For example, work clothes, new sneakers for her children, or car repairs.
- Assemble a team of volunteers to help clean the home, do laundry or even watch the kids so the single mom can take a break.

Is Your Check Engine Light On?

One of the most frustrating things can be getting into your car, turning the key in the ignition, only to hear that dreaded 'bing' and to see that tiny, orange "check engine" light. You've already had battles with your kids over getting up, getting dressed, deciding what they will or won't wear, what they will or won't eat. You've wrestled them into seatbelts or car seats, all while running through your own to-do list of expectations. All this before you finally make it into the car and turned on the engine. The last thing you need is the flashing neon sign that says there's trouble. Do we take the car right to the shop or do we ignore the flashing light, hoping it is a mistake and that it will just go away in time?

That's exactly what life is like sometimes. It is crazy and hectic and overwhelming. We have tasks to complete, things to do and people to take care of, so who has time to take care of themselves? Who has time to relax? Who has time to pray or read their Bible or do devotions? We long for those intimate moments where God speaks to our hearts and we feel His presence so fully. But if we're honest, we want those experiences on our timetable. We want the warm, loving closeness of God and not the uncomfortable prodding and conviction of the Holy Spirit.

Those moments of discomfort are our check engine light—when our stress level has reached its limit, when we are overworked and overtired, and when we snap at those closest to us. These are the warning signs that our heart needs attention. We can either ignore what God is saying, or we can wake up and give some attention to our current state. Psalm 46:10, NLT says, "Be still and know that I am God! I will be honored by every nation. I will be honored throughout the world." Like it or not, God will get our attention. He does it because His love for us is great. God's desire is for us to rest in Him, to take ourselves to the shop, and to recognize who He is. The Bible is our owner's manual and the big flashing check engine light is God saying, "I'm right here. Come to Me. Worship Me. Rest in Me."

However hassled we are, or how tumultuous our lives become, we ignore God's warning signs to our own peril. Will we pay attention and wait on Him for help? Spending time in His presence is vital to our ability to cope with whatever life sends our way.

About author



Captain Rachel Moore

USA Eastern Territory



Service Programs

April 2022 – Garden Party

April 1, 2022 By Major Santa Correa



Scripture Reference

“They will come and shout for joy on the heights of Zion; they will rejoice in the bounty of the Lord—the grain, the new wine and the olive oil, the young of the flocks and herds. They will be like a well-watered garden, and they will sorrow no more” (Jer. 31: 12, NIV).

Introduction

This program demonstrates creative opportunities for service to residents in nursing homes or those shut in at home

Program Purpose

People in facilities and those who are shut in are usually eager to have people visit and do activities with them. Through The Salvation Army's Community Care Ministries, we have a beautiful opportunity to visit those who can no longer leave their facility. We can provide a church service, bring gifts, crafts, music and show God's love to them. This can be done by involving others at the corps such as musical groups, Adventure Corps, Sunbeams, women ministries, men ministries, and Sunday School classes.

Decorations

These could include a watering can, gardening tools and small green plants such as ivy, elephant ears, or cactus.

Activity

Outdoors—If the residence the group is going to visit has a garden, ask for some of the women to volunteer to tend it. This could be a one-time event, or an on-going project where the group will visit on a regular basis to take care of the garden. For more residence involvement, purchase flowerpots, gravel, soil, mulch, green plants and flowers. Dig a series of small holes where you can fit the flowerpots in rows parallel from each other. Each pot should contain a layer of gravel, soil and mulch with a garden plant at its center. Give each resident their own flowerpot, which they would be responsible to water. Invite them to paint or decorate wooden signs with their name on it to identify their pot. It may be necessary to periodically replace the plants depending on the seasons.

Indoor—If the residence does not have a garden, purchase flowerpots/planters, soil and low maintenance plants that can be shared with the residents. Fill the planters with a mix of mulch, soil and pebbles and then add green plants. Instruct the residents on how to take care of their plant. The residents could also be invited to decorate the planters with stickers, paint and their names to represent everyone in the residence. An additional benefit is that plants are a good source of oxygen and it will help decorate the common area.

Rejoice in the Lord

I like to prepare my back deck for the spring, summer and fall seasons. As soon as it is warm enough, I move out the patio furniture, add colorful pillows and decorations such as a bird bath or garden flags and take my house plants outside. I like to drink my coffee every morning on the deck and just enjoy God's creation by listening to the sounds of the birds

singing and smell the moist air. This places me in a position of giving thanks to the Lord for bestowing all His wonderful blessings upon me.

A garden is the kind of place that can be used to express joy, peace and satisfaction. This is what we find in Jeremiah 31:12 (NIV): "They will come and shout for joy on the heights of Zion; they will rejoice in the bounty of the Lord—the grain, the new wine and the olive oil, the young of the flocks and herds. They will be like a well-watered garden, and they will sorrow no more." The prophet is expressing how the people of Israel will feel when they come back to the land that was promised to them. They are looking forward to the restoration of God's kingdom. Now, with their liberation they should have plenty and be joyful to honor God and serve Him. They compare their soul to a watered garden, meaning they will flourish and be fruitful.

How can we flourish and be fruitful? As we read God's word, we can compare our prayer lives with Him to the roots of a plant or tree. The more we commune with Him, the deeper our roots will go into His love. When we care and share with those around us, we will be fruitful.

These words are for us today as well. In the presence of the Lord we have hope for the future. Our lives should be like a beautiful garden filled with a pleasant aroma that through God's love we can share with others. When we are in God's presence there is a sense of peace and joy that fills us and overflows into others' lives. Today, let each one of us exult in the Lord. We read in God's word, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice" (Phil. 4:4)!

About author



Major Santa Correa

USA Eastern Territory



Service Programs

May 2022 – Blessing Bag Service Ministry

May 1, 2022 By Major Margareta Ivarsson



This program was written by a group of three wonderful women.

Major Antonietta Rosamilia, Raissa Henry-DiCaterina, Major Margareta Ivarsson

Introduction

People all over the world carry bags. It may be backpack, duffle bag, handbag, clutch, or purse. A woman's bag has many uses. It may contain items useful for emergencies, snacks to satisfy hunger, personal items, medication, or a Bible for spiritual encouragement. A blessing bag is different in that it is designed to touch hearts, promote healing, and meet personal needs.

Activity/Icebreaker

Invite the women to bring their favorite handbags. Display them on a table. Ask the women to share their choice of a particular bag. Is it significant because of where it was purchased or who gave it to them?

Concept and Steps for Beginning a WM Blessing Bag Service Ministry

Scripture teaches us to be ready to share what we have and do good, blessing others. Four steps will help outline a solid plan for a Blessing Bag Service Ministry.

- 1** Build a team. Identify individuals with the same passion for the community, willing to work alongside a team to bring change.
- 2** Identify the need. We saw a need for an outreach ministry to women working in massage parlors and strip clubs. Through training and research, we identified specific locations that had been left out of other community work.
- 3** Find and learn about local support for the issue. Join local task forces and learn how they are dealing with the issue. Through discussions with local partners, your team will be able to identify a unique mission location.
- 4** Meet them where they are. This will be different in each community. The motivation behind the blessing bag ministry is to step out of the corps building and go to the people wherever they may be. You may encounter them on the sidewalk or inside their workplace. The gift bags will represent your love, prayer and preparation. The simple encounter with the recipient of the gift will be a blessing to both the giver and the given.

P.E.A.R.L. Essence

(Acronym for Purposed, Empowered, Appreciated, Respected, Loved)

P.E.A.R.L. Essence is an outreach to women working in common sexually exploited fields. Monthly, a group of men and women distribute blessing bags to the women working in massage parlors and strip clubs. In preparation, the group spends time in prayer and worship with the motivation being to share God's love with others. In various ways individuals support the ministry. Some do so through a makeup drive collecting nail polish, lip gloss or jewelry for the gift bags. Others organize prayer and worship nights for those caught in Human Trafficking, often during the outreach time. While the women go into the businesses, male members of P.E.A.R.L. Essence assist by navigating logistics, travel and providing security.

What's in Your Bag?

Read Matthew. 26:6-13 (NLT).

This narrative from Matthew leads up to the death and resurrection of Jesus. The woman, identified as Mary in John 12, came to Jesus and poured expensive perfume over His head. She was preparing Him for burial before anyone was aware that He was about to die. When one of Jesus' disciples, Judas Iscariot, criticized her actions, Jesus rebuked him and stated that she has done a beautiful thing.

The Radical Love of Mary

We first meet Mary sitting at Jesus' feet just listening to Him (Luke 10:39). To her, hospitality meant giving more attention to the guest and any needs He might have than the meal that would be served. Her actions displeased her sister, Martha, who asked Jesus to tell her sister to help her in the preparations for the meal. Jesus gently rebuked Martha, telling her that Mary had chosen what was better. How often are we like Martha, so busy that we fail to take time to sit at Jesus feet and just listen to what He wants to share with us.

Later, Jesus paid another visit to the home of Martha and Mary. Again she was found at Jesus' feet, this time washing His feet with perfume and wiping them with her hair. It seems she understood better than the disciples that Jesus was going to die. Mary broke her alabaster jar pouring out her gift. A usual gift would have been around one ounce; hers was 12 times that much. Not holding back, she gave lavishly to Jesus, offering her expensive gift without fear. In this unselfish act her only concern was to please Jesus, offering herself in complete surrender.

When visiting clients in massage parlors we can identify with Mary's sense of urgency. Those who are there may never experience kindness and human dignity if we did not boldly reach out to them. Preparation before the visit is required. We must sit in silence and wait for the Holy Spirit's direction. He will guide us to those who are open to the good news of Jesus.

What lessons can be learned from Mary's actions? She surrendered her life to the Lord. She wanted nothing else than to sit at His feet and learn from Him. She seemed to be more aware of what the future would hold for Jesus and that His time with them on earth was coming to an end. She showed great love by lavishly anointing His head with expensive perfume. Some thought her act was extravagant, a waste of money, but Jesus said it was an act of worship that would be told everywhere as an example of costly service.

