

Women's Ministries Resources 2023-24



THE SALVATION ARMY WOMEN'S MINISTRIES RESOURCES

Deeply Rooted

2023-2024 PROGRAM YEAR

**“But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him.
They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream.”**

Jeremiah 17:7-8



Women's Sunday



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Women's Sunday

Women's Sunday 2023 – Deeply Rooted: Sermon

October 1, 2023 By Major Marion Durham



Women's Sunday – Deeply Rooted: [Outline](#)

Women's Sunday – Deeply Rooted: [Enrollment Program & Meal](#)

Women's Sunday 2023 – Deeply Rooted: [PDF](#) | [Word](#)

Scripture: Jeremiah 17:7-13

I have a garden where I grow tomatoes, green peppers, red peppers, white eggplant, zucchini, yellow squash, watermelon, and lots of beautiful herbs. Some harvests have been better than others, but each year it's been a joy to watch the young plants develop deep roots and produce fruit.

This year my tomatoes didn't do well. The plants grew, but they just didn't produce the delicious red tomatoes that I love. It took me awhile, but I eventually learned that the irrigation system was not working properly. When I planted the tender seedlings, they didn't get enough water and therefore, weren't growing the deep roots necessary to create the fruit for harvest. Adequate water is essential to developing roots and producing fruit.

Our scripture today is from Jeremiah 17 where we see a people just like my tomatoes. They were planted in parched places with no prosperity, no increase, no inheritance because they were trusting in man and not the Lord.

1. Judah loses its trust in God (Corporate)

Jeremiah 17:1-4 give us a picture of a nation that was the apple of God's eye, but who become a sinful nation. They lost their inheritance, both the actual physical land which God had given them, as well as the spiritual inheritance of being God's favored ones because of their sinful habits and practices like worshipping pagan idols.

Read Jeremiah 17: 1-4.

The people who had been liberated from Egypt had become slaves again. It was a national disgrace. The people who had been given instructions on how-to live-in God's way had lost it all as they broke commandment after commandment.

The prophet Jeremiah, prompted by God's Spirit, after addressing the people as a group, focuses in and looks at something more personal than the shame of the nation. He shows that the broader perspective is created through the actions of each individual person in Judah. They've lost their nation, their way of life and it's not just their neighbor's fault, it was their fault as well.

Read Jeremiah 17:5-6

2. Shallow Rooted Man Trusts in Self (Personal)

The person in this scripture put their trust in man, not God. Their strength is in something that is shallow, and they live in the dry places. The people of Judah knew about living in the desert, they knew that water could not be found in just anywhere. There were parched places,

salty places where no prosperity or sustaining fruit could be found. Yet, that is where they chose to live spiritually, where they tried to develop spiritual roots.

If we jump ahead to verse 13, we read, *"Lord, you are the hope of Israel; all who forsake you will be put to shame. Those who turn away from you will be written in the dust because they have forsaken the Lord, the spring of living water."*

When we choose to forsake God, we will find no lasting spiritual sustenance. We have no holy inheritance that produces healthy fruit, but instead dry, shriveled lives that struggle to survive. This is the message that the prophet Jeremiah had for Judah and for her citizens, and it still rings true for us today. Self-reliance can only get us so far. Dependence upon what is found in self and this life alone is shallow. God has created us for so much more.

Read Jeremiah 17: 7-8.

3. Deeply Rooted Man Trusts in God (Personal)

The person who trusts in the Lord has confidence in God! They depend on Him. They are deeply rooted and live without fear of the future. The heat will come. Dry seasons of life, difficult times and problems will come, but there is no fear because their roots run deep in the spring of living water, depending on God through it all.

When the irrigation system in my garden is working correctly, despite the heat of the day, the plants are green and bearing fruit. The same is true of when we are tapped in, irrigated, watered by *"the Lord, the spring of living water."* (vs. 13). If we keep going and read in verse 14, *"Heal me, Lord, and I will be healed; save me and I will be saved, for you are the one I praise."*

The deeply rooted man has great trust in God. He faces the same troubles of life that the person of shallow faith does, but it's in the response to those problems that faith is proven genuine and God rewards those who give Him the praise that He deserves.

We can fool others, can't we? We can say things, do things and play things, but only God knows what we really think and what we really believe. He knows our heart. *"The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, reward each person according to their conduct according to what their deeds deserve."* (vs. 9, 10).

So, let's dig in deep and develop those extensive roots. Scripture supports scripture. The Word of God interprets the Word of God. This concept of developing deep roots, nourished by the Living Water are found throughout the Bible in both The Old and New Testaments.

Read Psalm 1.

It's no accident that God compares us to trees. He urges us to grow! Just like giant oak trees began with an acorn, we begin our faith with a tiny seed, planted within us, but then we have

to grow! Giving our life to Christ is just the beginning.

Paul prayed for the believers he loved in Ephesus to have deep roots as well.

Read Ephesians 3:14-19

“Conversion is the work of an instant; spiritual maturity is the work of a lifetime. Is your faith like a seedling, a sprout, or a mature tree?”—Reverend Billy Graham, “Peace for Each Day.”

In other words, are you deeply rooted in Christ? In John 4 Jesus called Himself “the living water.” He said that those who drink from the living water, wouldn’t thirst again. That’s how we grow those well-watered, deep roots found in our text from Jeremiah. We focus first on the roots and then the fruit will follow. We can’t look for fruits until the roots are deeply watered in Him because deeply rooted people are obedient people who say yes to God. “The seeds that fell in good soil stand for those who hear the message and retain it in a good and obedient heart, and they persist until they bear fruit” (Luke 8:15, GNT). Are you deeply rooted?

A Christian with shallow roots is often impulsive, emotional, superficial, and immature. “The seeds that fell on rocky ground are the people who gladly hear the message and accept it. But they don’t have deep roots, and they believe only for a little while. As soon as life gets hard, they give up” (Luke 8:13 (CEV).

What evidence do you have for your own life? Are your roots shallow or deep? Growth can often be painful and even scary. We can be slow learners and it takes time to develop good spiritual habits and just as much time for us to unlearn bad spiritual habits. Judah never did. They didn’t give up the Asherah poles, their false idols, and broken-hearted practices.

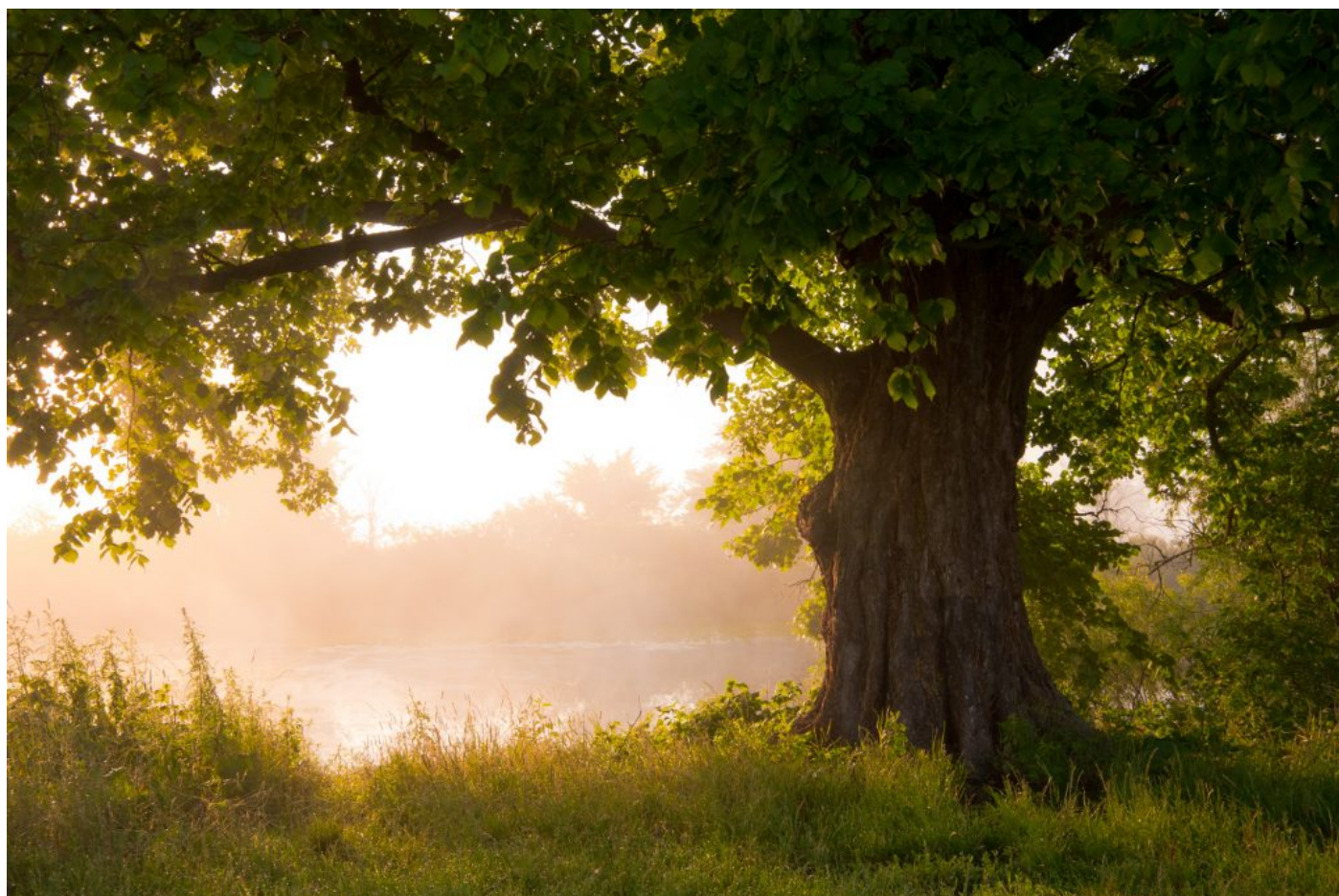
In closing, allow God’s Holy Spirit to convict you of things you need to either eliminate or add to your life. He will help you develop deep roots as you tap into the Jesus the Living Water, but you must obey Him as He directs you to make those things happen.



Women's Sunday

Women's Sunday 2023 – Deeply Rooted: Outline

October 1, 2023 By Major Marion Durham



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Preliminary Music – Corps Musicians

Welcome and Announcements – CSM

Call to Worship – Women's Ministry Leader

Leader: With joy and delight we gather to praise our Holy God!
With reverence and awe, we approach our Gracious God.

**Response: We give thanks that God understands us,
and does not want us to be that which we were never created to become!**

Leader: Creative God, You call us to worship You as Your children, made in Your image,
with a divine spark within each of us.

**Response: We give thanks that God understands us,
and encourages us to grow in our knowledge of God's awesome holiness.**

Leader: Glorious God, you invite us to sink our roots deep into your love and holiness,
and to grow stronger each day in our faith in You.

**Response: We give thanks that God understands us,
and that the fruits we bear are consistent with what God created us to become.**

Leader: We gather to worship and praise our supporting and caring God.

ALL: AMEN

— *written by Joan Stott (based on Psalm 1)*

Song #689/263 "Trusting as the Moments Fly"

– Women's Ministry Participant

Praise and Worship Team

Suggested Choruses: "I Raise a Hallelujah," Bethel Music

"What A Beautiful Name," Hillsong Music

"Good, Good Father," Chris Tomlin

Video Presentation – "Rooted":

<https://www.sermoncentral.com/church-media-preaching-sermons/sermon-video-illustrations/rooted-6546-detail>

Scripture Reading: Jeremiah 17:5-10 – Female Teen

Altar of Prayer – Song #32/663
“How Deep the Father’s Love for Us”

Pastoral Prayer – Corps Officer or Women’s Ministries Chaplain

Tithes/ Offering – Corps Treasurer

Offertory

Doxology #1036/31

Praise God from whom all blessings flow

Praise Him all creatures here below

Praise Him above ye heavenly hosts

Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen

Praise Team Special Music: “Your Love O, Lord”

(As sung by Third Day, available on YouTube)

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Message: “Deeply Rooted”

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Prayer and Personal Reflection

Song #690/522 “Trust and Obey”

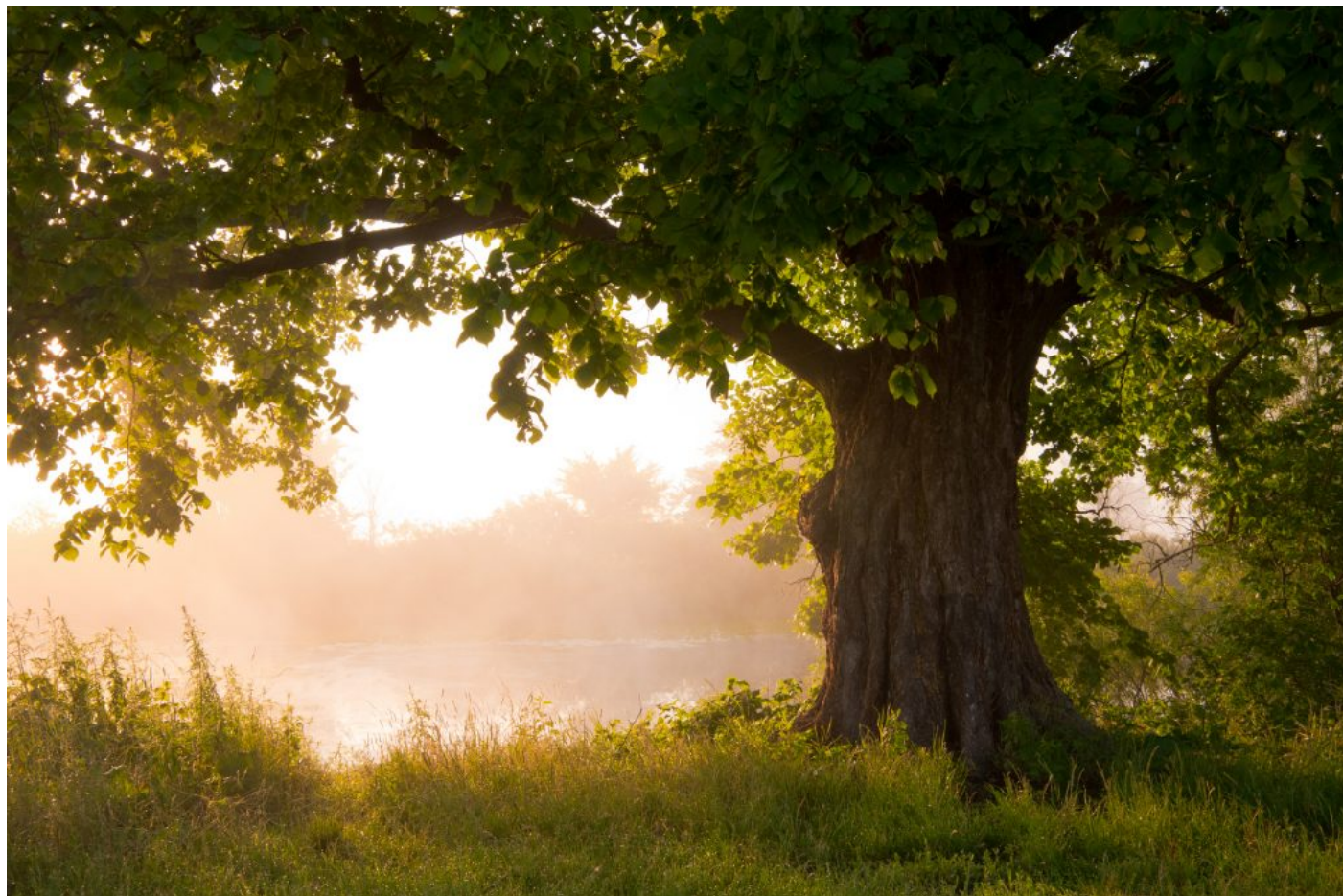
Closing Prayer – Women’s Ministries Participant



Women's Sunday

Women's Sunday 2023 – Deeply Rooted: Enrollment Program & Meal

October 1, 2023 By Major Marion Durham



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Scripture: Jeremiah 17:7-8

Menu:

Following the morning worship service, ask the Men's Club to serve a special meal for all of the women of the congregation. Depending on your budget, this could be a steak and baked potato dinner or as simple as brunch with traditional items like eggs, bacon/sausage, biscuits, and fruit. It would be fun to serve roasted ROOT vegetables (carrots, parsnips, turnips, potatoes and more) following the theme of deeply rooted. If there is no Men's Club, purchase sandwich platters from a grocery store so that the women will not have to cook for their own enrollment/recognition meal.