Are we so busy serving the Lord that it has become a barrier to knowing Him personally? Are we listening to what He wants to say to us? Are we asking for His directions, or following our own agenda? What gifts has Jesus given you that He wants you to share with others? Take time to just sit at Jesus feet and listen before you act. Out of the abundant blessings that He has given to you, what can you share with others?

Resources

[Sweet Prayers: Massage Parlors and Sex Trafficking Ministry](#)

About author



Major Margareta Ivarsson

USA Eastern Territory



Service Programs

June 2022 – For The Love Of Cookies

June 1, 2022 By Major Bethany Starkey



Materials Needed

Treat bags or small baskets big enough for a plate of cookies, ribbon, scissors, assorted cookies.

Refreshments

Chocolate chip cookie pie and cookie dough ice cream. Use a mini muffin pan to make cookie cups. Then add the desired filling. There are numerous filling suggestions online.

Guest Speaker Options

- 1 Policeman on the subject of personal safety and crime prevention.
- 2 Firefighter to discuss fire safety and how to respond to an emergency.
- 3 Someone from the medical community to talk about heart health, which is the leading cause of death among women.

Fire Safety Quiz

Using the website: www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/fire/home-fire-quiz.html have the women take the fire safety quiz.

Service Project

Love to Our Community Servants

Suggested recipients could be firefighters, police, paramedics. Have women who are willing to bring cookies sign up and tell what kind they will provide. Decide ahead of time the amount of cookies needed.

Day of the Event

Place plates of cookies on a table. Ask a couple of the women to walk around the table and put an assortment of cookies on individual plates. Have other women at a packaging station to place the cookies in bags or boxes and tie them with a ribbon. Add a note indicating where the cookies are from and the corps contact information.

Another suggestion would be to have a "baking station" during the program and make the cookies.

Cookie Quiz

Who made the first cookies?

- 1 French
- 2 Italians
- 3 British
- 4 **Persians**

In what year were cookies first made.

- 1 18th Century
- 2 **7th Century**
- 3 20th Century
- 4 16th Century

Who invented the chocolate chip cookie?

- 1 Betty Crocker
- 2 Duncan Hines
- 3 **Ruth Graves invented this recipe during the period when she owned the Toll House Inn, in Whitman, Massachusetts.**
- 4 Smith

Which country eats the most cookies?

- 1 **England at 13.6 kilograms per person per year**
- 2 United States
- 3 Holland
- 4 Italy

Other than something delicious to eat, what does the word “cookie” describe?

It is used in connection with the Internet and tells the server that this person has previously visited the site.

What are cookies called in other countries?

Biscuits—England and Australia

Galletas—Spain

Keks—Germans

Koekje—Dutch

Cookies, Cookies, Cookies

When I think of cookies, my mind automatically goes to Sesame Street and the phrases “Me want cookie!” and “Me eat cookie!” spoken by the lovable Cookie Monster. I actually have Cookie Monster as the voice on my GPS app. While traveling, he offers words of encouragement. If I make a wrong turn, he tells me that it’s okay and that I should eat a cookie. When I reach my destination, he tells me that I am a good driver and yes, I should eat a cookie. It puts a smile on my face as I journey along.

You and I should be a source of encouragement to each other as we are all in different places on our spiritual journey. Ephesians 4:29 (NLT) says, “Don’t use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.” Instead of using sarcasm or spreading gossip, our words to each other should be an extension of God’s grace, spreading kindness and building each other up.

Our words are one way we follow God’s leading in our lives. The Holy Spirit is very much like our personal GPS, guiding us through life. Isaiah 30:21 (NIV) tells us, “Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you saying, ‘This is the way; walk in it.’” We never have to worry about being led astray or having a bad connection. God is always speaking, always guiding. How we listen or how closely connected we are to Him is up to us. Each of us should desire a walk with God that is always in tune to the leading of His voice. May we be able to say like Samuel, “Speak, for your servant is listening” (1 Sam. 3:10 NIV). Listening to God’s voice, doing His will, even though we might have chosen a different path for ourselves, provides encouragement for others to remain faithful during difficult times in their lives.

Collectively, we can be a source of encouragement to those in our community as they journey through life. You never know what someone may be going through. The stresses of a difficult work load along with home life can take its toll. A little note of support or a small token of appreciation can have a huge affect. Unfortunately, many in our community may have a wrong impression of The Salvation Army. They may not be sure what to believe about who we are and what we do. This is a simple way to show love and kindness, to let people know that they are valued members of the community and of value to God. It’s just one way our words and actions can point others to Him. We read in John 13:35 (NLT), “By this everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another.”

Sweets have become a great way to spread cheer. Cookies themselves are so easily shareable. May you and I share encouragement with those who need it.

About author

Major Bethany Starkey



USA Eastern Territory



Service Programs

July 2022 – Block Party

July 1, 2022 By Captain F. Noemi Tripari



Introduction

Our communities are composed of people of diverse races, languages and cultures. God's desire is that all His creation be united. May we demonstrate harmony of the spirit and love for one another regardless of race, gender, age, social status or ethnicity. The Salvation Army has been called to celebrate God's goodness and praise His greatness as one nation.

Program Ideas

Groups

- Select a small group of women who will contact churches and community agencies, whether private or nonprofit, to invite them to participate and support the Block Party. When contacting the agency they will provide them with the following information:
 - A flyer listing the day, time and what will be provided.
 - The theme for the event.
 - A deadline to confirm if the agency wants to participate.
 - If they choose to participate, provide them with a list of supplies.
- Another small group will contact local business to seek their support and request possible donations.
- This group of women will be in charge of activities for the day (game stations, face painting station, prayer corner, snack and food station, including the barbecue).

Stations

- **Board Game Station**—have various game boards sorted by age. Assign four people to be in charge.
- **Face painting station**—Ask four people to take charge of of this station. You will need a table, paint, brushes and designs to choose from. Check Pinterest for ideas; (<https://www.pinterest.com>)
- **Prayer station**—Ask two of the women to man this station. Provide pencils and paper so that the prayer requests can be written down. Assurance should be given that each request will be prayed over. One-on-one prayers should also be available.
- **Snack station**—Four of the women should oversee and distribute the snacks. Have tables with snacks such as donuts, cupcakes, snack bars, water, coffee, and juice available.
- **Hot food station**—Four of the women should be assigned to prepare hamburgers and hot dogs. Provide a table where condiments will be available.
- **Information station**—Ask two women to be on hand to share information about the corps—times of Sunday services, youth activities and social services. Consider giving away Salvation Army branded items like notepads, pens, key chains.
- **Agencies station**—Provide a table to each of the participating agencies, so they can hand out information about their services.
- **Devotional time**—Start the event with a short devotional.

One Month Prior to Event

Follow-up with the agencies to confirm their attendance and check on what supplies they will need. Confirm that all volunteers are still planning to participate. Distribute flyers throughout the community.

One Week Prior to Event

Make sure all supplies are ready for the Block Party (tables, chairs, tablecloths, food, supplies, extension cords.) Confirm the arrangement to pick up the donated supplies. Continue to distribute flyers in the community.

Day of Block Party

Meet with all the volunteers and pray for God's blessing on the event. Set up the tables, chairs, tablecloth, and food. Relax and leave the rest with God.

Celebration!

"So reach out and welcome one another to God's glory. Jesus did it; now you do it! Staying true to God's purposes, Jesus reached out to the Jewish insiders so that the old ancestral promises would come true for them" (**Rom. 15:7-13, MSG**).

God wants to show us that everything created in this world has a purpose. Humanity is His most beloved creation, each with a specific purpose, each under His love and care. When Adam and Eve disobeyed God, they failed their God given purpose and lost His protection.

The relationship between man and God was severed. Separation between one another began then as well. Jesus, the beloved Son of God, came to the rescue. He provided us with His care, love and unity linked by one love—the love of Jesus. He deplores division by race, color, language or social status. We are one people, one nation, one kingdom in the eyes of God, through His Son.

For this reason, God has called us to celebrate together His feast and blessings without distinction. Let's celebrate, the hope of salvation for all. People of all nations, celebrate God's wonders! "Sing to the LORD ; praise His name. Each day proclaim the good news that He saves. Publish His glorious deeds among the nations (Ps. 96:2-3, NLT). Tell everyone about the amazing things He does.

About author



Captain F. Noemi Tripari

USA Eastern Territory



Service Programs

August 2022 – Birthday in a Box

August 1, 2022 By Major Karen Schmig



Introduction

This service project has been created to help people in the ARC/Shelters/Community Centers celebrate their birthday while away from home and family.

Service Project

Invite the women to bring items to pack in a birthday box for a man or women. Gift items could be candy, comfort snacks, hygiene items and a Bible. Check with the facility to see if you can deliver a cake or cupcakes to be enjoyed by all in the program. Include a birthday tablecloth, plates and napkins, a banner, party hats, noise blowers, and a small gift. The gift box could also be decorated.

Ask the women to make a homemade birthday card to let celebrants know they are thought of and prayed for.

Refreshments

Share a decorated birthday cake or cupcakes along with coffee, tea or milk.

Reflections

- What are your favorite birthday traditions or memories?
- What traditions in your family have been carried on from generation to generation?
- What would it feel like to get no presents on your birthday or not to celebrate?
- How would it feel to receive a “birthday party” box from someone you’ve never met?
- What are ways you could make a birthday extra special for someone you know?

Related Scripture

“You’ll be enriched in every way so that you can be generous in every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in Thanksgiving to God” (2 Cor. 9:11).

Birthday Celebrations

I remember when all four of our children were born. I knew that life would not be the same. I also had an overwhelming thankfulness to God that I was blessed with these new lives.

As years have gone by, we’ve celebrated every milestone in their lives, including their birthdays. The big ones: 1st, 5th, 10th, 13th, and 16th. We felt that it was important to show them how much their life meant to us, that we are celebrating one more year on this earth with friends and family.

With each birthday we celebrate, we can see the changes. We see physical growth. When we are older, we still change physically, but sometimes we may feel that something is missing in our life. Growing older may not be what we expected. It may be that we haven’t started to live—really live, because we haven’t considered our need for God. Scripture tell us in Ephesians 2:4, 5 (NIV) that “Because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive in Christ even when we where dead in our transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.”

"If we say we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us," God says in 1 John 1:1(NIV). But we know that everyone has sinned. Still, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

When we accept Jesus as our Savior and Friend, we truly start to live. We are born spiritually. How is your spiritual life? Have you experienced a new birth in Him? "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature, the old things passed away, behold new things have come" (2 Cor. 5:17, NIV). Do you have spiritual life and a relationship with the Lord?

My calling to follow Jesus has taken me to live in Arizona for 12 years. Often I had to drive from Tucson to Phoenix. On that road all you see is the dry desert. One day my car decided to break down and I was stuck on the side of the road in a hundred plus heat! I had no air conditioner in the car and no water to drink. My mouth was dry as dust. I needed water! Sometimes we feel that we are spiritually stuck in the desert, even though we have been born again of His Spirit. We go through a dry spell and thirst for the living water to refresh us. If you have been experiencing a dry spell and God seems distant, ask Him to refresh your spirit. Pray for a fresh vision and for the comfort and power of His Spirit.

Allow God's cleansing waters to wash over you today. Remember that after we have been spiritually born it is time to live a spiritual life with Him. You can celebrate a new birthday each year with Him, one where you never grow old.

About author



Major Karen Schmig

USA Eastern Territory



Service Programs

September 2022 – Hit The Books

September 1, 2022 By Captain Janelle Lewis



Refreshments

Make bagged lunches for the women. They could include a piece of fruit, a fluffer nutter sandwich, a juice box and a bag of chips. Include one of the scripture verses below in each bag.

Decorations

Place a stack of books on a black tablecloth with an apple on top for the centerpieces. Have a pencil at each chair for the women to take home.

Service Project Ideas

Invite the women to bring school supplies for backpacks for corps children whose families have limited funds. Ask them to write a note to be placed in the backpacks, telling the children that they will be prayed for during the school year. Invite them and their parents to attend a Sunday service and present the backpacks. Invite all the children to stand and offer a prayer for them for the coming school year.

Sharing Activity

Give each woman an index card and a pencil. Ask them to describe the most challenging homework assignment they had or ask them to share a time when they forgot to do their homework. Invite them to share if there was someone who supported them through their school years and how that made them feel. Is there some way that they can encourage a child that comes to the corps?

Hit The Books

Have you ever heard a child say, "Homework? Not again!" Believe it or not, children feel that homework is one of the worst things that could happen to them. If you mention the word, they begin to huff and puff and groan. They would much rather watch TV or hang out with their friends than do their homework. I remember being in school and the class erupting in celebration when the teacher announced that there would be no homework over the weekend. Homework may be disliked by many children, but it is a necessity for learning. It is the way children practice and master what they are taught in school. Simply put, if they want to hit their goals in life, they must hit the books at home.

As believers, we have homework to do every day. If we are honest, some of us have been missing several assignments. We have not been reading our Bibles and putting into practice the things we learn. The time we should be spending with God we give to shopping or watching TV, talking on the phone, crafting, or reading magazines. We avoid doing our spiritual homework. David writes in Psalm 25:5, "Guide me in Your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in You all day long."

This Psalm reflects David's earnest desire to learn the Lord's ways and to be guided by Him. David faced a troubling time and prayed that the Lord would teach him and guide him. David says that he will wait all day for the Lord's guidance and will not be hasty in making a decision on his own. During the most difficult times in his life he sought the Lord for His truth. In the same way we should have an earnest desire to be taught and led by the Lord especially during the difficult times in our life. The more we know about God, the more we will be able

to trust that His way is best for us. When we are faced with uncertainty about the future, concerned about our current circumstances, or even hurt by our past, we should earnestly seek the Lord as David did. When troubling times occur, the best thing we can do is hit the Book—the Bible. It is through the Bible that we learn about God's commands and promises for our lives. It is through the Bible that we are guided to make the right decisions.

At times it may be intimidating to read the Bible. Maybe you feel like a child again, having a hard time completing a homework assignment. You are not sure that you understand what you are reading. The best part about reading the Bible is that the Lord desires to help you understand. You have other believers who want to help you also. You can pray just like David did and the Lord will teach and guide you. Included in your lunch bag is a scripture verse. Your homework this week is to seek to put that scripture into practice in your life and to read your Bible. Let us end by praying David's prayer together.

Pray together Psalm 25:5 by having the women repeat after you.

Scripture Verses

<p>Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these. (Mark 12:30-31).</p>
<p>In your anger do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. (Eph. 4:26-27)</p>
<p>Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. (Eph. 4:29, 30)</p>
<p>Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. (Eph. 4:31)</p>
<p>Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. (James 1:2-4)</p>
<p>Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will. (Rom. 12:2)</p>

About author



Captain Janelle Lewis

USA Eastern Territory

Worship Programs



THE SALVATION ARMY WOMEN'S MINISTRIES RESOURCES

Hope for the World

2021-2022 PROGRAM YEAR

“ For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Jeremiah 29:11





Worship Programs

October 2021 – Hope for a Cure

October 1, 2021 By Major Anita Caldwell



Introduction

This program looks at the elements that can contribute to a healthy life style.

Ideas

Invite a nurse to share what healthy food is necessary for developing strong red blood cells.

Check the website: www.healthline.com/health/how-to-increase-red-blood-cells for information on this subject.

Share an evening of exercise using the DVD "Walk the Walk" by Leslie Sansone or walk one mile. Share the importance of healthy exercising, healthy blood flow and good blood pressure.

Invite a Christian counselor, officer or minister to present ways to heal from emotional pain. There are a number of articles on this subject on the website:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com>.

Icebreaker

Ask the women to briefly describe in writing ways in which God has touched or cured them or a family member. The leader can pick a few stories and read them aloud.

Craft

Invite the women to take slats of a pallet or wood and paint the word "Hope" on them. These can be taken home to remind them of the hope they have in Jesus. "Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord" (Psalms 31:24).

Activity

Hand out stones to the women and ask them to write on them those things for which we need a cure. Add the first names of those in your group or whose family member has a need for one of those cures. Create a prayer corner of these rocks so that as the women pass by they will remember to pray about them.

Give each woman a large stone. Ask them to simply write "Believe" on it, take it home and place it where they can see it daily to declare their faith that God is able to handle any problems they are facing. As the women write on the stone, play the song, "Able, He is Able," which you can find on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...).

Service Project

Visit the local Blood Donor Center and give blood to help others.

Video Clip

Show the [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...) video clip of Jesus healing the woman with an issue of blood.

Decorations

Place candles on small wood slats with the words "Hope," "Believe," and "Cure," printed on them. On the podium sign print the words "The Great Physician." You can also go to HomeGoods or TJMaxx and buy decor items with these words on them.

Scripture

Read Luke 8:43-48

Who Touched Me?

How could it be? There was no lump there last week. I looked again thinking I had not seen correctly. The next day, I checked again hoping I was mistaken. By the third day, I set the appointment for a doctor's visit with great uncertainty. He chose to try medicine first. One week later, the lump was still visible, and the doctor quickly set a surgeon's appointment and x-rays for the same day. Within just a few short days, I was in surgery. Little quieted my fears except my faith in the Great Physician, Jesus. Two tumors were removed and sent off to be checked as I waited breathlessly for the results.

We have all experienced that moment, that question; "What is this? Is there a cure?" Perhaps our child or parent is sick. Why me? Why now? Perhaps the hardest question of all is "God, I serve you every day; how could you allow this?"

No doubt the woman in Luke 8:43-48 who had been subject to bleeding for twelve long years had many of the same questions we have: "Will I die? Why can't anyone help? Why did this happen? What did I do to cause this?" Just imagine how tired she must have been.

Yet there was that ray of hope. She had heard about Jesus and she knew He was coming to her town. Her heart beat with possibilities. Maybe, just maybe, today would be her day of freedom from this hard life. Yet how could she get through the crowd to Him? Surely, He would not care about her situation. She wasn't important. But this could be her one possibility of healing! So, with great determination, she waited, heart pounding, expectation written on her face. There He was in the middle of a crowd. As He drew near, she threw herself into the crowd reaching for Him only to touch a bit of the cloth on the hem of His garment. Suddenly, she realized that she had been cured! Her journey of pain and fear was over at last.

Who touched me? Jesus recognized that she had been healed but wanted her to testify to the crowd. She did, hiding nothing. Oh, the joy of her thankful heart!

.....she was determined.

.....she refused to give up.

.....she pushed through the crowd.

.....she fought for hope.

Will you do the same today?

...will you choose determination?

...will you refuse to give up?

...will you push through the crowded, busyness of life?

...will you fight for hope?

And those two tumors? One was a cyst and one was benign. Hope for a cure ... fight with faith. When you do, when you find that cure you hoped for, tell everyone around you. Be the bearer of hope because of your fulfilled hope!

Discussion questions

- 1 What speaks to you about this woman?
- 2 How long has she been sick?
- 3 What changed her world?
- 4 What illness has challenged you?
- 5 How do you hold strong to hope for a cure?

Songs

["She Only Touched the Hem of His Garment"](#)

About author



Major Anita Caldwell

USA Southern Territory



Worship Programs

November 2021 – Hope for Provision

November 1, 2021 By Captain Stephanie Hargis



Welcome and Opening Prayer

Activity

Set up seven stations, each with one bottle of the following essential oils: Cedarwood, Cinnamon, Frankincense, Hyssop, Balsam, Fir, Myrrh, and Myrtle. Most can be purchased at

Walmart or found on [Amazon](#). The following [website](#) gives a description of the seven oils, their purpose and scripture reference. Place the description on a card beside the oil. While soft worship music is playing in the background, have the women visit each table, smell the oil and reflect on the words written about it.