Color Palette/Décor Ideas:

- Black and White Buffalo Plaid napkins
- White Tablecloths
- Green potted plants (from nursery or garden center)
- Black and White Buffalo Plaid Placemats

Centerpieces and Decorations:

- Fresh potted plants (to be given to the local leaders in recognition)
- Buffalo Plaid Paper Placemat (to put under the plants)
- Invite a local bonsai club to exhibit their plants.

Leader Recognition:

We would like to take a moment to thank all of our Women's Ministries leaders. Our key verse for today is *"Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream"* (Jer. 17:7-8).

Leaders, in the center of our tables today is a beautiful fresh plant purchased in your honor. We give them today to _____ (list names and jobs of local officers) in honor of your service to our corps and Women's Ministries. You add a freshness and life to our group, and we appreciate all that you do. Optional: Give a watering can (tie a buffalo check ribbon on the handle) to your Women's Ministry leader as an extra gift for all the little extras that she does to bring nourishment and life to the group.

Creative Time

As a filler while different tables of women are being served or going through a buffet line, enjoy a creative time with these three different craft ideas. This could also be done at the conclusion of the meeting.

Creative Time Set-up:

- Station One: Yarn Hearts
- Station Two: Adult Coloring Page
- Station Three: Succulent Potting

Yarn Hearts:

Have premade heart templates 2"-3" cut from posterboard or cardstock. The women can use the template to trace the heart on pieces of cardboard from a used shipping box. Take colored yarn and tape one end to the middle of the heart. Wind it around the cardboard heart. It should be free form and fun. Once the cardboard is completely covered, cut the yarn with a several inch tail and tie to the yarn covering the heart. Print and frame this scripture to display at this station next to a sample: *"I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward each person according to his conduct, according to what their deeds deserve."* (Jer. 17:10).

Supplies Needed:

- Scissors, yarn, tape, pencils needed
- Heart templates
- Cardboard

Adult Coloring Page:

A quick internet search will reveal free scripture-based coloring pages for the women. If your budget allows, you could give everyone a Christian Adult Coloring Book of their own. Or print several free ones, which are available online and they can make your own book. Have colored pencils, markers, and crayons available for women to use. If possible, find a tree with roots for women to color. Print and frame this scripture for this station: *"Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its rooted by the stream."* (Jer. 17:7-8).

Supplies Needed:

- Adult Christian coloring pages
- Adult Christian coloring books
- Colored pencils, markers

Succulent Potting:

Small succulent plants which are available at most local nurseries. At this station women can take those plants and group a few together in a larger pot with fresh potting soil. Be sure and use a plastic tablecloth at this station. Plastic spoons can be used instead of expensive gardening tools. An extra touch would be ribbon to tie around the pot with a tag. The women can write the scripture on it, or it can be printed on a label.

Print and frame Jer. 17:8b *"It (She) does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green."* Also have a sample plant.

Supplies Needed:

- Succulents
- Potting soil
- Pots
- Plastic spoons
- Plastic tablecloths
- Ribbon, tags and stickers (extra touch)

Enrollment Ceremony:

We are so pleased to have new members as part of our Women's Ministries groups this year. As I call your name, please come forward. Today as part of our recognition of you joining our Women's Ministries, I'd like to present to each of you a Pothos plant.

- Pothos plant are inexpensive and available at most garden centers.
- Display an example of a pothos plant where you can see the stem growing roots in a clear glass vase or glass jar.

This is the easiest plant in the world to take care of. In fact, if you cut off a small stem from this plant and put it in water, you see something wonderful happen. After a few days, the cutting will begin growing roots. No soil or special treatment needed! Then you can share this cutting with a friend. Just like someone brought you to our group, you can share a new plant and invite someone that you know to join us.

I would like to take a moment to pray over each of you and thank God for you.

Devotion:

In our theme scripture, Jeremiah 17:7, 8, we read how a person who trusts in the Lord is like a tree, rooted deep into nourishing grounds. Today you found as your table favor, a small journal or notebook. Inside you will find a printed copy of those verses. Let's read them out loud together.

I see the qualities of rooted faith in each of you, and I believe you can see it in each other. Please take a moment on the first page to write your name at the top of the journal. We are going to take time now to encourage each other by passing our journals around your table (or around the room if a small group) to each other. On the lines under the listed name, write a rooted quality that you see in that person. For example, if you see in (name) the spiritual quality of joy because of her effervescence and perseverance despite difficult circumstances, write a line or two to encourage her in the faith.

Close in prayer.

Education Programs



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Deeply Rooted

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**“But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him.
They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream.”**

Jeremiah 17:7-8





Education Programs

October 2023 – Deeper Relationship

October 1, 2023 By Major Linda-Jo Perks



Scripture: John 15:5 (NIV)

“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”

Preparation

Place praying hands statues, pens, crayons, colored pencils, and blank paper along with the verse, John 15:5, on each table. Purchase “shovel” spoons and tie on a tag that says “Dig Deeper.” These can be taken home as a reminder to spend time in God’s Word daily.

Ice Breaker: M&M Game

Give each woman a baggie with the following colors of M&M: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and brown. Instruct the women to pick one M&M out of their baggie without looking. If they pick red, they say something about their childhood. If they pick orange, they say something they do well. If they pick yellow, they tell something they’ve learned recently. If they pick green, they tell something they watch/listen to on TV. If they choose blue, they share something they can’t live without. If they pick brown, they tell something interesting that they did yesterday. In doing this exercise, the women learn more about each other.

Digging Deeper: Scripture Writing

To go deeper in our relationship with God, we first need to saturate ourselves with His presence. How can we do that? We can go to church and enjoy the rich fellowship that comes from being with God’s people and worshipping together. We can read our Bible and pray. Something a little different is Scripture Writing. This is a practice where you take a verse or passage of Scripture and copy it. But you can make it meaningful by adding your creative flair to the copying. This gets our minds thinking differently when we read the verse and then copy it using our senses. *(See Facebook page “Scripture Writing 2022” or check Pinterest.)*

You can keep these verses in a notebook or sketch pad. They give fresh fire to our time with God. Start by reading the verse several times. Write out the words. Then, take a pen, crayon, or marker and draw around the letters using different mediums. Ask yourself, what is this verse saying to me? There is no wrong or right because as you do this, you grow deeper in your relationship with God. It might feel awkward at first, but it will get easier. Remember to pray and thank God for making this verse come alive for you.

Growing Closer to God Together

When I was a kid, neighbors used to sit out on the porch and talk. They shared baked goods, stories and much more. They were available to help one another. You could go to your neighbor if you needed a ride or ran out of sugar. We need to be doing this with our church family. We can offer help when things are looking down for our neighbors, or we find ourselves in need. We can eat together. We can pray together. We can worship together. We can cry together. We were meant to share life.

When Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment was, He replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”¹ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’ (Matt.

22:37:38). Authentic relationships start with loving God. Every relationship we have should have God at the head of it.

Authentic relationships allow us to let people pray for us. We need to come as we are. We need to be real. When we share our struggles, we will find that we are not alone and that others struggle with similar issues. When we share with others, ask the following questions: Can I trust them? Do they really care? Can they help? Then we need to examine our answers to these same questions. Am I trustworthy? Do I really care? Are we willing to help?

How often do we listen, really listen? Instead of trying to think of a one-up story to share. We should ask questions to get to know the person better. Remember, God wants us to develop a deeper relationship. If you don't know how to respond, ask the Lord. "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord." (James 1:5-7).

Cell phones can be a blessing. Using them lets us keep in touch with family and friends no matter where we are. However, sometimes this is just communication, but we are not connecting. We don't see people's expressions or the anguish they are expressing when we don't hear their voices. We miss out on so much if we're always staring at a screen. So put the phone down, and spend time face to face.

So, if you are looking for a deeper relationship, remember, like branches of a tree, we are all connected in Christ. Be aware! Be intentional! Be available! Be honest! This could begin a beautiful relationship with God and a friend.

- 1 Do you want to experience authentic relationships with others? If so, are you actively practicing the five relational concepts that Paul lays out in Philippians 2:1-2? Encouraging, comforting, participating, affection, and sympathy.
- 2 Which one of these concepts is your most significant struggle?

Prayer

Share prayer requests and pray for each one.



Education Programs

November 2023 – Deeper Gratitude

November 1, 2023 By Captain Stacy McNeil



The New York Times released the article “How to Build Healthy Habits” on February 25, 2020, and under the headline, it read, “It’s not about willpower. Good habits happen when we set ourselves up for success.” How do we, as women, set ourselves up for success? Success in our

careers, success as moms (if applicable), success as friends, sisters, daughters and as Christians?

How do we expect to succeed if we don't allow anything in our lives with even an inkling that it will be a failure?

We as women need to develop a habit of believing that we will be successful in all things. The Bible can help us with that.

Colossians 2:6-7 says, "So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness." Here Paul is instructing us in some healthy habits that we should be developing.

Paul gives us four things in which we should develop a habit:

- Continue to live your lives in Him
- Be rooted and built up in Him
- Be strengthened in faith, as you were taught
- Be overflowing with thankfulness

How do we do those things?

We need to form habits, so they become routine and part of our typical day.

Continue to live your lives in Him.

- Schedule prayer time. There are many different resources online, in print, and on social media that can help us be more intentional in our prayer time. Here is one idea ...
- Label three envelopes with the words – "please, sorry, thank you."
- During your prayer time, fill out slips of paper and pray prayers asking the Lord for what you need (please), asking the Lord for forgiveness (sorry), and praising the Lord for what he has done (thank you). From time to time, go back and read your "thank you" prayers, remembering all God has done.
- Being rooted and built up in Him
- Reading and studying God's Word is key to establishing strong roots in Christ. Sometimes reading God's word is hard, not because we don't desire to learn more, but because Scripture is sometimes hard to understand. Here are a couple of ideas to make studying Scripture fun:

Bible Journaling:

- Find a bible with margins, patterns, and illustrations. Make reading scripture creative, ask questions in the margins, color, underline and mark it up. Follow up by working through your questions with someone who can help you find the answers.

Write Scripture:

- Google writing plans for scripture by topics, months, or books of the Bible. Get a journal and have that journal devoted to scripture writing. Each day before you write a new scripture, read the scripture from the day before. Reread the scriptures you've written in your journal. Let it get ingrained in your mind and your heart.
- Be strengthened in faith, as you were taught.
- We believe in God and that He walks with us daily. We believe that He has a plan for our lives. We have gone to Sunday School, learned the stories from scripture, and heard over and over about the birth, death, and resurrection of Christ Jesus. We have been taught much of what we need to succeed in a relationship with Him. How can we strengthen our faith and that relationship? Here is an idea...

Scripture Memorization:

- You can hear a song on the radio and know all the lyrics, whether it is a secular song or a praise and worship song. How do we learn all those words? We listen to it repeatedly, and it sticks in our brains. Why don't we do that with scripture? Imagine how much stronger our faith would be if we could recite God's promises when our faith is tested. Knowing Scripture helps us appreciate our mountain top experiences and helps us persevere through our valleys.
- Here are just a couple of key scriptures to commit to memory to help strengthen your faith:
 Proverbs 3:5-6—Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and He will make straight your paths.
 2 Corinthians 5:7—For we walk by faith, not by sight.
 Ephesians 2:8—For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.
 Luke 1:37—For nothing will be impossible with God.

Activity Idea

As a group, use one of the scriptures mentioned above or a Scripture of your choice and make a song out of it to help you memorize.

Being Overflowing with Thankfulness

Sometimes all the world's troubles surround us, and we overlook all God has done. Imagine if we developed the habit of being thankful for all things. Imagine if we had deeper gratitude, not just saying "thank you" but contemplating and focusing on gratitude rather than the negativity around us. How do we do that? Here is an idea...

Gratitude Jar: All you need is a large mason jar (maybe repurpose and clean an old pickle jar or similar container), large craft sticks, craft supplies you have lying around to decorate the jar, and some colorful markers.

Decorate your jar, and each day take your craft stick and a marker and write what you are thankful for that day. At the end of each month, take some time and reread all of what you were thankful for during the month.

As we establish healthy habits and focus on deeper gratitude and a more sincere relationship with the Lord, let us remember that each day is new. Reflect on this statement from the Dalai Lama, "There are only two days in the year that nothing can be done. One is called yesterday, and the other is called tomorrow. Today is the right day to love, believe, do and mostly live."

Today is the day you need to continue living in Christ. Be rooted and built up in Him, be strengthened in your faith, and overflowing in thankfulness. Be encouraged to begin building healthier spiritual habits today.



Education Programs

December 2023 – A Life Being Rooted in Jesus Christ

December 1, 2023 By Major Karen Brunelle



Introduction

What are your priorities? What is the most important thing to you? I know that families and jobs may be at the top of the list; however, as Christians, the answers should be Jesus. Throughout our busy lives, He is often pushed to the bottom. Matthew 6:33 (NLT) says, "Seek

the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and He will give you everything you need." When our lives are rooted in Jesus Christ, and we put "God above all else," He will give us everything we need.

Setting God as Our First Priority

Check the following website for suggestions for putting God first in your life: [7 Ways to Put God First in Your Life \(ibelieve.com\)](https://www.ibelieve.com/7-ways-to-put-god-first-in-your-life)

Program Ideas

1 Craft Activity – Make a pinecone candle plate

- Supplies Needed: a clean old white tea saucer or small plate, primer craft paint, distressed wood stains such as Deco Art American Gel Stains paint, paintbrush, craft glue, tiny pinecones, green candle (size 3 x 3 pine fragrant), newspaper or craft paper.
- Spread out the newspaper to cover your table. Take the tea saucer and paint with primer paint and let dry. Be sure to cover the entire plate with the primer paint.
- Paint the saucer with a distressed wood stain when the plate is dry. It will give the appearance of a wooden plate.
- When the plate is dry, take the craft glue and glue the candle to the center of the plate. When the candle is secure, add small pinecones around the base of the candle plate. Use the craft glue to secure the pinecones. Let the pinecones dry on the plate.