Refreshments

Serve pieces of bread with dipping oil along with grapes and Martinelli's sparkling cider. You can find a recipe for the oil [here](#).

Give-away

Purchase tiny jars and fill them with olive oil or buy olive oil gift jars on [Amazon](#). Wrap the jars in burlap and tie with a tag that says, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8).

How is Your Faith?

Today we looked at how seven essential oils impacted many people years ago and in some cases still are being used today. Our Scripture tells a unique story about another oil we likely use almost every day—olive oil.

Read 2 Kings 4:1-7

Olive oil can be used for many things beside cooking. According to this [article](#), there are a few other ways olive oil can be used: Removing eye makeup, soothing chapped lips, moisturizing skin, nourishing hair, soothing stretch marks and repairing cracked heels.

In Biblical times olive oil was typically used for cooking and as fuel for heat and light. It was vitally important in the people's daily lives. In 2 Kings, we learn about a widow who cried out to Elisha: "Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that he revered the Lord. But now his creditor is coming to take my two boys as his slaves." Elisha's response was "How can I help?" Elisha was about to demonstrate a kind deed to a poor widow. This miracle was one of four miracles performed by God through Elisha. Each one reveals the tender care the Lord had for the recipients. In this story, you see that God's outpouring of love was as large as the faith of the widow and her son and their willingness to obey.

Elisha's instructions were: "Go around and ask all your neighbors for empty jars. Don't ask for just a few." As they collected jar after jar, it was miraculously filled with olive oil, which they used to pay off their debt and live on what was left. The Lord provided for them so that they in turn could live a life of freedom, not worry.

In the same way, the Lord provides for us so that we can live free lives in Him rather than lives subjected to spiritual bankruptcy. The Lord wants us to seek Him to meet all our needs. We read in Ephesians 3:20, "God is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine." Do

we truly trust the Lord with all aspects of our life—from our children to our finances? Do we give to the Lord only that with which we are comfortable, or could we possibly give more, trusting that the Lord will meet our need? I don't think any of us wants to limit the Lord's blessing by a lack of faith or by being comfortable in what we can do in our own strength. Let's challenge ourselves to listen to the Lord, trusting He will surely meet our needs so we can act in faith. "The One who calls you is faithful, and He will do it" (1 Thess. 5:24).

About author



Captain Stephanie Hargis

USA Southern Territory



Worship Programs

December 2021 – Hope For Humanity

December 1, 2021 By Major Rebeca Prieto



Welcome and Opening Prayer

Responsive Reading

Leader: "In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of

David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

Reader 1: Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of his father David, and He will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; His kingdom will never end." (Luke 1:26-33)

All: You, Creator God, have written

Your great name on humankind;

For our growing in Your likeness

Bring the life of Christ to mind;

That by our response and service

Earth its destiny may find (Song # 1000 verse 4)*

Reader 2: "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

Reader 3: The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail."

Reader 2: "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her." (Luke 1:34-38)

All: You, Creator God, have written

Your great name on humankind;

For our growing in Your likeness

Bring the life of Christ to mind;

That by our response and service

Earth its destiny may find (Song # 1000 verse 4)*

(Luke 1:26-38)

**The Salvation Army Song Book*

Song # 127 "The Virgin Mary Had a Baby Boy"*

Explanation of Project—The Foster Care System: "Here I Am"

Instructions

The projects listed are in various levels to cater to different groups. Level 1 can be done during one women's ministries meeting. Levels 2 and 3 will include collecting items. If possible, set aside some space in the regular meeting room for the women to place the items throughout the desired time frame.

The Advent season is about preparing for the coming of baby Jesus. This project will focus on children in the foster care system who may find this season particularly difficult.

Level 1

Fill out cards with prayers and words of encouragement to mail to the local Foster Care Agency. A search on the Internet can tell you which agency is near the corps.

Level 2

Call the local Foster Care Agency and ask them if they are in need of particular items during the Christmas season. For example: diapers, blankets, toys, clothes. Plan which items your group can collect within a certain time frame to send to the agency. Choose one person or a group to deliver the items.

Level 3

Check with the local Foster Care Agency and ask if your group can "adopt" a family that is about to be reunited. Collect items that the family may need. For example: clothes, toys, food, household items. Inquire if a representative of the agencies could come to the women's ministries meeting to give a presentation regarding the foster care system.

Song # 125, "Gabriel's Message"

Overshadowed By The Most High

In Luke 1, we read the story of Elizabeth who hadn't been able to have children. In those days, this was considered a disgrace (verse 25) and probably overshadowed every moment of her life. In Matthew 1, we read the story of an unwed mother who would certainly have been subject to disgrace and divorce by her finance (verse 19). We recognize again how this situation would have overshadowed every aspect of her life.

We generally think of being overshadowed as a negative thing. No one wants to be overshadowed. It is not how we are meant to live. However, we often find ourselves overwhelmed by stress at work, problems within our families, daily temptations, or negative emotions such as shame and guilt. These often overpower us and make it hard for us to grow.

In Luke 1:35, the angel Gabriel says something interesting to Mary: “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will **overshadow** you. So, the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.” If being overshadowed is something negative, why would the Lord do this? Instead consider that being overshadowed as a positive power of the Most High that conceals or overshadows in order to protect us.

God had a plan for Mary’s life. We can see throughout the gospels how that plan came together. First with Elizabeth, then with Mary. Also that plan continued through Joseph, the shepherds and wise men. Before, throughout, and after Mary’s pregnancy, we see the hand of God orchestrating the events of Jesus’ birth. We also see how God protected Mary—first from divorce and disgrace, then from those who intended to inflict physical harm to her family. He instructed Joseph to take the family to Egypt to protect them. The power of the Lord overshadowed Mary and protected her. This ensured that the “Holy One to be born will be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35).

This Christmas season, instead of being overshadowed by secular things, be overshadowed by the power of the Most High and trust that He will protect you from things that seek to harm you. Let Him tower over you and cover you in His power. Find solace and hope in the shadow of His power.

Closing Thoughts and Reflections

Discuss the following questions:

- 1 What do we let overshadow us in our daily lives?
- 2 How can we let God be the one to overshadow us?
- 3 What are some ways that God has protected us?

Closing Prayer

About author

Major Rebeca Prieto



USA Southern Territory



Worship Programs

January 2022 – Hope For The Future

January 1, 2022 By Captain Debora Pereira



“I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future’”(Jer. 29:11).

Introduction

This worship service is designed to encourage the women that there is hope for the future through remaining humble, wise and obedient to the Lord.

Room Set-Up

Set up the room with one long table where everyone can sit together and enjoy a banquet style meal. Place the food, drinks and desserts on a table on the side of the room. Serve buffet style or family style from the table.



Decoration Ideas and Preparation

Place party favors (such as two drink coasters tied together with a ribbon) on the tables. Add a tag with the text: "Hope for the Future" (Jer. 29:11). The women can take these home to remind them of this passage and the devotional thought.

Refreshment Suggestions

Invite everyone to bring their favorite side, dessert or meat. Make it a banquet, just like Abigail served David.

Worship Outline

- Welcome and Prayer
- Call to Worship
- Song#573/TB#831 *"Be Thou My Vision"* (The Salvation Army Songbook)
- 1 Samuel 25:1–44 NIV
- Devotional: *"Hope for the Future"*
- Song *"Yes I Will"*
- Craft: Scripture Block
- Closing Prayer

Call to Worship

Play the Youtube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XF5MXX6iOWw>

Scripture Passage: 1 Samuel 25:1-44

Invite selected people to read the Scripture passage.

Following the devotional watch the Youtube video "Yes I Will": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NrTv39-IG4M>

Craft

Create a visual Scripture by printing the scriptures below and gluing them on the wooden blocks.

- James 1:22 NIV
- John 14:23 NIV
- Matthew 7:24 NIV
- Proverbs 10:17 NIV

Hope For The Future

Read 1 Samuel 25:1–44

Have you watched the TV show "Undercover Boss?" In this show the CEO of a company visits several stores or restaurants in his company without revealing his identity. It is interesting to

see situations played out and observe people's work ethic when they don't know they are being filmed. It is interesting, too, to discover what they consider important in their lives.

When reading 1 Samuel 25, we witness Abigail's true character. Her actions show her full submission to God's leading. We can see that she cares about those who would be affected by her husband's foolishness, his reckless decisions as he thinks only of himself. It was custom in his day to show appreciation to those who protected their people. But instead of thanking David, Nabal foolishly insults him.

Nabal was a wealthy man. His refusal to thank David was not a result of being poor, but an intentional decision to dishonor him. Abigail hears from one of the servants what has happened between Nabal and David, and she decides to act and do the right thing. She gathers all the gifts and sends servants to deliver them to David. The fact that she can gather all those items so quickly shows the extent of Nabal's wealth. Thanking David would have cost him so little and would have been the noble thing to do. Nabal's actions show that he was living up to the meaning of his name—"foolish."

David was preparing to act in a foolish and vengeful manner himself. By following God's leading, Abigail stopped something terrible from happening. Abigail prevented David from killing Nabal and all the men in his house. Her apology on behalf of her husband helped David to change his angry plan and to leave the matter in God's hands to be resolved. In a situation that is anything but hopeful, one person can do the right thing and instill hope.

As we continue to read this passage, we learn that Nabal dies and Abigail is left without a husband. In those days, a woman without a husband had few options. She struggled to survive. Once David realized that Abigail was widowed, he sent her a marriage proposal bringing her hope for the future.

When we place our trust in the Lord and truly submit to Him, we have hope for the future. It is the kind of hope that only God can provide and completely changes a hopeless situation. This is the hope that we all seek and need. May we strive to be like Abigail—humble, wise and obedient.

About author



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USA Southern Territory



Worship Programs

February 2022 – Hope For The Discouraged

February 1, 2022 By Lt. Bethany Yocum



Scripture Focus

Hagar – Genesis 16

Genesis 16:13 – She gave this name to the Lord who spoke to her: “You are the God who sees me,” for she said, “I have now seen the One who sees me.”

Purpose

To find hope in times of discouragement and in those moments when we feel forgotten or alone, reminding ourselves that even in that desert place we are loved by *El Roi*, the God who sees us.

Décor Ideas

Use a desert theme—tan tablecloths, cacti succulents and mirrors as centerpieces. Place large mirrors around the room with "*El Roi—God Sees You*" written in glass paint on the mirror.

Opening Activity: "Do You See Me?"

Ask the women to answer three questions on a sheet of paper, making sure no one sees their answers. Let the women know that their answers will be read aloud, so they don't write anything they may feel uncomfortable sharing.

- 1 Name one thing that makes you feel discouraged.
- 2 Name one thing that brings you hope.
- 3 What is one thing you wish others could see about you?

Place the papers in a basket. As their answers are read, the woman who wrote them will stand. The reader will share something good that they see in that woman. The process proceeds until everyone has had a turn.

Program Element Ideas

- 1 Worship element – Invite one of the women to perform a creative dance to the song, "The Truth About Me" by Mandisa. If the women are not dancers, show the video instead. This can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qj5fMIKe47w> This can also be used after the devotion for a time of reflection, if desired.
- 2 Craft Ideas
 - "Broken but Beautiful"—This craft uses broken mirror pieces and cardboard to create a mosaic heart. The instructions and pictures can be found at: <https://craftingagreenworld.com/articles/diy-crafts-turn-broken-mirror-cardboard-mosaic-art/>
 - "God Sees Me" Mirror Craft—Invite the women to decorate mirrors (square or handheld, which can often be found at a dollar store) with beads, costume jewelry, buttons, using hot glue guns. Use glass paint pens to write on the mirror, "*El Roi*" or "God Sees Me."

El Roi— Hope For The Discouraged

Read Genesis 16.

The first line to the song we heard earlier by Mandisa says, “If only I could see me as you see me and understand the way that I am loved.” I wonder how many times we have felt that way ourselves? We know what God’s word says about who we are and how He loves us. But when we get into desert places, discouraged and maybe facing what can feel like a hard time after a hard time, we often don’t see ourselves the way God sees us.

I would guess that Hagar was in that same place. Being a slave, her body was given over to her mistress’ husband. She must have felt used, despised and mistreated. She probably felt disposable and unwanted, pregnant, alone and facing the reality that she had nowhere to go and no one to turn to. She found herself in the desert, running from her pain, completely discouraged and doubtful that her life had any purpose or value at all.

The scripture says the Lord found her sitting by a spring in the desert. I imagine her looking into the water, seeing her own reflection, hating what she saw and telling herself all those lies we often tell ourselves when we are deeply discouraged. You’re nothing. No one cares about you. You have nothing to offer. You’re worthless. You are all alone. No one sees you.

In her deepest pain, there in that desert place, Hagar was given hope in her discouragement. She was found by God, she was no longer alone. God called her by her name as though no longer just the slave. He showed Hagar a love she likely never had known. For the first time ever she was seen, and her pain was heard by her heavenly Father. God told her to name her son Ishmael, which means “God hears.” He reminded her in that moment that He heard her. That He saw her. I think back to the song from Mandisa. Hagar was broken, but God saw someone lovely. Hagar saw guilty, but God saw forgiven. Hagar felt lonely, but God said I am with you. I’m sure this moment changed everything for Hagar. Filled with hope, Hagar proclaimed ... *El Roi*, “You are the God who sees me.”

It’s important to realize, however, that Hagar’s circumstances didn’t change. God sent her back to her mistress and told her to bear Abram’s son ... and eventually she was sent away, but even then God was with her. The difference in Hagar’s life is not that God made everything better in the physical sense, but that she now knew she was not alone and that she mattered deeply to God, that He would never leave her. When no one in this world knew her pain, God knew, and He cared. That is our hope as well. Not that we may see our current situations change, but that even when no one else sees us, God sees us. Knowing that changes our world completely, and we can push forward in the world seeing ourselves through our Father’s eyes as women who are loved, valued, worthy, capable, beautiful, heard and seen by God. There is hope for the discouraged. That hope comes from *El Roi*—the God who sees us.

Resources

[Hope T-Shirts](#)

[Hope Sweatshirts](#)

About author



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Worship Programs

March 2022 – Hope For The Frazzled

March 1, 2022 By Major Lori Miller



Theme verse: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28).

Decorations

Set up the platform to represent a cozy living room with a sofa, easy chairs, coffee mug, Bible and journal.

Discussion Groups

Read: Luke 10:38-42.

- 1 What words describe each of the sisters.
- 2 If you could sum up Mary in one word, what would it be?
- 3 In one word describe Martha.
- 4 Which one of these sisters do you relate to more closely and why?

Worship Song Suggestions

["Oceans" by Hillsong United](#)

["Trust in You" by Lauren Daigle](#)

Rest

There seems to be so much to do and so little time to accomplish it. The twenty-four hours allotted to us each day rarely stretches far enough to meet all our obligations. There are commitments, deadlines, obligations ... life is packed, and the hours are full.

We read the story of Mary and Martha, which is in Luke 10. Jesus is approaching the town of Bethany just east of Jerusalem. As He moves towards the Holy city, He is invited into Mary and Martha's home. As the head of the household, Martha is bustling around getting everything ready for Jesus' visit. She is, as Scripture says, "making preparations." Everything she is doing is for the visit of Jesus.

Perhaps she has done away with her ordinary, everyday menu of soup and bread, intent on preparing a banquet fit for a Messiah—The Messiah. I can imagine that Martha sends one servant to the field to slaughter a lamb, another to the market to pick up the fruit. Like a military general, she barks commands ... soak the lentils! Pound the grain! Knead the dough! She must make sure the centerpieces and the napkins match, that the servant pours the beverage from the right and not the left. Martha's mind is busy and abuzz. What would be just right for dessert? Will Jesus and His followers stay overnight? Oh, my goodness ... fold the sheets! Change the towels!

And in the other room, in contrast to Martha, is her sister Mary who is sitting at Jesus' feet. Martha comes to Mary and Jesus, and she says, "Jesus, Lord, she is not helping! Would you ask her to help me?" And Jesus speaks up and gently rebukes her saying "your sister Mary has done the better thing."

We don't know precisely what Martha was distracted by, but we do know that she is getting things done for her visitors. She is making preparations. She is doing good things. But good things can distract us from being with Christ. And Jesus told her that He would have preferred for her to be with Him rather than work for Him.

When we look at this story, at this Bethany backdrop of unexpected guests and expectations, we see the struggle that we face every day when work and worship collide. When doing seems far more important than dwelling, and when life is marked by distraction rather than devotion. Part of me is Mary; I want to worship extravagantly, and I want to dwell at His feet. But a big part of me is Martha—there is just so much to do.

We can get caught up like Martha, feeling as though we must prove our love to God by doing great things for Him. Mary is known to this very day for her devotion. And Martha is memorialized to this day by her distraction. What marks you? Do those who know you best say "she is utterly devoted to her God?" Or do they say, "Well, she is always stressed out and harried? She is distracted, pulled away from what is most important." Don't rush past the intimacy of the living room to be in the kitchen—doing great things for Him.

God desires to make our dwelling place His presence. His heart's cry is for us just to be with Him. And then, from that place of companionship and intimacy, we will journey on with Him in His protection and great provision.

There is an old Jewish saying, "May you be covered with the dust of your Rabbi"... may you walk so close to your teacher, your friend, your Savior, that you are covered in His dust ... His goodness, mercy, grace, protection, and provision.

Come out of the kitchen, sink into the richness of His presence, and stay there. Delight yourself, commit every worry, every care into His loving hands.

In closing play the video—Mary & Martha: <https://youtu.be/ssR9P30AWOY>.

Additional Resources

[Martha or Mary? – Who Should You Be?](#)

[LifeKids](#)

About author



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Worship Programs

April 2022 – Hope in the Storm

April 1, 2022 By Major Lynda Thornhill



Scripture

Hebrews 6:19, "We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure."

Decorations

Decorate using a nautical theme. Cover the tables with blue plastic tablecloths, place fish netting in the center of the table with sand and seashells scattered throughout the netting. Put a framed picture of an anchor as the centerpiece on each table. You can find nautical and beach décor at TJ Maxx, Home Goods, and Marshalls. You can also try Hobby Lobby or Michael's Art and Craft Store.

Refreshments

Let's set sail cupcakes (place a blue/red sail on a toothpick in each cupcake.)

Fish and chips (goldfish crackers and potato chips)

Driftwood (pretzel sticks)

Anchors away donut holes (with the toothpick sails)

Sailor knots (garlic bread knots)

Seaweed Dip (Spinach dip w/crackers)

Rice Krispies®Rafts (with the toothpick sails)

Under the sea party punch (1 can pineapple juice, 1 bottle blue Hawaiian punch, 2 liter bottle of sprite, 2 handfuls of Swedish fish)

Craft

Anchor Canvas Painting

Watch this video as a guide and stop intermittently for visual instructions. Also, follow the step by step instructions below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rH1aq0HFRr0>

Supplies

Canvas size of your choosing

Painters tape

Variety of paint colors

Sponge paint brushes

Sharpie markers (coordinate color with chosen paint colors)

Anchor cut out (you can find templates online)

Scripture verse (any of your choosing... a suggestion is Hebrews 6:19: "This hope we have as an anchor of the soul.")