2 Fun tree puns

Share the following tree puns throughout the program:

<https://www.everydayknow.com/tree-puns>

- 3 Pack a lunch and picnic at a local park amongst the pine trees. If you live near a national park, there are many options for hiking and walking trails.
- 4 Explore the national parks website for further information. This website has some videos on national parks. Find out about entrance passes to your local park—www.nps.gov.
- 5 Watch a documentary on the Eastern White Pine. Go to www.neforests.com for further information on this documentary film, "Eastern White Pine—the Tree Rooted in American History." There is also a vast selection of videos on youtube.com.

Deep Roots

When traveling in northern climates, particularly in states that comprise the north half of the United States, you can't help but notice the natural beauty of the landscape. There are hills and valleys, lakes and mountains, and thousands of beautiful trees. Most notable are the pine trees. Did you know that a pine tree has deep roots and can grow from 50–150 feet tall?

Roots are important. If the roots are good and firmly established, a tree will flourish. The roots will supply the tree with what it needs to grow and remain healthy. The pine tree is a

beautiful reminder of strength and vitality. It stands as a towering, majestic symbol in the land. It is a tree among trees. It always stands tall through all seasons of life, and its roots are well-nourished and connected.

In scripture, we are reminded that “blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him.” (Jer. 17:7) The New Living Translation states, “But blessed are those who trust in the Lord and have made the Lord their hope and confidence. They are like trees planted along a riverbank, with roots that reach deep into the water. Such trees are not bothered by the heat or worried by long months of drought. Their leaves stay green, and they never stop producing fruit.” (Jer. 17:7,8) Do you see the connection?

God wants us to be entirely rooted deeply in Him. Our roots must reach deep into the vast water of faith and hope. Roots grounded in the saving power of Jesus Christ and His kingdom principles, a strong prayer life, and the fellowship of believers. If your faith is deeply rooted, you will be sustained not only in this life but in the life to come. You will also experience spiritual fullness. Your life of faith will be like the mighty evergreen tree. A tree that is always vibrant and growing. You will be a believer who exhibits spiritual strength and will provide a pathway for others to draw near to Jesus.

Do you want to have a life that is rooted in Jesus Christ? If that is your desire, you can trust Him to plant the seed of faith and hope within you. The seed will sprout roots built upon Jesus. He can sustain you. Matthew 6:33 reminds us “to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

Perhaps you are already trusting in faith but not getting all the spiritual nutrients you need. Take a moment now to evaluate where your roots are deriving spiritual strength. It may be time to assess your faith walk if it is not in the Word and Biblical principles. Ask Jesus to help you find what you need to thrive for His glory and purpose.

Discuss these questions with your group.

- How do your personal goals and ambitions align with God’s priority for your life?
- Are you filled with spiritual strength and vitality?
- Are your spiritual roots well established?

Time of Prayer and Scripture Challenge:

“And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow Him. Let your roots grow into Him, and let your lives be built on Him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness” (Col. 2:6-7 NLT).



Education Programs

January 2024 – The Secret Place of Our Meeting

January 1, 2024 By Major Ivonne Ortiz



Prayer Stations

Set up three prayer stations in the meeting room or chapel. Have them reasonably far apart so that one group will not disturb another. Each station should have a small table and three or four chairs. The number will depend on the number of women participating in this exercise. Play soft music to create an atmosphere of prayer and worship.

Pray for Families—place cards on the tables with the following subjects. Invite the women to choose two or three as their prayer focus. 1. *Infertility* – pray for someone you know who

desperately wants a child but has not been able to conceive. Read 1 Samuel 1:1-20 – Hannah. 2. *Wayward child* – Read Luke 15:11-32. 3. *Single Parents* – pray for someone raising a child alone. Read Psalm 27:10. Have a basket of hearts that the women can take with them to remind them to continue praying for families.

Pray for Government – Place photos on the table of the President, Governor, Congressmen from your district, and the Supreme Court. Pray for the president that he will make the right decisions and that he will honor God. Pray that the Governor will lead the state well and that he will make wise decisions. Pray for congress that they will pass wise laws and follow the will of the voters. Pray for the members of the Supreme Court and that God will give them wisdom in all their decision.

Pray for the Corps – Purchase small stained glass craft kits from the Oriental Trading Company or print pictures of small stained-glass windows that the women can color as they pray. Pray for the corps officers and their families. Ask the Lord to give them wisdom as they lead the corps. Pray for the Local Officers as they work with the soldiers of the corps. Pray for the young people that God will watch over them during these difficult days.

Games

In an open space place, a crossword puzzle or a word search that the women can do while waiting for the next prayer station.

Craft – Heart-shaped Fabric Hanging

- 1 Fabric
- 2 Cut two heart-shaped pieces
- 3 Glue around the edge, leaving a space to add spices
- 4 Stuff with the spices and polyfill
- 5 Place a looped ribbon for hanging and glue shut the open edge.

My Hiding Place

I grew up in my grandparent's large wooden and zinc house. In the kitchen was a large china cabinet with a space at the bottom. As a child, I was small and thin and could fit into tiny spaces. If something frightened me, I would go to my secret place under the china cabinet. There I felt safe and protected because no one could find me.

One day my grandmother asked me where I was hiding. I told her it was a place where I could talk to God and know He would protect and comfort me when I was afraid. My grandmother

told me I didn't have to be afraid because God would always take care of me no matter where I was and that He would be my secret hiding place.

As I grew older, I could no longer hide under my grandmother's china cabinet when I was afraid. However, the fact that God would be with me has not changed. He is my hiding place. Psalm 32:7, 8 tells us, "You [God] are my hiding place, You protect me from trouble. You surround me with songs of deliverance. I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go I will give you counsel and watch over you."

In our strength, we are weak, but through His strength, we are strong. Ephesians 3:16-19 tells us, "I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. 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."

We daily face trouble and concerns we can't handle in our own strength. During these times, we need to rely on God's love, which is wider, longer, higher and deeper than we can imagine. We must seek the guidance and strength available to us through the Holy Spirit.

In this portion of scripture, Paul is writing to the Ephesians. He tells them that it is his prayer that they will be "... strengthened with power in the inner being by his Holy Spirit" (verse 16). His prayer is that no matter what they face, they will remember that they have strength and power through the Holy Spirit. That message is still valid for us today.

He then tells them that he prays, "Christ will dwell in our hearts, by faith."(v.17). When we invite Him, Christ will come and dwell in our hearts. John 14:23 says, "He who loves me shall keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and We will dwell with him." This is true communion with Jesus that leads us to mature and grow.

Paul concludes his prayer by reminding the Ephesians that God can "do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine according to His power that is at work within us" (verse 20). Do you need to be reminded of this truth today? Are you still relying on your own strength to solve your problems? Or are you depending on the power available through the Holy Spirit?



Education Programs

February 2024 – Invisible but Important

February 1, 2024 By Major Maria Stephenson



Did you know?

That a hormone is a regulatory substance produced in an organism and transported in tissue fluids such as blood or sap to stimulate specific cells or tissues into action. One hormone that is the talk of the town for most Americans; is insulin. Insulin helps regulate many metabolic processes that provide cells with energy levels. Insulin production happens in the pancreas. If your pancreas is not working correctly and your body can't use the insulin, it will make your sugar levels get too high, and you will develop diabetes. It is essential to know that the most

common form of diabetes is Type 2. In 2020 the CDC reported that one in every ten Americans is diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes.

How can you prevent Type 2 diabetes?

- *Eat on a regular schedule. This will help you maintain a balance in your blood sugar levels.
- *Eat a balanced diet, including protein, carbohydrates, and vegetables in each serving.
- *Select healthy fats in your diets like extra virgin olive oil, avocado or coconut oil.
- *Avoid sweetened drinks like soda or energy drinks.
- *Eats foods high in fiber like beans, berries, whole grain or avocados.
- *Keep your body moving. Go for a brisk walk or do some aerobic exercise.

Online Resources to teach you about Hormones, Diabetes & Health Choices:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-SPRPkLoKp8>

“How do Hormone Work?” YouTube Video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVegFvk_DTW

“Preventing Type 2 Diabetes” YouTube Video:

<https://www.hormone.org/your-health-and-hormones/glands-and-hormones-a-to-z/hormones/insulin>

Article: What is Insulin?

<https://www.benefiber.com/fiber-in-your-life/daily-fiber-intake/top-10-high-fiber-foods>

Article: 10 Top High Fiber Foods:

<https://blog.thediabetessite.greatergood.com/diabetes-games>

Five games to teach about diabetes to children or adults.

Fellowship Time

Have every woman bring a fruit or vegetable to create a delicious and healthy fruit or vegetable salad. Enjoy a cup of hot tea with a sugar-free dessert. Invite the women to exchange sugar-free recipes as part of the program.

Let Health Be the Goal!

You are pre-diabetic. Those are words you never want to hear from your primary care doctor after your annual wellness checkup. According to the CDC, one in three adults is now prediabetic in America. If you, like me, are one of those people, don't panic! Hope and healing are available if you believe God cares for you and is interested in your wellbeing. God knows everything about you, chooses to love you and provides for all your needs.

God truly cares for all of us as individuals. The words of the Psalmist remind us that we were made a little lower than the angels, and God crowns us with glory and honor. Praise God! Human beings were part of God's plan of creation all along. "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" (Psalm 8:3-5). Every single thing God created was good. (Genesis 1:31) God cares for all He created so much that after finishing all His creation, He put us in charge of it. (Genesis 1:29-30)

God has provided all the nourishment our bodies need for our well-being since the beginning of creation. (Genesis 1:12) There are many diets out there. Indeed, you have heard of the benefits of some of them to maintain a healthy weight. It is recommended for diabetics and prediabetics to shed some extra pounds. I am not a nutritionist, so I can't recommend one diet over another to accomplish your health goals. But what I can do is encourage you to do your own research and see what works best for the health of your body. Remember, this body is His Holy Temple, and we are responsible for taking good care of it. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

God knows your constant battles with weight and the yo-yo effects that fad diets have left you with. God knows about your struggle with the fear, the shame, and the anxiety your health issues have caused you. The pressure to overcome our bad habits regarding food is so real. So let me encourage you today by saying, let health be the goal. Shift your focus to the one that promises to supply your everyday needs (Phi. 4:19). Focus on the praiseworthy things. (Phi. 4:8) As you formulate a plan to help you accomplish your health goals, remember that God is with you (Zeph. 3:17). Focus on the blessing that it is to be alive. Think about the goodness of God and the strength He provides so you can continue to move forward towards better health (Ex. 15:2). I pray in the name of Jesus that you will enjoy good health and that all will go well with you (3 John 1:2).



Education Programs

March 2024 – Uproot Old Habits

March 1, 2024 By Captain Denise Martin



Think About Your Habits

Discuss the following questions:

Do you know how long it takes to create a habit?

It takes 21 days to create a habit, but only a moment to break it. Think about any habit you have—reading your Bible, praying for others, eating things you know aren't good for your

body, being attached to your cell phone (scrolling through social media, playing games).

What kinds of bad habits do you have?

Some habits can be good, but some can too quickly become detrimental addictions. We often justify our actions so that we don't feel so guilty for feeding our bad habits. There is a high chance that our bad habits may develop into addictions. Scripture tells us in 1 Corinthians 10:13 that we won't be tempted beyond what we can handle...so why do we so easily give in? Addictions take us away from the reality of life. We become so engrossed in whatever our habit is that we discover we are living in hiding—usually hoping no one finds out about our addiction.

From a medical view, no matter what your addiction is, it causes the brain to release dopamine, which makes you feel good. It's the same for food, cocaine, gambling, or alcohol. Your body craves more dopamine so it can continue to feel good. The problem is that it will also make you feel bad at some point.

Instead of hiding our addictions, we need to find that soul friend who can help us and hold us accountable without judging us. Instead of reaching for our phone or comfort food, we need to reach out to someone who will help us and talk us through that addictive urge.

How can we get rid of bad habits or overcome an addiction?

It may sound trite, but praying is always the best place to start when trying to eliminate bad habits or overcome an addiction. If you know God, you know He loves you where you are—not where you think He wants you to be or where you may one day be. He loves you right where you are at this exact moment. Does He want better for you? Of course! But He loves you!

The big question is, "How does a person overcome unhealthy habits/addictions?" First, know that it doesn't happen overnight. Chances are, you may slide back into addiction before leaving it behind entirely. Begin by replacing your unhealthy addiction with a healthy one.

If your addiction is food, that's not something you can walk away from. There's no going cold turkey. We must have food to fuel our bodies. However, we need the right kind of fuel. Unfortunately, carrots will never taste like chocolate, but by making different choices and trying new things, we can make better choices about how we fuel our bodies.

Start removing the foods you know are not good for you from your home. If your family complains, tell them they need to make better choices too. Check out Pinterest or food blogs/sites for ideas for healthier dishes. It doesn't have to be a gourmet meal. Just something healthier than what you would typically prepare. I have learned that I can live without mashed potatoes. That was a big deal for me as I was a meat and tater girl all my life. I switched potatoes for brown rice, and I'm still alive! And honestly, I like brown rice.

Set goals for yourself. Don't make it impossible, but stretch yourself. Setting smaller goals will keep you motivated. If it's about food, try one new vegetable or healthy dish each week and don't try it just once. Try preparing it in 2 or 3 different ways. You may be surprised and like one or all! Try substituting vegetable noodles for pasta. There are many other vegetables you can make "noodles" out of—spaghetti squash, zucchini and squash are a couple. If your phone is your addiction, instead of scrolling through Facebook or playing games, spend that time face-to-face with family and having honest conversations. Have a family game night, spend time in your Bible or be still with God and listen.

The bottom line is that our addictions take us away from our lives ... our children, spouse, siblings, parents, friends and God. Satan loves having that kind of control. And let's be honest—unhealthy addictions are Satan's way of keeping us away from God and everyone else. We need to grow deep roots in the Word! Being in the Word is how we battle and put on God's armor. The devil isn't going to fight fair.

Here are some great resources to help you change your eating habits:

- The Book "Made to Crave" by Lisa TerKeurst
- [Recipes.com](https://www.recipes.com)
- [Eatingwell.com](https://www.eatingwell.com)
- [Eatthis.com/recipes](https://www.eatthis.com/recipes)
- [Fruitsandveggies.org/recipes](https://www.fruitsandveggies.org/recipes)

Devotional

****Prepare this two weeks before the gathering.***

What you need: three clear pots/cups, dirt, flower seeds (Petunias, Sweet Alyssum, Magic carpet seed mix), water

- Pot #1: plant seeds a day ago
- Pot #2: plant seeds one week ago
- Pot #3: plant seeds two weeks ago

****Display seeds, pot #1, pot #2, and pot #3 on a table.***



Finally, it is Spring! This season, you may see green sprouts, flower buds, and fresh green grasses. We have three pots displayed here today. Seeds were planted in each pot two weeks ago, a week ago, and a day ago. The seeds represent us in Christ. The seed does nothing, but it will sprout if placed in dirt and watered. Its roots will begin to grow, as you can see. The more the roots grow, the stronger the plant becomes. This is how our faith works in our lives. Staying in God's Word nourishes our soul, helps us be rooted and grow in Christ and produces flowers or good fruit.

In Matthew 2:10, Jesus said, "The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire." When we are in Christ, and He is in us, there is no doubt that we can produce good fruit. However, we need to be careful not to fall into any temptations. What kinds of old habits still hold you from growing in Christ? First, identify what they are. You may want to write them down on a piece of paper. Second, in your prayer, talk to God about all your old habits and ask Him to help you get rid of them and help you reside in Him and grow. Third, read the Word of God. It will be your spiritual food that nourishes your soul. The more time you spend in the Word, your deeper roots go. And last, set your goals and walk through them with your fellow believers. It is hard to accomplish it on your own, but fellow believers may build up one another. First Corinthians 10:13 says, "No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can endure it." Do not allow those detrimental addictions/habits to take root in your life. Hold on to God, who is faithful.



Education Programs

April 2024 – Don't Be Swayed by Anything

April 1, 2024 By Captain Cheryl McCollum



Scripture: Psalms 139:14

Activity – Create a hanging mirror

Supplies needed:

- 4-inch metal or wood ring hoops
- 4-inch round mirror tiles

- 75 pieces of 12cm pieces of yarn (choice of different colors)
- One 12-inch piece of yarn (same color if so desired)
- 2-beads
- Cardboard
- Felt
- Glue Gun
- Pencil
- Comb

Instructions:

Take each cut piece of yarn, place it under the ring, and then loop it to tie it to the ring. Complete this process until the ring is covered with colored pieces of yarn. Then take the comb and unravel the yarn by combing through it. Take scissors and trim around the edges to make it neat. Use the mirror as a pattern to cut a circle out of the cardboard and felt. Place glue around the outside rim and place the mirror face down. Cover the mirror with cardboard. Use the 12-in piece of yarn and place a bead on each side of the yard at the top, leaving space between the two beads but making a knot under each side so they don't slide off. Take the end of the yarn and glue that to the back of the cardboard. Glue the felt on top of the cardboard. Let dry. Check Pinterest for other ideas.

Don't Be Swayed by Anything

I believe the first exposure to self-esteem for me came from this famous quote. "Mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the fairest of them all?" The 1812 Brothers Grimm fairy tale Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs was made famous in 1937 by the Disney version, where the Evil Queen is so jealous of her stepdaughter's beauty that she goes to extreme measures to get rid of her. Instead of seeing her beauty, the Queen focused on what the mirror told her.

As far back as I can remember, I have struggled with my body image. My body was much more developed than most girls in elementary school, and I struggled with weight. I can't remember when I wasn't trying some new type of craze diet or some workout my older sister was dragging me to attend. For years I was just not comfortable in my own skin.

Are we sometimes like the Evil Queen swayed by the thoughts and comments of others? When we focus on the opinions of others to build our self-esteem, we run the risk of doing the complete opposite. When we depend on people's thoughts that don't line up with how we feel about ourselves or that may point out negative criticism, we can become overtaken by depression and feelings of inadequacy. This can lead us to believe we are unloved. I forgot that we are created in God's image. We need to ask ourselves the questions in Galatians 1:10,

“Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings or God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.”

I have learned that only through understanding who's I am and how much He loves me that I have been able to understand and love myself. Throughout the Bible, we are reminded that we were created in God's image. If we were created in God's image, then we must be loving, kind, strong, and forgiving to others but most of all to ourselves. God did not have this cookie-cutter mold and created one type of person. We were all created so beautifully different, which is why this world is so amazing.

Ephesians 4:14, 15 says, “Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of Him who is the head, that is, Christ.”

Have you gone into the ocean with a small child? Even if they are not my children, I get nervous because it can be very dangerous if a strong wave comes up. Even as adults, it's hard to withstand the pull of a strong tide. But as we get older, we learn to maintain our balance. We decide how far out we go in the water. The same can be said of those that continue to put us down or say hurtful things to us. We must not only identify those people in our lives and remove them. But we must learn God's truth about who we are and why we were created. He is the only one that has those answers. We must read the bible to learn His truth and develop our relationship with Him to build our self-esteem so that we are not looking to others to build us up. We should not be so concerned with how they perceive us but be more concerned if we are leading and living the life God has given us. We should not allow anyone to break our spirit.

As you have created your mirror, I pray that you will hang it in a place that will remind you of how important you are to God. He does not care if your gray hair is showing, if one eyebrow is lower than the other, if your nose is large or small, or if you have blemishes. He already knows! And guess what ... He loves you just the way you are. He wants you to bring Him those things that are hurting you. He wants you to give Him the places in your heart that you won't let others see. Allow Him to see you. When you look in that mirror, allow the reflection coming back to be whom God sees as you are “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Ps. 139:14).



Education Programs

May 2024 – Being Rooted in Love

May 1, 2024 By Major Jenny Alarcón



Small Group Activity

Motherhood is challenging but worthwhile! Ask a local gym representative to come to lead a Mommy and Me workout. This does not need to be only for mothers and their children but could include any women with a niece or nephew, grandchild, or child in their care. The challenge will remind women that we can do hard things and that the work pays off! Moses' mother, Jochebed's choice, changed his life forever. It is proven that children take cues from

their primary caregivers, so the choice to begin an exercise regimen, while perhaps not as tricky as Jochebed's choice, can still impact your child's life for the better for years to come.

Gym

Look into joining a local gym together.

Sedentary Group

Basket weaving can be fun for a group that isn't active. Use this activity to remind the group that we are like baskets. We must weave ourselves together with our family, God, and corps family. Weaving correctly is not as easy as it may appear; incorrect weaving techniques make weak baskets. It is worth it to take your time and learn how to do it so that the basket can serve its purpose. Check Pinterest for basic instructions on weaving. The following is a site for a paper basket: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/482800022559691793/>.

Bonsai Activity

Check to see if there is a gardener who specializes in Bonsai trees who would be willing to share with the group. If this isn't possible, consider purchasing a beginning Bonsai tree kit, which is available on Amazon. There are many parallels to the Christian life in the art of bonsai. Share with the women your observations.

Community Service Idea

There are women in our communities who, like Jochebed, struggle to take care of their families. Single mothers have to hold down a job to pay rent, put food on the table and still spend quality time with their children. Very few of these women can find time to take care of themselves. Organize a time for the women to enjoy a night out while their children are cared for. At the end of the evening, send them home with groceries or a grocery store gift card.

Motherhood

If you want to find the picture-perfect mother who has figured out how to perfectly balance all the aspects of life, look no further than social media today. There you will see mothers with spotless living rooms, perfectly manicured nails, healthy dinners, and kids in ironed, matching clothing living what they call their "best lives!" While it may be pretty to view, this picture-perfect life is a myth. It doesn't exist. Yet many of us beat ourselves up daily because we think we have fallen short of being a superwoman.

Motherhood is never an easy journey. During the pandemic, it became even more challenging with remote schooling compounding our already active role as mothers into one that has left many moms crying while locked in the bathroom, trying to figure out how to get it all done. Most moms want to ensure that they provide the ingredients necessary for their children to

be rooted in love. It can take years to realize that God is the main ingredient for this; without Him, the roots will not hold.

I have found that the only thing I can do to remind myself to come back to reality is to look to the women of the Bible and see that even they were imperfect and could only try their best to be good examples to their children and families. While doing our best to help our children to survive during the recent global pandemic, we can look to moms who were doing their best to help their children.

One of the first Bible stories I remember hearing as a child was the story of Jochebed, Moses' mother (Exodus 2:1-10). She understood the pressure to save her child. We don't have to wonder how she felt when we read this story. We know she was willing to do anything possible to save her child. We know that in that situation, we would do the same. Because while the idea of a mom being Wonder Woman is a myth, a mom being a Mama Bear is not!

In Exodus 2: 3, we see that "when she could no longer hide him, she got a basket made of papyrus reeds and waterproofed it with tar and pitch. She put the baby in the basket and laid it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile River." In typical "mom" fashion, Jochebed took what she had available to her and made it work. Sound familiar? Moms, we need to remember that what made her mission a success was that it was motivated by love. The world will tell you that a million things need to be your priority as a mom. I'm here to tell you that the most important thing is that you make sure your children are rooted in the love of God and confident in your love. That way, when you let go, just as Jochebed did when gently pushing the basket carrying her son into the water, your children will remain in the safe hand of God.

Many people don't often recognize that while she made history with this bold decision, she and her husband were members of the priestly tribe of Levi. Her influence made ripples for generations, and it didn't begin with that choice she made. It started when she was a child, being taught by her mother and father. The Levites were Jews who were exclusively responsible for the religious traditions of the Jewish people. That means Jochebed's life was rooted in love through God, sacrifice, and honor.

While Jochebed was alive over a thousand years before Paul penned the book of 1 Corinthians, we can see how the love we read about in that letter was at the root of how she lived and led her family. Her life-saving decision to save Moses' life in this way was reminiscent of what she learned as a child. First Corinthians 13:13 gives us insight into three aspects of motherhood and yet reminds us of "faith, hope and love ... the greatest of these is love." Remember that our stories do not begin when we have children. Some of the most impactful women in my life never had children of their own. We are who we are because God has created a plan for our lives, and we recognize it and do our best to follow it. Bold action and changed lives happened because of that. Make it your mission today to be rooted in love and pass that down to the children in your lives.



Education Programs

June 2024 – Healthy Roots, Healthy Life

June 1, 2024 By Major Jessie Irwin



Games

- **Thread It** – Choose four people to thread as many needles as possible in a minute. This sounds simple, but the game can get very frustrating and competitive.
- **Lucky Charms**—Use a box of multi-colored cereal and small bowls. The object is to separate the “charms” into individual categories using large serving spoons. The team which separates the most grain in a minute wins—bonus points for the hearts.

Stress Games From Childhood

Set up tables with stress-based games for the women to play:

- Ants In The Pants
- Operation
- Chutes & Ladders
- Perfection Duo
- Jenga
- Chinese Checkers
- Perfection
- Don't Break the Ice
- Crocodile Dentist
- Kerplunk
- Connect Four

Show the YouTube video on games that cause stress. <https://youtu.be/h8aUZXFcxuQ>

Nutritional Break

Serve yogurt, nuts, green tea, dark chocolate, popcorn, sliced fresh vegetables, avocados, hummus, crackers, and sliced fresh fruit.

Stress in Our Lives

Every part of our lives contains some stress. Our physical, emotional, and spiritual health are deeply entwined, interrelated with each realm of who we are and how we interact with our world. When our body recognizes a change in emotion or signs of danger from the brain, it quickly brings in a rush of hormones.

Some stress is good for you. The impetus to stay punctual, the ability to memorize a presentation, the effort to have available every ingredient for mom's birthday cake, having all the directions for the trip, having the tickets for the show, bringing the cell phone, having the right outfit—they all happen based on a mild to intermediate level of stress. Stress is a part of everything we face in life. It helps us remember to blow out the candle in the dining room, maintain a schedule, pay our bills, file the project alphabetically so it can be found easily, and hang up the keys on their assigned hook. We face stress morning, noon, and night.

However, some stress is bad for you. The Oxford English Dictionary defines anxiety as “a mental health problem that causes somebody to worry so much that it has a very negative effect on their daily life.” Physical symptoms of excessive stress include aches and pains, chest pain or racing heart, chronic conditions, exhaustion, headaches, trouble sleeping, dizziness or shaking, high blood pressure, muscle tension or jaw clenching, stomach or digestive problems, trouble having sex, unreasonable weight gain and loss, weak immune system. Excessive stress can lead to emotional and mental issues like anxiety, irritability, eating disorders, depression, sexual dysfunction, panic attacks, and sadness. If you are overwhelmed or paralyzed in thought and actions, using drugs or alcohol to cope, or having thoughts about self-harm, you should seek medical help.

When looking at stress, we want to have “The Goldilocks Amount.” Too little stress makes for a dull, frustrating, unproductive existence. Too much stress can leave us overwhelmed, irritable, exhausted, and sometimes sick. Just right stress helps us feel happy, creative and motivated.

We read in Romans 5:2-6, “Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God’s glory. We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment. We know how dearly God loves us because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with His love. When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners.”

We can rejoice when we encounter problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment. We know how dearly God loves us because He has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with His love.

In verse 4 is the word endurance or perseverance (ὑπομονή (hypomonē – sounds like hoop-om-on-ay’). This means bearing up under, remaining upright even after trying circumstances that cannot be controlled. It is the presence of God abiding with and transfusing the deep disposition of patient waiting, steadfastness, and even joy. Patient waiting, steadfastness and joy—endurance resonates through stressful situations beyond our control or our reach.

Some of the stress we face is what we have created internally, an elevated level of perfection or control that insists that working more and trying harder will increase our success or achievement of happiness. It is challenging to resist projecting a persona of high performance, momentum, and recognition. We can easily forge a façade that shows the world “I have my act together.” But forcing the entirety of our self-worth through a false identity is living a lie. Chaining our self-worth to that false identity is spiritual slavery.

We need Jesus to speak clearly to our hearts to release us from the captivity we have created. We need endurance and perseverance from the Holy Spirit to face life with all its potential messiness. We cannot wait for “things to get better” before we start rejoicing in Jesus’ name because that day may never come. Waiting for the loneliness to abate, for a better job, for a romantic relationship, and for a stress-free day does not leave room for the Holy Spirit to work through us as a vehicle of endurance and perseverance.

Jesus calls us through Romans 5:4 to acknowledge that this moment in this messy reality can be when to rejoice in Him. Hoop-on-on-ay’ – Endurance – Perseverance. Do not avoid the presence of this sacred moment with its opportunity for joy. Turn to Jesus and feel the divine embrace of joy that brings order to your stress and anxiety.

In closing, sing the Hymn “All Your Anxiety” (SASB 427)



Education Programs

July 2024 – Deeply Rooted through the Storms

July 1, 2024 By Major Cat Lyle



Scripture: “For though the righteous fall seven times, they rise again, but the wicked stumble when calamity strikes” (Prov. 24:16).

Thunderstorms

There is nothing quite like watching a thunderstorm roll up to your doorstep. Its majestic beauty and power are captivating. All storms require three things: 1. Moisture—usually from the ocean; 2. Unstable air—is created when warm moist air is near the ground and cold, dry

air is above. 3. Lift—the difference caused by the air density pushing the unstable air upward. This updraft fuels the storm causing it to grow. The downdraft will phase out without the updraft, causing the storm to diminish.

Storm chasers are mesmerized by the beauty of storms. They aim to capture the center of the storm in motion. They exert a tremendous amount of energy chasing storm after storm. The adrenaline rush for storm chasers is rather addictive and can put them in harm's way, making them vulnerable to the elements and dangers of the storm. A storm's unpredictable approach can catch you off guard and inflict fear. One minute you are captivated by the beauty of the storm, and the next, you are paralyzed with the fear of the reality of the danger you face. As we explore the four types of thunderstorms, we will also explore our response to the fear they can inflict.

Four Types of Thunderstorms

Single Cell Thunderstorms are often called “popcorn” or “pop-up storm.” These storms bring brief periods of rain, lightning, and sometimes hail and offer relief from the summer heat. These storms are weak and usually last about an hour.

Multi-Cell Thunderstorms are multiple single-cell storms that have joined together. They are sporadic and unorganized. Hail and gusts of wind are common with this type of storm. They circle over the same area continuously, resulting in mass rainfall and the threat of flooding. Floods happen when the ability of the ground to absorb heavy rain has reached its capacity. When the ground becomes flooded, it can create a flash flood. They can be extremely dangerous, as they are unpredictable and can quickly sweep people and homes away. NOAA (National Severe Storms Laboratory) reports more deaths from flash floods than hurricanes, tornadoes, or lightning.