[Stencils](#) (optional)

Hope

When the word hope is mentioned, more times than not the context is "I don't know what is going to happen, but I hope ..." I'm sure you've said at one point in your life, "I hope I get that job, I hope my children behave, I hope my car starts." While hoping in this way isn't a bad thing, there's a definite difference in this and Biblical hope. These are examples of wishful thinking. Hope in the Bible is the Christian hope that when God has promised something is going to happen and you put your trust in that promise and your faith in action, it will happen.

The reason this distinction is so important is because oftentimes we have the tendency as Christians to believe that we will be free from problems. Our wishful thinking motivates us, and when things don't go the way we hoped, we believe God's not listening to us.

We find an example of this in Mark 4 starting at verse 35. Jesus had a long day teaching and was traveling to the other side of the Sea of Galilee with His disciples. While they were traveling, a fierce storm developed. These were fishermen who were accustomed to storms, but this was a fierce storm. They were scared and Jesus was sleeping. Oftentimes when we experience storms, it's easy to think Jesus isn't paying attention. "Lord, why are you sleeping while I'm suffering? I'm afraid, I'm scared, I don't know how I'm going to get through this and you're not helping me."

The disciples learned an important lesson that night on the sea. They learned to trust in Him with their faith. Jesus slept, not because He didn't care, but because He was in control. At the command of His voice the wind calmed down and the sea was calm.

Following Jesus doesn't mean we're never going to experience trials. What it does mean is that we will have the opportunity to cling to Him in the midst of our troubles. This is the hope being referenced in Hebrews 6:19. "We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain." It is the certainty that in amid our troubles Jesus is there as an anchor for our soul.

Resources

[Nautical Stencil](#)

[Anchor Cupcake Toppers](#)

[Pinterest – Nautical Party Food](#)

About author



Major Lynda Thornhill

USA Southern Territory



Worship Programs

May 2022 – Hope for Mothers

May 1, 2022 By Major Jennifer Melton



Discussion Questions

What are things you associated with motherhood?

What does (or did) a typical day of motherhood entail?

When does motherhood end?

Game

Mothers are the number one recipient of greeting cards! And the most heartwarming cards and poems are typically given around Mother's Day. Hold a contest in which each woman/team writes their own poem or creates a Hallmark worthy card. Show and read them aloud. Award prizes to the best, worst, funniest, or most thoughtful.

Suggested Songs

The following songs can be found on YouTube.

[*A Mother's Prayer by Keith and Kristyn Getty*](#)

[*God So Loved by Hillsong Worship*](#)

[*Clean by Natalie Grant*](#)

[*How Deep the Father's Love for Us by Stuart Townsend*](#)

Love in Action

Offer to take over 'Motherhood' for a day in the life of a local mother. A team can begin bright and early by arriving at the home and making breakfast, getting children on the bus/drive to school, cleaning the home, doing laundry and dishes, preparing dinner, assisting with homework, and cleaning up after dinner while the mom spends time with her kids. Leave quietly with a written card left behind with a small prayer and chocolate. [Be sure in all of this that your volunteers have completed Safe From Harm.]

Prayers for Mothers

Take turns praying for the mothers in the group as well as mothers in your community.

Motherhood is Messy

By Major Arvilla Hostetler

"And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God" (Eph. 3:17b-19).

Motherhood is messy! From an infant's dirty diapers to a teenager's filthy laundry, motherhood keeps us on our toes and knee-deep in messes. Oh, how do moms do it?! Day after day, a life of spills, messes and cleaning up ... all done because of love.

Tom Mullen once wrote, "Where two or three are gathered together, someone spills his milk." He's right, and if it hasn't happened to you yet, it will. You see, the principle that we all live by is this: I spill milk. You spill milk. All God's children spill milk. Sometimes other things are spilled as well—feelings such as anger, hostility and frustration. Sometimes we spill history: such as past failures, old grievances and painful embarrassments.

Let's face it, engaging in anything sacramental has the potential to cost us something before or in

addition to the good that we gain. To become whole and healthy, whether as a family or an individual, comes at a price. So the question becomes, are willing to pay that price?

In some homes spilled milk is screamed at. The spillers are denounced, judged, castigated, often called stupid and singled out for embarrassment. In other homes, spilled milk is cried over; and cried over; and cried over, and cried over.

In healthy (Christian) homes, spilled milk is cleaned up. If there are tears, they are momentary. If there are rebukes and calls for future caution, they are accompanied by towels and spot remover. And if I never learned anything else, I learned that the work of a Christian home is cleanup work. Cleanup work that involves not only messes we make, but the messes made by the people we love. For if we cannot find in our home people who try to love each other in the same manner as Jesus loved, sooner or later, we will find ourselves alone in a broken home.

I know that I have been talking about individual homes and families, but I could just as easily have inserted corps for the word home because that is what our corps is and should be. The congregation is the family, and it doesn't matter the size of the table or family. The principle holds true: I spill milk. You spill milk. All God's children spill milk.

Walter Wangerin shares: "Unless that home ... that family [corps] can draw upon Christ, whose capacity to forgive outlasts and exhausts our propensity to sin, spill, and screw up; and who said to His friends, with whom He made His home, try loving each other like this."

Christ loves ... spilled milk. The messiness is cleaned up through love.

About author

Major Jennifer Melton

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Worship Programs

June 2022 – Hope in Distress

June 1, 2022 By Major Christine Harris



Before you conduct this worship program ask the women to read the book of Ruth at home.

Set Up

Play soft instrumental music. Use simple flower arrangements as centerpieces. Have available boxes of tissues as talking about grief can be very emotional.

Refreshments

Coffee, tea, water with lemon bars, strawberry shortcakes, or a fluffy key lime pie. You can find recipes on the Internet. The following is one site:

<https://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/fluffy-key-lime-pie>.

Surviving Grief

If you know that one of the women has experienced a great sadness in her life, (death of a loved one, loss of job, loss of home, a great illness) ask if she is willing to share her testimony about her grief and how God spoke to her during this time.

Paper Lanterns

Purchase paper lanterns that can be found on Amazon. At the end of the meeting invite the women to write a note of release or thanks to God, then symbolically light them and watch them fly towards the heavens. If lighting the lanterns is not allowed in your community, use helium balloons.

A Letter to God

Encourage the women to write a letter to God expressing their feelings of disappointment or sadness. They can seal them to take them home or permanently shred them. It can be healing for the women to share their letters with the group if they wish to do so.

Art Therapy

If the women like the hands-on approach, invite them to use modeling clay or paper and pencils to give shape to their feelings regarding grief.

Scripture Cards

Create uplifting and encouraging scripture cards that can be sent to others.

Scripture suggestions:

Joshua 1:9 "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

Psalms 34:18 "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."

Psalms 46:1 "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble."

Psalms 147:3 "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds."

Matthew 5:4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."

John 14:1 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me."

Romans 8:28 "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

Revelation 21:4 "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

Washing of Feet

Read John 13:1-9

Consider closing out your worship period by following Jesus' example and washing the women's feet. Set up two to three tables (depending on the size of your group.) Ask one or two of the leaders to assist you by standing behind a bowl of water with hand towels and lotion. If your group finds this uncomfortable, wash the women's hands instead. The reminder is that God hears our prayers. He graciously removes the "junk" we allow to build up, and then lovingly and gently brings us comfort from His Holy Spirit. Close in prayer.

Discussion Questions

- 1 How would you describe grief or loss?
- 2 Have you experienced a loss in your life? (Death, infertility, loss of job or a home.)
- 3 How can we help someone in a time of loss?
- 4 What does the Bible say about our feelings?
- 5 How did you see God's hand at work during your difficult days?

Kinsman-Redeemer

The story of Naomi, as outlined in the book of Ruth, is illustrated by the names of the characters. Naomi means "My Joy" and she was married to Elimelech which means "God is King." Elimelech was from Bethlehem and all was well until a famine hit the land. Had he lived up to his name and trusted in God, he could have saved his family a lot of problems. He chose a rather faithless route and relocated to the foreign land of Moab, a place where God was not acknowledged as King.

Naomi and Elimelech had two sons, Mahlon (meaning sick) and Chilion (meaning ailing). Both married Moabite women. Soon, tragedy struck. First Elimelech died making Naomi a widow. By the time they had lived in Moab for 10 years, both of her sons had also died leaving three grieving widows. Naomi encouraged her daughters-in-law to return to their homes so they

would be supported. One kissed her mother-in-law and wept bitterly as she returned home. The other daughter-in-law, Ruth, decided to stay with Naomi saying, "Where you go, I will go, and where you stay, I will stay." Ruth and Naomi then embarked on a journey to Naomi's home of Bethlehem.

When they arrived, people immediately recognized Naomi but when she spoke to them, she said, "don't call me Naomi for my name is now Mara." Mara means bitter! Take a moment to consider your lowest point in life. Perhaps you lost a job or suffered great financial distress. Perhaps you were rejected by someone close to you. Maybe a death occurred causing you to doubt God and to become angry and bitter. Well, that was Naomi's experience. "Call me Mara because the Almighty has made my life very bitter" (Ruth 1:20).

This is also an image of hopelessness. A tragic widow returning to the home she had left after losing her husband and two sons and accompanied by her foreign daughter-in-law. In her own words, Naomi "...went away full, but the Lord has brought me back empty" (Ruth 1:21). Thank God that this isn't the ending point of Naomi's life, but the beginning of a remarkable story of hope and redemption.

There is a great deal of kindness and forgiveness in this story which starts with the remarkable Ruth. At harvest time, Ruth goes to glean the fields belonging to Boaz who was a family member. Noticing Ruth and hearing of her reputation, Boaz not only allows this foreigner to glean in his field but makes sure she has enough to drink and eat. Indeed, so successful was Ruth's gleaning that she returned to Naomi with six gallons worth of grain.