Squall Line Thunderstorms can spread over hundreds of miles. They are common in the Midwest of the United States. Squall line storms are a baseline of thunderstorms that produce heavy rainfall, hail, lightning, and tornadoes. The greatest threat in this type of storm is the straight-line wind of more than 70 MPH, which causes tremendous damage. The damage caused by the storm can be mistaken for a tornado and often requires a storm surveyor to assess the damage the next day and determine if it was a squall line thunderstorm or a tornado.

Supercell Thunderstorms are called “The King of Thunderstorms” and have a majestic presence. They are often referred to as rotating thunderstorms due to the rotating updraft (mesocyclone) that sets them apart. Though they are small, these supercell storms are fierce. The rotating updraft prolongs the storm and causes it to become organized. The wind shear of a supercell thunderstorm causes the storm to spin like a top, changing the direction and speed of the wind. It generates extreme weather, often with baseball size hail and flash floods. They can be weak and yet produce violent tornadoes and often result in multiple tornadoes in one storm. They produce more tornadoes than any other storm.

Video on Supercell Thunderstorms: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yvIKlgelY6g>

Be Prepared

As beautiful as storms can be, they can inflict fear, causing people not to react and putting them in great danger. The best line of defense against the dangers of thunderstorms is being prepared. An action plan will keep you moving against fear, keep you safe, and minimize impact.

In the United States, the NOAA National Weather Service Forecast Office created an alert system to alert communities of severe weather. Visit their website below to learn about the difference between Warning and Watch Alerts. Look up alerts that may be in your area and create a plan of action for your current situation and location, both at home and the corps. Being prepared and knowing how you will respond will keep you safe.

<https://www.weather.gov/lwx/WarningsDefined>

The Storms of Life

Weather storms come out of nowhere. Sometimes life storms also take us by surprise, causing great fear. If we are not deeply rooted in solid ground, they can cause tremendous damage and alter the trajectory of our lives. Though the storms we face vary, we can be certain that we will all face storms.

Proverbs 24:16 tells us, "The righteous fall seven times." Even with the best intentions, we are all bound to fall multiple times. Many friends will show kindness and mercy to a friend who falls once, only to become impatient and critical when that friend falls a second or third time. The same can be said about how we treat ourselves during life storms. We can be our own worst enemy, withholding mercy as a punishment for having fallen yet again. We need to be patient with ourselves and others. Be quick to offer mercy, compassion and kindness.

The second part of Proverbs 14:16 reminds us, "They will rise again." A righteous person will get up. The fall or failure isn't the final story. "Rising again" is the redemptive story. The storms may change, but a righteous woman's rising remains the same as she trusts in Christ. It's a personal relationship with Christ that a righteous woman remains deeply rooted and can rise again and again and again. The storm will come and test our roots and our relationship with Christ. It will keep you grounded when all around you is uprooted.

Physical storms inflict fear with no regard for your circumstances. Life storms can do the same, inflicting fear of loss, failure, rejection, and regret. But as a daughter of God, we can hold on to the truth 2 Timothy 1:7, "God gave us His spirit. And the Spirit doesn't make us weak and fearful. Instead, the Spirit gives us power and love. He helps us control ourselves." The storms we face will be challenging and life-changing, but the Spirit has given us the power and love to face every storm. Being deeply rooted in Christ before the storm is the key to weathering the storm.

Closing

Discuss:

- 1 What can you do daily to help deepen your relationship with Christ? Be creative and specific. There is no right or wrong way.
- 2 How do you best connect with God? It may look different than someone else.

Invite the women to pray to ask God for His direction as they consider their relationship with Him.

Other Resources

Preparedness:

- <https://www.ready.gov/plan>
- <https://www.weather.gov/>

Sci Jinks -What Causes a Thunderstorm? <https://scijinks.gov/thunderstorms-video/>

“Anchored: Finding Peace in the Storms of Life,” (A 28-Day Devotional) Joseph Prince

“When You Don’t Know What to Pray” Charles F. Stanley

“Ultimate Reliance: Breakthrough Prayer Practices for Leaders,” Sue Nilson Kibbey



Education Programs

August 2024 – Grow Taller, Grow Deeper

August 1, 2024 By Major Kimberly Belanger



Introduction

Prayer is our primary and most satisfying connection to God. It is acknowledging God for who He is in our relationship with Him. Seeking God in prayer is having the confidence that He can intervene in our lives. God loves and cares about our concerns and our thanksgiving praise to Him. It is beautiful to come to God in our adoration for Him. We pray to Him and tell Him how awesome He is. We can also go to Him to confess our sins. God hears and answers our prayers. God forgives our transgressions and wipes every tear from our eyes. Thanksgiving should be our most effortless prayer. We all have so much to be thankful for; it should just

flow out of us like a river. Prayer is so important that even Jesus hid away to be with His Father. May Jesus be our example in life.

Activity

Explain that today's activity will be reflective. Take thirty to forty minutes to complete this activity. Meet in a room where the women can have space for some private time, preferably where there are comfortable chairs. Purchase a writing journal for each person. Walmart or the dollar stores often have them. You will be guiding them through the SOAP method of prayer/journaling. This method will allow you to dig deeper into scripture and have the scripture come alive. The following explains what SOAP represents and that responses are reflective and meditative. Encourage everyone to journal a few SOAP prayers.

S: Scripture– Invite the women to choose a passage that stands out to them or is memorable. (A few examples are listed below.) Write the scripture in the journal under the letter "S."

O: Observation– What did the reader observe in this passage? What is God saying today? Do I need to change my life to respond to this scripture?

A: Application–How can I apply the verse and observation in my life?

P: Prayer/Plan– Write a prayer and then a plan to go forward with what was revealed in this scripture passage.

Example of SOAP Journaling

Have these scripture verses on the table that the women can choose from if they have trouble picking a scripture.

S: Ephesians 6: 10-12 "Finally, be strong in the Lord in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."

O: We need to put on our armor of God to take our stand against evil. I must acknowledge that evil influences are all around me, but God's armor protects me. Sin is all around us, but God is more significant in his mighty power. He is the victor. (Ephesians 6:11).

A: Don't pretend that evil does not exist or the devil does not exist. Be aware of the schemes. Daily, put on that armor and stand against the evil one. (Ephesians 6:12)

P: Plan-Daily put on the armor of God. (Ephesians 6:10)

Prayer-Lord, You are the Holy One; it is You that protects, and You that gives strength. Give me strength as I stand against the devil's schemes. Please open my eyes to see things that are

not of You.

Refreshments/ Room Set Up

Have hot tea and coffee available while the women are journaling. Play soft Christian instrumental music. This will set the tone of a relaxed atmosphere.

Growth



Scripture: "Therefore, I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours" (Mark 11:24).

Grow taller-Ask in prayer

We are to pray to God and ask for whatever we need. God tells us to ask in prayer no matter the circumstance, whether prayer is too small or too big. Matthew 6:9 tells us how to pray: "Our Father in heaven hallowed by your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread, and forgive our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one." Our prayers should not be selfish but within the will of God. We are to ask according to His will and His plan. Don't get discouraged if God does not answer your prayers in the way you think He should. He is listening and responding according to His will.

Grow deeper-in faith

Faith is an active trust in God. We believe that results in action. Faith is instituted when we trust Jesus for the first time in salvation. It is faith that gets us through challenging situations. Hebrews 11:1 says, "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." We are to pray and then believe that we have received that for which we are praying. Faith will allow you to grow deeper in your spiritual life. You will become more dependent on Him. Sing for joy as you grow deeper in faith.

Prayer

Father, we see You as our purpose in life and our everlasting Father. You are good. We pray that in our prayer life, we will continue to seek you every day. Prayer is a deliberate action of seeking Your face. We want Your blessings, Father, but we also want to give You glory. May we grow taller in prayer, reaching to You, Lord. May we grow in ways we cannot understand. Give us a hunger for You, Lord, to seek and pray to You. For our faith, please help us continue to trust You in all we do. May we grow deeper in our faith. True faith in You is trust. The trust that you will give us big dreams only You can fill. We trust You with all our heart, mind, and soul today. For You, O Lord, all the honor, glory, praise, and power. Amen.



Education Programs

September 2024 – Enlarge My Territory

September 1, 2024 By Major Carmen Campbell



Seasons of Life

Beauty is found in every season of the life of a tree. Trees and humans are made to survive the seasons, but not only survive but flourish. Once planted, trees will seek the source of life—living waters for nourishment and continued growth. In Jeremiah 17:7, 8, we read, “But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes;

its leaves are always green. It has no worries in the year of drought and never fails to bear fruit." We are to be like a tree, planted firmly in God.

The root system of a tree performs many vital functions. In winter, it is a storehouse for essential food reserves needed by the tree to produce spring foliage. Roots transport water and minerals from the soil to the rest of the tree. They also anchor the portion of the tree above ground. Keeping it healthy ensures an adequate food supply for the roots to continue their vital functions. One such act of a root function is to become bonded to the earth. Tree roots do this through their dense root system. We may not see it, but as the roots grow deeper in the soil, they support the tree. This way, it is less likely to become detached from the ground and fall over. Roots anchor the tree, such as a life spent planted in Jesus, anchor our soul.

Root systems often grow wider when they cannot grow downward, such as when bedrock is at a shallow depth, or there is a high water table. Roots tend to be longer when conditions are favorable. Dry, compacted soils produce fewer but thicker roots, some of which can grow to extreme lengths.

Before the weather gets too cold and wet, follow the tips on properly caring for your trees. Doing this in autumn will ensure your trees remain strong and healthy. These will help old-growth and newly planted trees during winter. Taking care of your trees during the cold months will help them be their best in the spring.

Caring Tips

1 Prune and Rake Leaves.

Fungi, which cause disease in your tree, love to hide in fallen leaves. As the weather warms up in the spring, raindrops will enable the spores to reinfect the tree root systems. Therefore, removing dead branches, limbs, and leaves is essential. Fall is a great time to prune your trees. Dormant trees will drop their leaves, making it easier to see the tree's structure. The right amount of pruning can eliminate injury to the tree and helps reduce tree stress. Be careful not to stress your tree by over-pruning. Over-stressing your tree could affect its health and cause the tree to fall.

2 Add Mulch.

Mulch helps protect the tree and the rooting system from distress brought on by the winter and summer seasons. Add a layer of mulch around the tree a few times a year. The amount should be no more than 3 to 6 inches.

3 Watering.

It is recommended that trees be watered two to three times a month in the fall season so that it does not get too dry.

4 Fertilize

Applying fertilizer in the fall helps protect the tree from winter damage and keeps it

healthy. It is one of the best tree maintenance efforts you can do to aid your tree in staying healthy.

5 Plant Trees

Fall is the best time to plant new trees. The cooler temperatures mean less chance that the new tree will die from sun scorch or drought. It may not make sense since trees drop leaves during the fall, but conditions are perfect for stimulating new root growth during cooler weather. Roots get established during fall and winter. Spring brings showers, and summer's warmer temperature will stimulate tree top growth.

Taproots

Have you cut a tree down because the tree roots were damaging your septic field, foundation, or sewer connection? The strength and persistence of tree roots are no joke. The growth of tree roots is all about the search for nutrients and support for the tree's canopy. If either one of these missions fails, the tree is likely to die. The first root to grow from the primary roots is called the taproot, and it emerges as a radicle from a germinated seed. The taproot continues to grow as the tree matures. Some trees have evolved the ability to produce very deep and robust taproots to find a deeper water table and withstand drought conditions.

Jabez is like a taproot. In Scripture, we note that Jabez's mother gave him that name for its meaning, "I gave birth to him in pain" (1Chro. 4:9). We also note that Jabez cried out to God, "Oh that you would bless me indeed and enlarge my territory. Let Your hand be with me and keep me from the evil one" (1 Chron. 4:10).

Enlarging your territory takes a deep-rooted commitment. Jabez wanted more influence, responsibility, and opportunities to make a mark for the God of Israel. He was committed to doing His will when those around him were not. Today, we are told to do whatever makes us feel good. There is no distinction between right and wrong behavior. Destructive behaviors surrounded Jabez, but in the midst of it, he called on God to be the judge and guide of his actions. He asked him to enlarge his territory. The word "territory" can also mean "coast" or "borders." In the Old Testament, God moved His people from captivity to the Land of Promise and opportunities. Enlarging your territory is asking God to show you more of Himself in you and your ministry so that others may become saved and enriched. This prayer takes courage. It speaks of the deep-rooted intimacy and the obedience Jabez had to God. If the song had been written in Jabez's day, I believe he would have sung the chorus, "I shall not be move, just like a tree that's planted by the waters I shall not be moved." His commitment to God was steadfast and sure.

Enlarging your territory takes increased courage. Not courage to fight the battles, but to let God fight them. Jabez's prayer took boldness and courage. God has not forgotten His promise, have you? Was there a passion a commitment that died out along the way? God stands ready to bless those who believe their God is capable of great blessings. As He said in

Zechariah 4:6, "This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty."

We have all had a moment where we realize we will not be able to move forward unless we earnestly seek God and ask Him to be with us. He wants us to invite Him to go with us. But, if we play it safe, we may never know this truth. Suppose we allow things to stop us from venturing beyond where we feel safe. In that case, we won't see God's hand working powerfully in our lives, whether it is fear of failure, doubt, insecurity or even when people tell you that you will never amount to anything. Then, we must believe in God's ability to do even more than we could think or imagine. Fear can rob us of power. But prayer puts that power back into its proper place. So, remove fear and apathy and plant your roots deep within your faith in Christ. Stepping out of our comfort zone can yield more power in our lives. Look around at the people who are making a difference for God. Ask them what they do in their prayer life. You will see boldness in their prayers. They know what blessings God has in store as they see their lives unfold.

[Plant Identifying Game](#)

Fellowship Programs



**“But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him.
They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream.”**

Jeremiah 17:7-8





Fellowship Programs

October 2023 – Deeply Rooted in Harvest

October 1, 2023 By Major Joy Robbins



Scripture: Psalm 119:11

Introduction

It seems the whole world has gone mad for plaid. It's one of the most recognizable designs globally, coming in almost every color and shade under the sun. While it may be trendy today,

people have worn this iconic fabric for thousands of years.

The earliest known tartan in Scotland can be dated to the third or fourth century AD. In other parts of the world, tartan cloth has been found dating to approximately 3000 BC. Tartans had significant meaning as they represented individual Scottish clans. For further information on tartans, go to: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/brief-history-plaid-180957342/>

While plaid has been around forever, it has made a massive comeback, with various bold patterns known as buffalo plaid colors being all the rave. Below are program ideas that are all about plaid.

Program Ideas

Host a pajama party featuring all things buffalo plaid. Invite women to wear pajamas in their favorite color, buffalo plaid.

Watch the Broadway Musical, *Forever Plaid*, which can be rented from Amazon, or watch the trailer, which gives snippets of the story. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hx1tCaKeE_Q

Discuss

- 1 While the premise of the movie *Forever Plaid* is fun to watch, is it scriptural?
 - Hebrews 9:27 - "Just as man is appointed die once ..."
 - Ecclesiastes 3:2 - "To everything there is a season and a time for every purpose under heaven. A time to be born and a time to die."
- 2 As you look back over your life so far, are there things you regret, things that you wish you had handled differently? What can you do about them now?
 - Peter denied Christ three times. Read *John 13:37-38*.
 - Peter was sorry. Read *Luke 22:62*.
 - Jesus restored Peter. Read *John 21:17*.
- 3 Have you asked the Lord to forgive you of your sins?
 - Read *John 1:9, John 1:12*.
- 4 We have the rest of our lives ahead of us. How should we act so that we don't have regrets?
 - "Love the Lord our God with all your heart and will all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Mark 12:30, 31.

Farmhouse Harvest Buffalo Plaid Pumpkin Craft

Make DIY Buffalo Plaid Pumpkins. Here's what you will need:

- Roll of Toilet Paper
- Fabric 18 x 22
- Wooden Spoon to help poke the fabric into the center of the toilet paper roll
- Ribbon
- 4" sticks from the yard or cinnamon sticks.
- Faux fall leaves

For easy directions on making toilet paper pumpkins, check the following video.

<https://www.madetobeamomma.com/toilet-paper-pumpkins/> or

<https://www.anallievent.com/diy-buffalo-plaid-pumpkins/>

Strong Roots

Anyone who knows me knows I have a black thumb. Give me a growing plant, and it will take one look at me and wilt or die. Growing things is not my talent. But there is something special about when it's time to harvest. I remember picking buckets of blueberries with my grandma to use in baking. Or taking my niece to the pumpkin patch to find just that right pumpkin. All the fresh treats that someone has worked so hard to grow—berries, apples, corn. A seed has been planted in the soil, then watered and tended to, and protected while its roots grow deep.

A tree needs to have deep roots to survive the storms of life. Have you watched the trees through the seasons of life? In winter, it's bare, standing tall as the elements of life throw their best at it. In spring, the leaves and flowers start to bloom to life again. The beauty of the spring color changes our world to make it bright and beautiful. The fruit begins to come to life in the summer and grow toward ripeness. Then in the fall, the fruit is full-grown and ready for the harvest. We see all this beauty around us throughout the seasons of life. But it's what we don't see that makes the difference. It's the strong roots that grow under the ground. The life force of the tree comes from how strong its roots are.

Christians are the same way; we have different seasons of life. Sometimes we need to stand firm in the storms, other times, we are full of life and color. But we can only grow fruit when we have a stable foundation in the Lord. Roots grow in every direction taking hold of the soil to keep it vital to keep it upright. Just like those roots, we need to hold on to the Lord to be our strength, and the stronger we grow in our relationship with him, the stronger we are when the storms of life come.

One way for our roots to grow strong is through the word of God. "I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You" (Psalm 119:1). Have you ever been in a storm of life and suddenly a scripture that strengthens you and gives you peace? That is an excellent

example of God's Word hidden in our hearts. These deep roots keep us strong through the many storms of life. When we hide His Word in our hearts, it helps us be ready to face life rooted in place and share His word with others.

About author



Major Joy Robbins

USA Southern Territory



Fellowship Programs

November 2023 – Deeply Rooted in Baking

November 1, 2023 By Dorris Gonzalez



Let's Bake! Holiday Baking Party

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Introduction

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, instructs the Thessalonians to encourage one another and build each other up. As believers, we are instructed to be concerned about our brothers and sisters in Christ and to stir up one another unto love and good deeds. We are to care for each other and consider how to stimulate one another to love as Christ loves us.

Cooking recipes are available from many sources. I have a family-inspired recipe book that I enjoy trying. I like remembering the occasions and memories associated with these recipes. For years these recipes were a well-kept secret. I had to rely on information passed down through generations. But now, I can measure precisely the ingredients needed for each dish.

During the holiday season, the Gonzalez family always gets together. After the arrival and greeting, immediately, the aroma of food cooking hits you. A roast is in the oven, tempting baked cookies and cakes are on the counter, and freshly brewed coffee entices each family member to head for the kitchen, where a sharing time begins. The older I get, the more I appreciate our time together. Holidays and weekend visits to Grandmother's house were always a special time. As I reflect on those times, I realize how important it is to be with family. I want my family and the generations to experience the same joy I experienced in being with each other and know how these special moments build one another up.

Our lives are like a recipe, a map to understanding the commands of Jesus. The guidelines are in plain sight; no map is needed, no secret ingredients to search out. God's word, the Bible, is the map, the recipe for a fulfilled life in Christ and for encouraging one another.

Program Ideas

Advanced planning will be necessary for each of the program options listed below. Ask individuals to handle various aspects of the program such as advertising, invitations, setup, and clean-up decorations.

- Have a professional baker or women's ministries member experienced in baking teach cookie baking or a cookie decorating class. You will need to plan for a least two to three hours for this program. If they are demonstrating cookie decorating, ask a couple of women to contribute the cookies to be decorated.
- At the next potluck dinner, skip the dessert course and have a cookie exchange, swap recipes, share your baking stories with family, and print copies of the recipes. Ask the members to bring their favorite cookbooks and utensils passed down in the family for table decorations and display them.
- Plan an outing to a local cooking school. Or watch an online cooking class on baking. There are many cookie baking tutorials on YouTube.
- Contact and invite representatives from the local fire department, police station, and medical field to come to a recognition meeting. Along with words of appreciation for their service, present them with baskets of homemade cookies. For those not in attendance,

deliver the baskets to their workplace. Enclose cards expressing thankfulness and gratitude to these individuals for their service to the community.

Encouraging One Another Through A Christ Filled Life

The Bible is full of stories of Jesus having a meal with people. One such occasion included the breaking of bread and fishes shared by a young boy. Jesus showed how much He cared for others and His great love for them. Other occasions were dinner with a tax collector, the Lord's supper, and a visit to Mary and Martha's home.

The Tax Collector (Luke 19:1-10 NIV)

Jesus was passing through Jericho. There was a man named Zacchaeus who was a tax collector and a very unpopular man. He wanted to see Jesus, so he climbed a tree. Jesus looked up and said to him, "I am going to your house." And he did. People were wondering why Jesus would go to the home of a sinner. But Jesus showed his acceptance of Zacchaeus, and immediately, Zacchaeus' life was changed forever. He told Jesus he would give half of what he had to the poor, encouraging one another. Jesus concluded by saying, "The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

- **The Lord's Supper (Luke 22:1-19 NIV)**

Jesus had a specific reason for bringing the disciples together for the Lord's Supper. Before Jesus died, he had a final meal with the disciples. He wanted to give them something to remember Him by when He wasn't with them, so He used the bread and wine they were having with their supper that night to symbolize His love for them. Jesus revealed Himself to His disciples through the breaking of bread, and the wine was a tangible reminder that His blood and His life served as a payment for the sins of the world. Jesus took the bread, broke it, and gave it to His disciples, and He said, "this is my body give I for you, "do this in remembrance of Me."

- **Mary and Martha. (Luke 10:38-42 and John 12:2 NIV)**

The story of Mary and Martha gives us an example of two women who loved Jesus and showed their love for Him in two different ways. Whether you are a Mary or a Martha, both women are valuable and have a purpose. Mary sat at the feet of Jesus to get closer to Jesus. Martha prepared the house for Jesus as any hostess would do. Seeing the needs of others is an integral part of His ministry. Martha had a heart for hospitality, and Mary had the heart to learn. Both personalities are necessary for encouraging and uplifting one another.

- **The Feeding of the Five Thousand (Matthew 14:13-21 NIV)**

Having a Martha personality, I never want to be without food for my guests. Jesus was teaching, it was late, and his disciples noticed the people were getting hungry. What are we to do, we do not have enough food? Jesus's reply was, "give them something to eat." "We have only five loaves of bread and two fish here," they answered. Jesus was not worried. He took the fish and loaves from the disciples and, looking up to heaven, He gave

thanks and broke the five loaves and two fish and asked the disciples to share with the multitude. Everyone was satisfied with twelve baskets of food leftover. Five thousand that day were fed, not counting women and children.

Why was being with family and friends so important to Jesus? To show us acceptance, and love, to know the needs of others, and to seize every moment to build each other up. The recipe to a fulfilled life in Christ and for encouraging one another:

- Be deeply rooted in Christ
- Mix well the secret ingredient "love."
- Add equal parts of charity, kindness, goodness, and gentleness—Galatians 5:22-23 NIV
- "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and your neighbor as yourself" Matthew 22:27-39 NIV.

In conclusion, mix thoroughly with Hebrews 10:24, 25 NIV "Spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another and even more as you see the Day approaching."

Resources

- www.allrecipe.com/sugar cookie Recipe
- www.realhousemoms.com/Sugar cookie icing
- www.biggerbolderbaking.com History of baking
- www.britannica.com Food
- www.kingarthurbaking.com/recipes This website list baking classes
- <https://difference.guru/cookingvsbaking> Cooking verses baking
- <https://www.bhg.com> Most Essential Tools Every Home Cook Needs (Better Homes and Garden)
- <https://newspring.cc> 2 Peter An 8 Day Devotional
- <https://www.vibrantlife.com> 21 Ways to Build a Stronger Spiritual Life



Fellowship Programs

December 2023 – Deeply Rooted in Giving

December 1, 2023 By Captain Amanda Keaton



'My Favorite Things' Holiday Gift Exchange

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 9:7.

Decorations

Set a warm and inviting tone for this event to make it meaningful. Decorate the tables with white, gold, or silver tablecloths and candles. Create a shimmery look with glitter or iridescent fabric. Use square, oval, or octagon mirror tiles with white or cream candles for the centerpieces. Add Chrismon ornaments to compliment the centerpiece.

Refreshments

- Serve a Charcutier board featuring fruits, vegetables, cheese, and crackers. Serve sparkling grape juice or apple cider in a festive punch bowl.
- Pre-bake sugar cookies and provide supplies, including a variety of sprinkles for decorating. Provide Chrismon patterns for women to use in decorating the cookies.

Origin of Chrismon:

These decorations, which were first made by Frances Kipps Spencer, originated at the Ascension Lutheran Church in Danville, Virginia. She developed them because she wanted Christians to remember why they celebrated Christmas. Instead of placing any traditional decorations on a tree at Christmas time, Frances wanted to put some meaning behind them. So, she developed decorations with Christian symbols on them that helped remind Christians of the birth of Christ. The Ascension Lutheran Church still practices what Frances began. Each year they put up a twenty-foot [Christmas tree](#) and open the church up to the public. When visitors come, they are told the story of Jesus through Frances' original Chrismon.

These decorations are traditionally white and gold. White represents the color of Christmas and the purity of Jesus when He came to the earth. Gold represents the majesty and glory of Christ. When other churches picked up the tradition of Chrismon, they began to develop symbols that were unique to their church but still tell the same story.

Below is a video that helps explain Chrismon and gives you a visual of a Chrismon tree. You may have seen these many times but did not know they were called something else.

Link to Patterns Explanations: Below are links to explain the various patterns and their meaning.

- <https://www.mycorneronline.com/tutorial/bible/chrismonintro.html>
- <https://youtu.be/VUZ2VHQ-6QY> (This link is a video and audio resource to enhance what is learned on the link above.)
- <https://www.cathedralofhope.org/images/spiritual-life/chrismons-elpc.pdf>

Craft: How to Make a Chrismon

Below you will find links with instructions on creating your ornaments.

- <https://d2lyc38tx1fwww.cloudfront.net/chrismon-patterns.pdf>
- https://d33stri0dm17m9.cloudfront.net/campuses/2018_ChrismonPatterns.pdf?mtime=20181130100011
- <http://chrismon.org/assets/Bookorder64228.pdf>

Games:

Guess the Meaning:

Have available examples of the symbols used as well as possible meanings. The goal will be to associate the picture with its meaning correctly.

<https://holidappy.com/holidays/Martin-Luther-Frances-Kipps-Spencer-and-Chrismons>

Matching Game:

This game could be done collectively as a group or for individuals to 'race' and is even open to other adaptations.

Per group (or individual) print out two copies of each symbol/pattern on cardstock. For individuals, use 4"x4" or even playing card size. For large groups, style a full sheet of cardstock or copy paper. I recommend gluing it onto construction paper to give a darker background.

- Place cards face down to begin the game. For a larger group, split into teams and give each team a turn to flip two cards right side up. If the two cards match, the team gets to keep those cards. Allow the next team to take their turn. If the cards do not match, they will be turned back and left on the board.
- When individuals are racing, have everyone take their cards and place them face down. Have them mix the cards around while face down to make the challenge fair. Set a timer and instruct the individuals to make as many matches as possible. Another option instead of setting a timer is to see how long it takes the first person to make all matches.

Chrismon's Bingo Board

To aid in learning the different symbols, use the link to access 30 5"x8" Chrismon Bingo Cards. Use your favorite candy as a space marker. <https://myfreebingocards.com/bingo-card-generator/30-free-cards/jkmjg6k>

The Perfect Gift

At Christmas, our hearts and minds are quite focused on giving gifts. Giving gifts is truly one of my favorite things. When we share a gift with a friend, family member, or co-worker, we share a piece of what they mean to us. To give a meaningful gift, we take what we have learned about them, their hobbies, interests, collections, or crazy impulses, and pick out that special gift. We anticipate the smile on their face as they open the perfect gift selected for them. Some people are fun and easy to shop for. You know what they like and find the ideal gift almost immediately.

Then, others are so hard to shop for. This is not because they only want expensive things or won't value any gift; they just aren't easy to shop for. This often makes us more reluctant to buy anything for them. Sometimes we take the easy way out and purchase a gift card. After all, who doesn't love a gift card?

However, what better way can we participate in a holiday gift exchange than to give someone a gift with no solicited monetary value, for those are the things that never perish. How much time do we spend with our families throughout the year? Are we present outside of just the 'special' occasions? Do we invest time in their special interests? Time is one of the most valuable things we have in life. We never know how much of it we have left, yet we only seem to cherish it when the moments and opportunities have passed.

Give yourself and your family the greatest gift this year: time together. Whatever that may look like for you—more video chats, brunches, carpooling, games, shared movies. Give to each other freely what God has given us. Time is a gift, use it wisely.

Why not give the gift that keeps on giving. Share our Lord in Savior Jesus Christ and what His birth means to the world? Share the story, symbols, and meaning of the Chrismon with your friends and family. You could even make an ornament as a gift for a loved one.

Learning together and exploring the Chrismon with friends and family is a simple and non-threatening activity. It brings the pieces of Christ's story together. No matter the age or reading level of those in the group, having pictures will open up opportunities to talk, share, and learn together.

"The free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:23); "By grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8); "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!" (2 Corin. 9:15)



Fellowship Programs

January 2024 – Deeply Rooted in Warmth

January 1, 2024 By Major Anne Westmoreland



Scripture: Hebrews 13:16

Introduction:

Soup Social: Soup Swap and Tasting

This fellowship program is a heart-warming get-together that includes a meal for the women gathering and our neighbors.

Invite the women to bring several containers (either plastic or mason jars) of their signature homemade soup or favorite purchased soup. Those who choose not to bring a soup could be encouraged to give a small donation for utensils, bread, and salad. The soup containers should be cold but ready to be heated in either a crockpot, microwave, or stove. Prepare signs to identify the different types of soup.

Fellowship Around the Tables and Soup Tasting

Invite those who brought soups to share about the kind of soup they brought, whether it is a family recipe, a soup with a special story, or a favorite international flavor. As women fellowship around the tables, provide small cups of the different soups, salad, and bread. Include trivia facts as conversation starters. A variety of trivia can be found at the link below. You may also want to focus on famous soups of the world.