Naomi tells Ruth about Boaz who we learn is a "Kinsman-Redeemer." A Kinsman-Redeemer represents a family member who cannot act on his own behalf. In this instance, Naomi was a widow who could not sell the land that belonged to her husband Elimelech because of her poverty. To sell the land she would need a Kinsman-Redeemer to buy the land from her. In doing so Boaz not only restored Naomi but took Ruth as his wife to maintain the family name. What a remarkable redemption story is portrayed in the lives of Naomi and Ruth. It is even more remarkable to realize that Ruth became the Great Grandmother of King David and part of the lineage of Jesus Christ.

Spiritually, Naomi was very low—to the point of extreme bitterness. But God did not forget her. One might argue that she had given up on life, but her return to Bethlehem was an important step towards redemption. She left the godless land of Moab and went back to her home of Bethlehem and, as such, back into the will of God. When we realize that we have wandered from God, the important first step is to turn back towards Him. In times of bitterness as in ease, we must cling to the hope that is Jesus Christ.

Put yourself into the journey of Naomi and Ruth. They had moments of desperate darkness; the loss of loved ones, the loss of position and a genuine sense that God had abandoned them. If you consider the lowest point of lostness as being away from God and their journey back as redemption, where do you stand right now? If your life is dark, is it because you have wandered away from Him? If so, it's time to turn back to God. If you've turned back to Him but

still cannot see a way forward, put your trust in Him who said, "I will never leave nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5). If you've been fully restored, praise God for His faithfulness.

Jesus Christ is our Kinsman-Redeemer; He has called us brothers and sisters. "Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So, Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters" (Heb. 2:11). By His sacrifice on the cross, Jesus paid the price for our redemption and now He sits beside the Father interceding on our behalf. The Lord Jesus Christ bought us for Himself, out of the curse, out of our destitution. He has made us His own beloved bride and blessed us for all generations. He is the true Kinsman-Redeemer of all who call on Him in faith.

Additional Articles on Ruth

[Ruth – Who Would Have Thought?](#)

About author



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Worship Programs

July 2022 – Hope for the Nation

July 1, 2022 By Lt. Rachel Pruitt



Introduction

The goal of this program is for women to see that they can provide hope to others because of the light of Jesus shining in them.

Program Outline

- Welcome
- Worship Songs: Living Hope (<https://youtu.be/9f2FXxDVO6w>), God of this City (<https://youtu.be/d61LamkXfwk>)
- Devotional
- Interactive Prayer Time
- Closing Prayer

Decorations and Visual Aids

Use various forms of light (battery operated candles, lanterns, or string lights) to create soft light in a darkened room. These will be used as metaphors for hope and hopelessness. Set up a main worship center or use centerpieces on each table, incorporating the following, which will be used during the interactive prayer time.

- Small flat rock for each person
- Stationery, envelopes, and pens
- Picture or graphic of the word HOPE
- Stamp ink and baby wipes
- Toy soldier for each person
- Scripture take-away cards

Hope

(Begin the devotion in a dimly lit room.) Sometimes our world feels dark and hopeless. Situations take over our lives that make us feel out of control or seem too difficult for us to handle. Families are separated, people are treated unfairly, people are homeless and without food, viruses cause world-wide sickness and death. It can be easy to feel as if there is no hope in the world, that there are too many tragedies to even begin to think about hope. Although it's easy to get caught up in that feeling, it's not the truth. We have a living hope in Jesus. Despite the darkness that surrounds us, there's a light shining. *(Stage women around the room to light candles on each table.)*

In the book of Esther, we read about a nation that was in darkness because of persecution, racism and hatred. A political leader was threatening to end an entire race of people. He may have succeeded had it not been for Esther.

In the first chapter of Esther, we're introduced to King Xerxes and his style of leadership. When Queen Vashti refused to come to his party, he had her removed from her position as

queen. The King made this decision at the guidance of his other royal officials, believing that Queen Vashti's refusal would cause other women throughout the land to follow suit.

In Chapter two we meet Esther, a beautiful Jewish woman, who was raised by her Uncle Mordecai. Years before, the Jewish people had been taken captive and exiled to Persia. The King was not aware of Esther's background but chose and established her as his Queen.

When Esther's uncle told her about Haman's plan to eradicate the Jews, she stepped into action. She approached the king despite knowing that to approach him without being specifically called could mean her death. She took a risk for the sake of her people. She was their hope in the darkness. At the end of the story, the King believed Esther and had Haman killed. The Jews were saved, and Mordecai was elevated to a position of leadership. Would any of that have been possible had Esther not been willing to follow God's leading in her life?

There was hope for an entire race because of one woman's actions. Despite what we may think or feel, we can also offer hope to others. Because of Jesus life, death and resurrection we know that we will live eternally, that there is grace and mercy for us, that sin need not control us. When we accept Jesus as our Savior, we have that light, that hope, living in us. Although we may not be called to save an entire race of people as Esther did, we can reach out to those around us and offer hope to the hopeless. We read in 1 Peter 1:3, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." This isn't just a nice idea or a good thought to keep in mind, it's real and its alive.

As we spend some time in prayer, think about ways you can offer hope to those around you. Maybe God has called you to do something outside your comfort zone like He did with Esther. Our God doesn't fail, He is love, He is faithfulness, He is truth.

Interactive Prayer Time

Hope for Me (*Stones*)

Sometimes it feels like our lives are out of control. It's hard to think about what life will be on the other side of that situation. Take a rock from the worship table and think about one situation in your life that you thought you would never get through. Thank God for bringing you through it. In the Old Testament, people built altars or placed stones of remembrance in a specific spot to remind them of what God had done for them. Spend time thanking Him for being your hope amidst the chaos and fear. Place your rock on the pile. Our God is faithful. He doesn't let us down. *Spend some time in prayer.*

Hope for My Inner Circle (*Cards*)

We usually know a lot about the people in our inner circle. They are often the people we rely on when things get tough. When is the last time you've encouraged the people you're closest to? Make a list of those close to you who need a word of encouragement. Write a card to

those who don't live near you. For the others, send them a text, email or make a phone call when you get home. Don't forget those in your immediate family. Tell them something that you appreciate about them.

Hope for my Community (*Hope Sign*)

We don't live isolated in the world. We are part of a family, a neighborhood, a city and a state. Community works best when we all work together to support and help each other. Jesus gave us a great example of community by teaching and healing those who were outcast by other members of society. Take a few minutes to pray for your community. How can you be a better neighbor? How can you help to create a better unity? How can you share the hope of Jesus to others? Think of Esther's example of providing hope to her people. After your time spent in prayer, put your thumb on the ink pad and place your thumb print inside the letters that spell HOPE. Let this be a reminder that life is better together.

Hope for my Country (*Toy Soldier*)

We in the United States are fortunate. Even those in our country with the few economic resources would be considered rich compared to other countries. While others face persecution every day, we are blessed to live in a country that offers religious and political freedom. However, there are many in our country who don't know about the hope found in Jesus. They have never met Him or experienced His love. While we pray for the leaders, troops, lawmakers, and emergency service workers who serve our country, let's also pray for those individuals who are hopeless. Take a toy soldier home as a reminder to pray not only for our leaders, but also for those fighting battles that we know nothing about.

Whispers of Hope Cards

Christians are called to be the light of Christ in a world shrouded in darkness. Take a Scripture card home for yourself and one to share with a friend.

(Make up Scripture cards with the following verses from the NIV version.)

Jeremiah 29:11—For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Isaiah 40:31—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.

Romans 15:13—May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 11:28—Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

Psalms 119:114—You are my refuge and my shield; I have put my hope in your word.

Hebrews 10:23—Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful.

Micah 7:7—But as for me, I watch in hope for the Lord, I wait for God my Savior; my God will hear me.

Psalms 25:5—Guide me in Your truth and teach me, for You are God my Savior, and my hope is in You all day long.

1 Peter 1:3—Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Closing Prayer

About author



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Worship Programs

August 2022 – Soul Healing Love

August 1, 2022 By Major Julie Anne Louden



Program Outline

Welcome and Introduction

Soul Healing Praise and Worship Songs

"Lord I Give You My Heart, I Give You My Soul," available on YouTube.

"How Great Thou Art," Song #993, *The Salvation Army Song Book* or on a YouTube video.

Soul Exploration

Prayer

I asked God for strength that I might achieve,

I was made weak that I might learn to humbly obey.

I asked God for health that I might do greater things,

I was given infirmity that I might do better things.

I asked God for power that I might have the praise of men,

I was given weakness that I might feel the need of God.

I asked for all things that I might enjoy life,

I was given life that I might enjoy all things.

I got nothing that I asked for, but everything that I hoped for,

Almost despite myself, my unspoken prayers were answered.

I am, among all, most richly blessed!

—Author Unknown

Soul Reflection

"It Is Well With My Soul," Song #771, *The Salvation Army Song Book*

Craft—Soothing for the Soul

Check the Internet for recipes and the benefits of bath salts.

Devotional—Soul Healing Love

Scripture. 1 Samuel 1:1–18

Benediction

Soul Healing Love

"Jesus said. 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself'" (Matt. 22: 38, 39, NLT).

The soul is the emotional nature of a human being; the substance or essence of who we are. It is the core energy or life energy that is in human beings. It is immortal. The Salvation Army's Eleventh Doctrine speaks of this, "We believe in the immortality of the soul, in the resurrection of the body, and in the general judgment at the end of the world." In Scripture the Greek word for the soul is *psuché*. This is close to our English version of psyche, meaning "breathe" or "breath of life." God breathed into Adam the breath of life and Adam became a "living being."

Since God made the soul as the central aspect of man that is most like Him, the soul is the most God-like part of the human psyche. The soul's God-like nature enables it to be capable of great depth and caring. The soul rejoices, praises, hopes and is patient. The soul can be satisfied, happy and at rest with God and itself. Because the soul contains emotions, appetites, and memories, it is also vulnerable to pain and hurt. It can become unsettled, angered, frightened, despairing, weak, despondent, disquieted and even bitter.

When God created us, He gave us a soul. That soul developed depending on how we were raised. Some of us were loved, nurtured and well cared for. Others were mistreated, abused, neglected, or even ignored. Regardless of how your soul was formed, we all have soul wounds. There are those hurts and pains inflicted upon the psyche that leave emotional scars. This may have happened to us growing up or it could have happened recently. However, many of us do not want to face the ugly, dark parts of ourselves that contributed to these scars. Seeing our soul for what it is, the good and the bad, is extremely hard. As Christians, we don't want to see our sinful nature. But to apply God's soul healing love, we must see those sins and confess them to Him. The good news is: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Finding out what has wounded us, will help heal our souls. Facing our own hurts and wounds helps us to understand the wounds of others and will help us in our daily relationships.

Read 1 Samuel 1:1-18.

Hannah shows great faith as she asks the Lord to bless her with a child. Prayer helps us to learn the best way to approach and view our hurts, our brokenness and our adversaries. Hannah takes these troubles to the Lord in prayer. When we follow her example and leave our problems in God's hands, He will give us healing, peace and joy. His grace will become evident in our lives.

Invite the women to read aloud Mathew 22:37-40.

Jesus said that the first commandment is to love God with all our heart, soul and mind. When we love God with our entire being, we can't help but show love for our neighbor. It is a natural and logical outgrowth of that love. The second greatest commandment He gave is to "Love your neighbor as yourself." When we practice soul healing love, we love others.

"The Broken Doll," in *Chicken Soup for The Mother's Soul*, tells of a mother who asked her daughter why she was late coming home from school. The daughter explained that her friend had dropped her doll and that it had broken into pieces. The mother expected her daughter to say that she had helped her friend repair the doll, but instead she replied that she didn't know how to fix it, so she just helped her friend cry. *You can access this full story on the Internet.* Often loving others as we love ourselves is just being there for them and offering words of encouragement. We usually can't fix their problem, but we can hold their hand and let them know how much we care. We can pray with them, letting them know that Jesus also cares.

What is the condition of your soul? Do you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your mind? Do you love your neighbor as yourself? Is your complete soul given over to Him or is there something that keeps you from a complete surrender? Although we know that we have been saved by the blood of Jesus, we can still have areas in our life that need to be healed. Healing is a process. A friend of mine said, "It's not enough to preach against sin because sin is not the real issue. Sin is not the problem. Sin is merely how a person seeks to medicate their problem." We keep sinning because we are still hurting. Wholeness in our soul comes when we turn to the Lord in our weakness and pain and allow Him to do what no one else can do. Only God can regenerate the human spirit. Only God can raise a person to spiritual maturity and soul wholeness. God's healing restores, loves, forgives and saves.

Soul Cleansing Power

Time of Reflection and Meditation

As an outward sign of continuing to need God's healing and restoration in your life, I invite you to come and have healing water poured over your hands. *(Set up basins filled with water in a couple of locations in the meeting room. Have the piano play the song, "Jesus, Lover of My Soul." This is also available on YouTube.)*

Vocal Benediction

Bless the Lord, O my soul,

Bless the Lord, O my soul,

And all that is within me,

Bless His holy name.

-Psalm 103

About author



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Worship Programs

September 2022 – Hope Through Infertility

September 1, 2022 By Captain Kimberly Cundiff



Introduction

This program focuses on the topic of infertility and references the story of Sarah from Genesis 18:1–15. There may be some who attend your corps, in your sphere of influence, or who simply reside in your community who may be struggling in silence with infertility. It is an important topic for the church to include in ministry and to provide hope and healing. Those

who suffer from infertility need someone to hear their stories and provide encouragement. This may be a one time program or a launching point within the corps/church or as an outreach open to anyone in the community.

Planning

Ask specific individuals to handle various aspects of the program prior to the event: advertising, invitations, resource collection, set up and clean up.

Program Options

- 1 Invite someone from a local infertility support group to come and speak to the group.
- 2 Invite someone who has struggled with infertility and is willing to share their story with the group.
- 3 In addition to the resources provided below, collect handouts from local resources prior to the program.

Set Up

The arrangement of the room will depend on the size of the group, location and how formal the setting is. Because the topic for discussion is a personal and intimate one, strive for a setting that allows those who share to feel comfortable.

Informal settings—Starbucks, someone's home (living room/dining table), fellowship hall around tables with refreshments or a meal to encourage more interaction with various members of the group.

Formal setting—chapel pews with the leader standing at front of the group or fellowship hall/classroom/conference room with chairs and a podium for the leader. If in the corps building, plan for appropriate signage so those attending who are not familiar with the building will know where to go.

Hope for a Child

Read Genesis 18:1–15 NIV.

Sarah is the first woman in the Bible whose experience with infertility is shared. God had promised her husband Abraham that he would father a child with Sarah, but after waiting for a long time Abraham and Sarah did not conceive a child. When three strangers appeared unexpectedly at their house, Abraham rushed to meet them and prepared his house to show them hospitality, which was expected during those times. If we look at how much bread he asked his wife Sarah to bake, we see that he was preparing for an extravagant feast, including a choice calf usually reserved for special occasions. As they were eating, the visitors asked Abraham where Sarah was. Abraham replied that she was in a tent because in those days

men and women did not eat together. Now Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah was 90 years old, so you can imagine that all these preparations were very tiring for both of them. Still, they did what was expected of them.

During the meal, one of the visitors told Abraham, "At this time next year I will return and Sarah your wife will have a son." I imagine that Abraham might have started to choke on his food in disbelief or to laugh at such a ridiculous statement. He knew that he and Sarah were past the age of childbearing. What the visitor said seemed ridiculous! But God created the whole world and everything in it! Surely He could create another human life if He chose to do so, regardless of the most insurmountable circumstance. Sarah laughed. And I am sure she was looking at her husband at this point, thinking this man is crazy.

Then the Lord said, "Why did Sarah laugh?" (vs. 13) "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" (vs. 14). She may have laughed because she had not been able to have a child for so long and her unbelief was starting to take over. If she was honest, she probably would have had to admit her true feelings, which were that she was afraid. Afraid that she might not ever have a child or that at her age she could not handle motherhood. Or maybe she was angry that God had not answered her prayer when she was young in the way she wanted. Sarah replied that she did not laugh (vs. 15). God knows how we feel. There is no need to lie about it. He will supply all our needs as he did for Sarah who not only got pregnant but delivered a healthy child long after anyone would have expected.

There are many stories in the Bible of other women who were said to be barren. There was Rebekkah, Isaac's wife and Rachel, one of Jacob's wives, Manoah's nameless wife, Samson's mother, along with Hannah who we know prayed for a child for a long time. Consider also Elisabeth, the mother of John the Baptist. They all had something in common in that they all believed, prayed, and asked God to bless them with a child. They chose to trust in God's promises, not in their hope or desire. God already had a future planned for them and he answered their prayers.

Everyone's story is unique. God sees you where you are. You do not have to suffer in silence or struggle all alone. You are not forgotten, and God always keeps His promises to love you and be present with you. He can perform a miracle if He so chooses as He did for Abraham and Sarah. That miracle may come in a form we don't expect. What he asks of us is that we continue to believe in Him even when circumstances seem bleak. He asks that we remain faithful even we don't receive the answers that we want, in the time we want, or in the way that we want. You may not become pregnant. But that doesn't mean that God won't give you children to love. When circumstances for us are difficult we must still have faith (Hebrews 11:1) that our God is working in ways that we may not understand and have the courage to face those uncertain days that He may be glorified. (see Deuteronomy 31:6)

Closing

The closing will depend on the setting. Options include: Prayer chorus followed by prayer or time of sharing around the table or in small groups. Those in attendance may be encouraged

to begin an online Bible reading plan as a group. (See online resources below.)

Prayer Chorus

“In Thee O Lord Do I Put My Trust” (3X)

For Those Struggling with Infertility (Online resources)

<https://lifewaywomen.com/2020/04/21/finding-gods-faithfulness-through-infertility/>

<https://reproductive-endocrinology-infertility.imedpub.com/>

<https://www.waitinginhopeinfertility.com/>

<https://www.sarahs-laughter.com/>

<https://justbetweenus.org/topics/struggling-with-infertility/>

Resources for Pastors and Leaders

<https://dancinguponbarrenland.com/resources/pastors-ministry-leaders/>

<https://erlc.com/resource-library/articles/god-remembers-the-barren-and-so-should-the-church>

For Those Dealing With The Loss of a Child

<https://stillremembered.org/>

<https://www.sarahs-laughter.com/>

Support Groups

<https://www.sarahs-laughter.com/> (Nationwide USA, locations listed on website/non-denominational supporting women of all faiths Christian ministry)

hannahshope@biblechapel.org (Locations in PA, USA and FL, USA – contact for current locations)

<https://www.watermark.org/dallas/ministries/shiloh> (located in Dallas, Texas)

Online Bible Reading Plans

<https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/1221-infertility-encouragement-from-sarahs-laughter>

<https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/11366-longing-for-motherhood>

<https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/15718-gods-presence-in-miscarriage-and-infertility>

<https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/12544-7-stages-of-grief-after-miscarriage>

<https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/14337-the-hannah-anointing>

<https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/13351-its-not-supposed-to-be-this-way-by-lysa-terkeurst>

Books

Walking through Infertility: Biblical, Theological & Moral Counsel For Those Who Are Struggling by Matthew Arbo

Longing for Motherhood, Holding onto Hope in the Midst of Childlessness by Chelsea Patterson Sobolik

Communication Tips

<https://resolve.org/support/infertility-and-relationships/what-to-say-and-not-to-say-to-someone-living-with-infertility/>

<https://www.penmedicine.org/updates/blogs/fertility-blog/2015/august/four-questions-to-ask-other-couples-who-are-going-through-fertility-treatments>

How to start a faith-based women's ministry infertility support group

<https://waitingforbabybird.com/how-to-start-a-faith-based-infertility-support-group-tips-tricks-and-mistakes-to-avoid/>

About author



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