- <https://www.funtrivia.com/en/Hobbies/Soups-5948.html>
- <https://foodandroad.com/world-famous-soups/>

Soup Swap and Sharing

At the end of the meal, invite the women who brought soup to swap with one of the other women. One container of each kind of soup could be set aside in either the refrigerator or freezer to be shared with those living on the street on a cold night.

Devotion:

Share the story of "Stone Soup." As it is a folk story, there are many different versions, but all of them have the story's same moral. The "Stone Soup" story can be found at the link below. A simplified version of the story can be found in the second link.

- <https://stonesoup.com/about-the-childrens-art-foundation-and-stone-soup-magazine/history-of-the-stone-soup-story-from-1720-to-now>
- https://www.learningtogive.org/sites/default/files/handouts/Story_Stone_Soup.pdf

I am sure the soup tasted delicious to everyone in the village because it was delicious and because everyone contributed. What a clever traveler, getting everyone to give a little bit that made for a scrumptious and nutritious soup. It certainly was not the stone that an important function.

Anything in life is so much better when shared. The principle of sharing is found many times in the Bible; one example is the young boy who shared his two fish and five loaves that eventually fed over 5000. When we share, something happens. God blesses and multiplies. In

Hebrews 13:16 we read: "And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased."

When The Salvation Army was founded, the motto "Soup, Soap, and Salvation" was quickly introduced and adopted by all. We are about meeting human needs. If someone is hungry, we offer them a meal; we help clean them up, and then we share the gospel with them. This is our foundation and motivation, deeply rooted in the love of God and His love for His people.

But we don't stop there. We invite every person to join us on the journey, each contributing something, and before we know it, we have created something lovely, fragrant, and beautiful together. Each with different talents and contributions, yet adding to the whole.

The secret to a good soup is quality ingredients, sufficient time for the flavors to blend, and much love and warmth. Here in our fellowship, where we gather, each created in the image of God, sharing time and life together, loving one another, we have the perfect recipe for life-giving and heartwarming soup for the soul.

Will you add to the flavor? God has gifted you uniquely, and what you can contribute is precisely what is needed. Jesus tells us in Matthew 5:13 that we are the "salt of the earth." Salt has an essential function, in fact, several vital functions, one of those being to bring out the flavors. We want people around us to see and fully taste that the Lord is good. May each of us be deeply rooted in Him and in His love and warmth so that we may be the salt that brings out the God-flavors in life for all to see and experience.

Benediction:

May God bless you with His warmth this day. May the love of Christ fill you. May He show you clearly how He wants to use you and your gifts for His glory and the benefit of others. May He be pleased with your sacrifice. May "Soup, Soap, and Salvation" be your motto deep within and stretched to reach those who need to hear. Amen.



Fellowship Programs

February 2024 – Deeply Rooted in Love

February 1, 2024 By Lt. Shania Mhasvi



I Love You More Than Cupcakes: Cupcake Bake-Off

Scripture: 1 Peter 4:8

Decorations

To create a fun and vibrant space, place tablecloths of different colors on individual tables. For the table centerpiece, make “cupcake bouquets.” Check Pinterest for videos of how to

make the bouquets using either a Styrofoam sphere or plastic cups.

For a more straightforward option, fill tall vases with colorful cupcake liners and place them on different-colored square sheets of paper in the middle of each table. Add a picture frame next to the vase that contains the Scripture verse from 1 Peter 4:8, "Most of all, love each other as if your life depended on it. Love makes up for practically anything" (MSG).

Refreshments

Provide simple finger foods to compliment the cupcakes, such as fruit, cheese, crackers, sandwiches, and chips. For the drinks, provide bottled water or lemonade.

Cupcake Bake-Off

Divide the women into two teams. If there is a corps nearby, invite them to come and participate. The two teams will have the option to choose between various kinds of cake mixes such as chocolate, white, vanilla, or strawberry. Instruct the teams to have at least one secret ingredient that they will incorporate into their cupcakes. Provide different toppings in small cups available for the teams to use for their toppings or their secret ingredient.

Instruct the participants that they will have one hour to bake and decorate the cupcakes and present them to the judges. The judges will pick the winning team based on the appearance, taste, and final presentation. Regardless of the winners, provide an oven mitt, a baking mix, apron, or whisk for the women to take home as a reminder of the fun shared.

Cupcake Puns

Throughout the day, share puns regarding cupcakes from the website:
<https://askforadventure.com/cupcake-quotes-captions-and-puns>

Recipe Share

Provide notecards and pens so that the women can share their recipes.

I Love You More Than Cupcakes

Cupcakes have always been a special treat enjoyed by many around the world. It's no wonder that you can find them at birthday parties, weddings, and even special gatherings. They can bring a smile to everyone's face, no matter how old or young.

Growing up, I used to love to try my hand at making cupcakes to share with my friends and family. It was fun to measure out each ingredient, mix it in, and place it in the oven to bake. When the cupcakes were finished, I would pull them out, wait for them to cool, and then

slather the tops with delicious icing. It was a beautiful moment to share with those around me. I'm reminded of a quote that says, "When you share a cupcake, you share love" (Amber).

It's no secret, however, that making cupcakes can sometimes be hard work. The process involves some effort to make sure that the cupcakes turn out just right for others to enjoy. Through 1 Peter 4:8, we can also see an example of a command given by Peter that requires determination and effort on our part as well. It says, "Above all, love each other deeply because love covers over a multitude of sins" (NIV Bible: 1 Peter 4:8).

Though we are all not perfect and deeply flawed, God's love for us is overflowing and unconditional. When we love our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ with the same love given to us by the Father, we ultimately love Him and obey what He commanded of us to do. Like the sugary icing on the top of a cupcake, his love covers all our sins, so we too must cover others in that same, sweet love. When we do so, our lives reflect the sweetness and beauty that can be found only through Him.

I encourage you to allow His great love to flow through you so that your relationship with those around you may flourish and produce a sweeter Godly aroma than all the cupcakes in the world.

Prayer:

God, we love because You first loved us (NIV Bible: 1 John 4:8). We are so thankful for Your love that covers our sins and offers us full redemption and salvation. We praise You because no love is sweeter than Yours. Help us to share Your amazing love with all that we encounter. Give us a heart that draws near to You and reflects who You are and what You mean to us every day. Thank you, Lord, for all that You are doing in us and through us to give glory and honor to Your Kingdom. Amen.



Fellowship Programs

March 2024 – Deeply Rooted in Nature

March 1, 2024 By Dan Duncan



Tree Hugger Party for the Planet

Scripture: Genesis 2:15

Program Ideas:

Service Project: Consider joining as a group to assist in the planting of trees. There may be a specific group, like an urban canopy organization, that coordinates neighborhood plantings in urban areas. If spending a few hours planting is not feasible, consider contributing to a tree-

planting agency like The Nature Conservancy, National Forest Foundation, or US Forest Service.

Field Trip: Visit a local botanical garden, arboretum, or park. Many of these places offer free services during the day or on weekends. Sometimes the best way to rediscover a love for what God loves is to go outside and observe. Using senses like smell, sight, and hearing, work as a group (or individually) to record all that surrounds you (animals, birds, insects, grasses). Gather as a group and share your observations and how you felt. If the weather doesn't permit, check into virtual tours.

Party: Organize a party in celebration of the natural world. Include in the background a slideshow of images of nature. Consider integrating nature recordings like those produced by TheSilentWatcher on Youtube. Cornell Lab of Ornithology includes live feeds at various bird nesting sites and feeders. Explore.org also provides many live feeds on wildlife.

Craft: Nature Jar Display is a simple craft that can be personalized.

Gather clear and smooth Mason jars, natural elements (ex: soil, sand, river stones, pebbles, shells, small succulents, etc.), raffia, or twine.

Ask participants to imagine an outdoors where they feel relaxed. Perhaps it is a beach, a forest covered in snow, or a quiet desert. Using the materials you provide, ask them to create a display of the nature they see in their care. It can be as elaborate or simple as creativity and the materials allow.

Game: "Tree ID Quiz"

Divide into groups and give each group a pencil and piece of paper. Lead a trivia quiz on trees (like this one provided by the Sierra Club- <https://blogs.sierraclub.org/greenlife/2013/08/tree-quiz-identitree-how-well-can-you-identify.html>).

Refreshments

Following the theme, serve fresh and natural snack items. To make "Banana Sushi," you'll need bananas, dark chocolate, and pistachios. Melt the chocolate, peel the bananas, and dip the bananas into the chocolate. After they have cooled, crush the shelled pistachios, and sprinkle them onto the banana. You will produce something that may look like a mossy tree trunk. Slice the bananas and serve. You can find detailed instructions on the website below.

https://www.thepetitecook.com/pistachio-chocolate-banana-sushi/?utm_content=buffer3a0d0&utm_medium=social&utm_source=pinterest.com&utm_campaign=

Devotion: "Yours, Mine, and Ours"

Have you ever borrowed something from someone you cared about? Whether it was as big as a car or as simple as a book, you were probably more careful with the borrowed item than with most of your stuff. Why? Because you cared about the person, about your relationship, and you cared about preserving the things they care about.

In Psalm 24:1, the psalmist declares, "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it." One statement proclaims that the true owner of the earth and its inhabitants, whether humans, plants, animals, is God. In Leviticus 25:23, God also claims, "the land is mine." The Creator and Preserver of all things is the absolute owner of all nature.

Yet we also recognize that God gave the natural world in some fashion to his people. His command to the man and woman in Genesis 1:28 shows this. There is a risk of abusing our power and authority, but Genesis 2:15 helps with that concern. It says, "The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it." It was an act of God to put the man in the garden. God is letting the man, the woman, and their descendants borrow the land. And God uses words that speak more of stewardship than dominance. The Hebrew word for "till" connotes the act of tending, caring for something, and helping it flourish while it provides what the caregiver needs. The Hebrew word for "keep" connotes guardianship, stewardship, and protection.

Out of love for God and a concern for our relationship with Him, we ought to care for what he has given us. The earth is the Lord's. It has never stopped being his. Even though he has given us some authority and power over it, he still expects that it is treated with respect. So, while we live our lives on this good earth, and while it provides us with what we need to survive, let us always remember to tend it, allow it to flourish, and protect it from those who would abuse it. When we do this, we might find that God will say, "It's ours. Let's share in it together."

Song Suggestions:

#21/421 "God Speaks to Us in Bird and Song" and #66/167 "This Is My Father's World"



Fellowship Programs

April 2024 – Deeply Rooted in New Life

April 1, 2024 By Lt. Kirbi Reyes



Cacti and Creativity: A Terrarium-Making Party

Scripture: Corinthians 5:17

Introduction

Succulents and terrariums are low maintenance and perfect for people who do not have a green thumb or do not have time to care for an outdoor garden. This program gives

instruction for creating affordable terrariums using everyday objects.

Items Needed for Easy DIY Terrarium

- Succulent Soil
- Little rocks or gravel
- Moss
- Various succulents (we found several succulents for \$1 at our local Walmart)
- Glass containers, cups, and open jars
- Plastic cups for scooping the different layers into the terrariums.

Directions

Invite women to pick up their containers. Be creative. They do not have to be the same. The women will love having a variety from which to choose.

A terrarium is all about the layers. Without the proper layers, your terrarium will not be functional and eventually rot. Your first layer is small rocks placed at the bottom of the container. This layer drains the water from the soil.

If you work in a closed container, you will need to put a layer of horticulture-activated charcoal next. This prevents mold from forming in the closed vessel. If you are working in an open container, this is not necessary. Next, put a layer of moss. You can get packs of moss in various colors from craft stores like Hobby Lobby.

Finally, put in one or two inches of soil, then plant the succulent cuttings as you like. As desired, you can cover the ground with moss, pebbles, or other embellishments.

For further instructions and ideas, check the following website:

<https://savedbylovecreations.com/2013/05/make-terrariums-galore-in-under-1-hour.html>

Making It a Party

While some succulents are edible, others are not. Rather than consuming the plants, make your own by decorating cookies or cupcakes. Use store-bought sugar cookies, icing, and different icing tips to create the different succulent textures.

Items Needed for Cacti Cookies

- Sugar cookies or cupcakes
- Different color icings, piping bags, or quart-size baggies.

Instructions for Decorating Cacti Cookies

If you do not have piping bags, you can easily make one by filling up a plastic quart-size baggie and cutting a small hole at one of the corners. Choose the icing color and begin to pipe leaves around the edge of the cookie slightly overlapping each other. Move-in one layer and pipe another circle of leaves, letting them slightly fall over the first layer. Continue until the surface of the cookie is frosted. No dessert will look the same, but if they cover the entire top, they will look like one of the many types of succulents.

God's Care

My husband's mother was raised and lived in the Rio Grande Valley portion of Texas all her life. She loved gardening and working in the soil. She would gasp in astonishment every time she would pass a plant that she had not seen previously and wanted to know more about it. She could name plants by their Latin names and learned how to care for them. When she found a plant that she did not know, she would often ask if she could have a cutting so she could attempt to grow it. She would take it and care for it as a mother care for her newborn child. She would transplant them into her garden and update us on her plants' progress. I was always amazed because those little cuttings never stayed little for long. We would return for our annual visit, and her cuttings were no longer little but full-blown plants.

In 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV), the apostle Paul writes: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" This is what we call the "Jesus changes everything" verse. Once Jesus has entered the picture, it's over. Everything is changing, the new creation is born, and the old has nowhere to go but be gone. When we are in Christ, we are made new. What does that mean for us? It means we are no longer those little cuttings. It means that someone has come in, loved us, changed us, and made us new. It means that we are changed from the inside out. People should be able to tell the difference. They may not be able to put their finger on it, but they should know that the person that was, is not the same.

Our God has been making "new" business for a long time. In the beginning, God created everything. But my favorite part is when He took the dust of the earth, breathed into it, and created man. From dust came you and me! But if it weren't for that, you and I would still be dust. If it weren't for my mother-in-law's gardening, those cuttings would never have rooted and bloomed and brought new life to new and old places. Those cuttings which were once small, fragile, and in need of care are now blossoming and unrecognizable. It's a whole new thing, a jaw-dropping, ever-blossoming new creation. When God comes into our life, we are made new.



Fellowship Programs

May 2024 – Deeply Rooted in Laughter

May 1, 2024 By Ashley Escobar



Laughs and Lattes Comedy Night

Scripture: Proverbs 17:22

Introduction

Host a Laughs and Lattes Night featuring a coffee bar and Christian comedy video. Here are a few tips:

Refreshments

- Invite the women to bring their favorite dessert to share.
- Use a chalkboard to list the different coffee available.
- A Keurig machine will make it easy to offer a variety of specialty coffees.
- Provide the following:
 - Variety of creamers and milk
 - Different coffee syrups
 - Whipped cream
 - Caramel and chocolate drizzle
 - Provide iced and hot coffee options.
- Have different coffee mugs available for women to take home at the end of the night.

Depending on the length of your program time, you may want to preview one of the following 3 comedy DVD and **edit** it if necessary. There are also shorter excerpts available on YouTube. Some suggestions are Chonda Pierce, *Girl Talk*, Anita Renfroe, *"I'm Not High Maintenance, Just Low Tolerance;"* Jeannie Robertson, *"I Can Hear Myself Wrinkling."* Christian comedy may be a **new experience** for many women. Keep some Kleenex handy for those that will laugh so hard they cry.

Name that Tune Game

Name that Tune is a fun game that individuals of all ages enjoy. With music from the '50s to today's, create a game that fits your women. You can use YouTube or Spotify to play instrumentals music so that there are no lyrics.

Head's Up Game

Attach word cards to a headband with the words facing out. The game's object is to guess the word based on clues provided by a teammate. This game is available on Amazon.

Medicine for the Soul

When was the last time you had a gut-busting belly laugh that made you cry? Scripture says, "A cheerful heart is good medicine" (Pro. 17:22), which makes belly laughs good for the body, mind, and spirit.

Too often, we hear about the struggles and difficulties we face as Christians. However, God created joy and humor. Think of the most joyful person that you know. A person whose smile

and sense of humor cause happiness to fill the room. Their lives release the aroma of Christ and refresh you from just being around them. What makes them smile or laugh? How does their attitude affect their days and your own?

According to the Mayo Clinic, more giggles and guffaws are just what the doctor ordered when relieving stress. Here's why. Whether you're laughing at a sitcom on TV or quietly giggling at a newspaper cartoon, laughing does you good. Laughter is an excellent form of stress relief. A good sense of humor can't cure all ailments, but data is mounting about the positive things laughter can do.

A good laugh has significant short-term effects. When you start to laugh, it doesn't just lighten your load mentally; it induces physical changes in your body. Laughter can:

- **Stimulate many organs.** Laughter enhances your intake of oxygen-rich air, stimulates your heart, lungs, and muscles, and increases the endorphins released by your brain.
- **Activate and relieve your stress response.** A rollicking laugh fires up and then cools down your stress response, increasing and decreasing your heart rate and blood pressure. The result? A good, relaxed feeling.
- **Soothe tension.** Laughter can also stimulate circulation and aid muscle relaxation, which can help reduce some of the physical symptoms of stress.

Although we will have troubles in this life, we can guarantee that we will laugh again one day. Sometimes when all we see are looming clouds, we forget that the sunshine is right behind, waiting to be seen again. Similarly, when we are down, we know that God is right there, and His joy is accessible through the Holy Spirit. Even though hardships last in the night, joy comes in the morning (Psalm 30:5).

Laughter is the best medicine. Go ahead and give it a try. Turn the corners of your mouth into a smile and then laugh, even if it feels a little forced. Once you've had your chuckle, take stock of your feelings. Are your muscles a little less tense? Do you feel more relaxed or buoyant? That's the natural wonder of laughing at work.

Many believe that if you are a Christian, you should be sober and that everything should be very serious. However, this is not true. God gave us the ability to laugh. He has a sense of humor. You only have to look at some of His creations to realize that is the case. From the lumbering hippopotamus to the antics of the monkeys, we can see many things that make us laugh. So, when you are feeling down, ask the Lord to let you see the funny side of life. Remember, "The joy of the Lord is your strength" (Neh. 8:10).

Resources:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/stress-relief/art-20044456>

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Fellowship Programs

June 2024 – Deeply Rooted in Rest and Relaxation

June 1, 2024 By Ashley Escobar



Lights, Camera, Action! – Outdoor Movie Night

Scripture: Ecclesiastes 3:1

Introduction

Summer calls us to a slower pace and invites us to enjoy rest and relaxation. What could be more relaxing than a movie during the dog days of summer? When fireflies come out to play, it's time to string lights and hosts an outdoor movie night. A popcorn bar, firepit, blankets, and smores will enhance the festivities.

Popcorn Bar

- Popcorn is a must for a movie night. Pinterest is an excellent resource for a popcorn bar. You could also decorate the popcorn bar based on the movie's theme. Regardless of your theme, you will need the following items:
- Individual containers or bags for popcorn.
- Provide both savory and sweet seasonings. You can usually find a few flavors in the popcorn aisle of your local grocery store. A more comprehensive range of options is available on Amazon. You will also want to get a can of butter spritzer. This makes the seasonings stick to the popcorn—purchasing some popcorn bags or boxes from your local party supply store or Amazon.
- Here's a list of suggested toppings:
 - Cookie Crumbles
 - M&M's
 - Chocolate Covered Raisins
 - Trail Mix
 - Sprinkles
 - Gummy Bears
 - Pretzels

Game

- Print out movie-themed icebreaker questions from the website below to encourage conversation as women arrive. Consider placing the questions in a popcorn box and have everyone draw a question to answer: <https://womensministrytoolbox.com/host-a-movie-night/>

Movie Suggestion

- Select a movie that is appropriate for all audiences. Some good Christian movies include War Roo, God's Not Dead, and I Can Only Imagine.

- Inspirational movies based on real-life stories can be impactful too. Just make sure the content is appropriate for all audiences.
- Invite women to share how the story impacted them personally and strengthened their faith.

Additional Activities

Here are two resources that provide movie-themed activities and full programs.

- Group's Blockbuster Movie Events—Relevant Retreats and Movie Nights for Youth Ministry.
- Chick Flicks—Group's Dinner and a Movie Friendship, Faith, and Fun for Women's Groups.

Devotion

In the book of Acts, there is a clear description of what living in a community with other believers can look like. They shared meals, prayed, worshiped, and met in each other's homes. In modern culture, we could say, "they gathered in back yards and watched movies together as a way to rest and relax after a busy work week. This is a beautiful description of how we can show up for one another, as a family does.

This "doing life together" can look different to many believers, and as our culture changes and shifts, there are new ways to fellowship and share a meal. Watching a movie as a family is relatively a normal thing. Taking time for one another as believers, as the family of God, makes our bond stronger—makes our church stronger and ultimately strengthens the community we serve. It's taking time to pour into one another by simply showing up and doing life with one another, just as the apostles did.

The book of Acts says that when the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, and the sharing of meals and prayer, "a deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders." This is what their community looked and acted like:

"All the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity—all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved" (Acts 2:43-47).

A beautiful mosaic, a stained-glass window of God's people coming together in harmony with one another. There isn't a more beautiful picture than this. Today, the stained glass would

include popcorn and laughter.

About author



Ashley Escobar

USA Southern Territory



Fellowship Programs

July 2024 – Deeply Rooted in Family

July 1, 2024 By Captain Stephanie Hargis



National Park Road Trip

Scripture: Matthew 11:28

Introduction

There's nothing like taking a lengthy family road trip to a new destination. A National Park family road trip is a great way to see the beauty of God's creation and create new family

memories.

Transform your meeting space into a wilderness adventure with party supplies from Amazon or Etsy.

Skit - "A Tree-mendous Day": [July2024_DeeplyRooted_Tree-mendousDaySkit](#)

Program Ideas

- Road trip questions can be used as an ice breaker at the beginning of the program: <https://www.liveawilderlife.com/fun-road-trip-questions/>
- Invite a travel professional to present a program on family road trip adventures available in your area.
- Invite a guest speaker from the Parks Service to present a program on local wildlife.
- Take a nature walk through a local park or preserve for a Nature Scavenger hunt: <https://happymomhacks.com/scavenger-hunt-for-kids-teens-nature-neighborhood/>
- If the women do not have good mobility, play nature Bingo. https://www.google.com/search?q=nature+bingo&rlz=1C1CHBF_enUS894US894&oq=

Refreshments:

- Provide a DIY trail mix bar with components like dried bananas, goldfish, mixed nuts, M&Ms, and dried cranberries.
- Build a campfire and make smores.' Creative smores' combinations can be found on Pinterest.

A Road Trip

What is your favorite part about a road trip? Maybe it's visiting historical landmarks, buying memorable souvenirs to commemorate the journey, or trying all the local food flavors you come across on the way to your destination.

When you go on a road trip, you expect your destination to be filled with all sorts of exciting things to see. We don't just wait until we arrive at our destination to begin our sightseeing. We begin to take in all that we see along the way, from how the clouds change or how the sky disappears as you drive through a mountain range, or may even know how the trees change. Maybe you started with palm trees and then found yourself in a national park filled with many tall redwood trees. In most cases, no matter where you travel, you can always be sure that you will come across a tree of some type.

Did you know that a tree's roots must absorb oxygen to survive? Or that the roots anchor the tree into the soil so the leaves are elevated and can take in all the rays from the sun? The tree's roots also provide storage. The roots store nutrients and food during the winter so that they can bear healthy green leaves in the spring. A tree needs to have healthy roots because, without them, a tree would not be able to stand tall and would fall over. If the roots of a tree are not given the best care, the tree cannot thrive and will not be able to provide the vital oxygen that you and I breathe.

Matthew 11:28 says, "Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest." Sabbath is such a beautiful discipline. It realigns us to remember that He is God, and we are not. It is important because we can connect to the source that gives us the breath in our lungs, and it cultivates roots in deep soil. A tree grows tall and strong because of the roots planted beneath it.

In the same way, we, too, grow in our relationship with the Lord as we seek him for rest and replenishment. This may look like spending a quiet hour alone in prayer, reading or writing His Word, or even being still in His presence. A great book about Sabbath is Mark Buchanan's "The Rest of God." In his book, Mark explains the importance of the Sabbath. This beautiful discipline is made for us to indulge in. Sabbath is meant to be our escape. Instead of fleeing or looking for the next vacation day to find rest, we see the solution in God's creation of Sabbath. He invites us in and says, "Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest."

When we take a trip, we typically do not travel alone. We enjoy going with someone with whom we can share the experience. The people who go with us on these road trips are people we have gotten to know and built a foundation with. In many cases, these people have seen the good, bad, and the ugly and still enjoy our company. We walk with each other, share one another's burdens, and celebrate one another's joys.

It was discovered by a professor of forest ecology that when insects damaged a fir tree, it could send chemical warning signs to a nearby pine tree. What is even more fascinating is that the pine tree then began to produce defense enzymes to protect itself from becoming injured, just like the fir tree. Without this, the insects could have taken over many trees. In the same way, you and I help each other on this road trip of life. Our deep roots in the Savior allow us to connect so that we can help each other when our life is threatened by the unknown. We need to have people in our corner who challenge us, encourage us, and help us have deep roots in Jesus. When we have those deep roots, the unknown doesn't hinder us or shake us up. It allows us to stay firmly planted where we are. Trees bend in the wind and shake off their leaves, but they are not so easily broken.

Whether planning a road trip or running errands around town, don't forget to take a moment to set your eyes on the beautiful trees. May they remind you how important it is to be rooted in Jesus. As you go throughout your daily routine, I hope you make time to get away to find rest and solace in all that the Lord has for you. Find a friend, someone you trust, and lean on each other. Carry each other's burdens, encourage one another, and help each other to

continue to develop deep roots in Jesus. Those deep roots will keep our lives grounded as we experience trials and challenges. When those trials and challenges come or when we feel the need to get away, the Lord is inviting us to come away with Him. "Come to me all who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28.

About author



Captain Stephanie Hargis

USA Southern Territory



Fellowship Programs

August 2024 – Deeply Rooted in Nostalgia

August 1, 2024 By Captain LeAnna Marion



Vintage Picnic Party

Scripture: Ecclesiastes 3:12-13

Introduction

Do you remember old-fashioned picnics? For many of us, childhood memories involve picnics, flying kites in wide-open spaces, summer road trips to the lake, a day at the park, trips to the

zoo, or a ride through the country to experience the splendor of God's magnificent creation.

A century ago, when Henry Ward Beecher was asked how we could make our nation better, he answered, "Multiply picnics." An old-fashioned picnic is a great way to celebrate summer. Picnic or classic barbecue-type foods combined with activities such as sack races, face painting, and egg-and-spoon races can make for a lovely, nostalgic celebration.

Menu

Serve a cookout-themed menu, including burgers, hot dogs, chicken, or other favorite grilled meats. Invite women to bring traditional picnic side dishes, such as potato salad, baked beans, coleslaw, potato chips, and watermelon. For dessert, summer and apple pie go well together. Set up a large jug of lemonade or put out individual lemonade bottles.

Serve the food in red plastic food baskets lined with red-and-white checkered napkins or parchment paper.

Decorations

It is not necessary to go overboard with decorations because the idea is a celebration of yesteryear's simpler times. Add a few touches such as red-and-white checkered tablecloths and balloons—display old-fashioned soda bottles in a galvanized bucket of ice.

Games

Organize games where families can participate together. Favorite classic picnic games include sack races, three-legged races, and wheelbarrow relays. A baseball game or dodgeball is a great team-oriented game also.

For the less mobile, have a word or question-type games. A fun activity for adults and kids alike is to play bingo.

Prizes for games could be boxes of Cracker Jack, jump ropes, a set of jacks, or sidewalk chalk. Lemonade mixes in canning jars are another fun gift for summer picnic guests.

Devotion:

Ecclesiastes 3:12-13 says, "I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live. That each of them may eat and drink and find satisfaction in all their toil—this is the gift of God."

In return to Family Picnics, Russell Cronkhite writes, "Can you hear the laughter? Can you see the cloth-covered tables abounding with an array of fresh salads, platters piled high with fried chicken or glazed ham, and bowls full of fresh-picked produce? Can you taste the simple pleasure of homemade, deli-style sandwiches with just that right touch of mustard and

creamy mayonnaise, perfectly paired with those salty, crunchy kettle chips and sweet, cold root beer? Can you smell the wood smoke as ribs sizzle on the grill? Can you hear the friendly voices calling you to tables set with beaded pitchers of sweetened iced tea and those homey, scrumptious desserts?"

Perhaps nothing invokes nostalgia of by-gone picnics like a treasured family recipe. Who can tell me what makes grandma's cooking the best? The love, care, and time she put into it. I think we can all agree that there is something special about grandma's recipes. Recently, my mom sent me a picture of my grandma's Mississippi Mud Cake recipe. On the recipe card was an ingredient that I had heard of but never purchased. Can you guess what it was? Oleo. It's an old brand name of margarine used as a substitute for butter. I never had the opportunity to watch my grandma make her cake, and in fact, I do not have many memories of her at all. However, I know she was a faithful soldier, loved Jesus, and made a delicious Mississippi Mud Cake.

Baking a cake sure has come a long way since my grandma's day. It used to take many hours toiling away in the kitchen. Our scripture today from Ecclesiastes 3:12-13 says, "I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live. That each of them may eat and drink and find satisfaction in all their toil—this is the gift of God." My grandma always found joy in the toil of baking for her family. It was something that took time, effort, and sometimes a little sweat, but she was happy to do it for those she loved. Watching her family enjoy the product of her toiled efforts brought her so much joy and happiness.

What is the difference between joy and happiness? Joy and happiness are two different emotions that are similar but actually very different. Joy is attributed to something very consistent and internal, while happiness tends to be triggered by external circumstances.

Joy is part of our inner nature as Christians that comes from having a relationship with Jesus. Happiness is only achievable on earth, while joy is spiritual and only achievable through the love of Christ. Joy is a spiritual fruit that is given to us by the Holy Spirit. Joy is not only attained here on earth, but it is also something that we connect with God because it is given to us by the Spirit. In Galatians 5:22, Paul writes, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,"

Like my grandmother, we can feel happy when someone enjoys our food, but joy enables us to be light-hearted when our brownies resemble a burnt offering. Joy allows us to live the Ecclesiastes 3:12-13 fully: "I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live. That each of them may eat and drink and find satisfaction in all their toil—this is the gift of God."

In the words of Russell Cronkhite, "So what are you waiting for? Call up some friends and pack up the family. Grab the football, the frisbee, the kite-or all three. Turn off the cell phone, pack the hamper, and head out to the yard...or across town to the park...or out into the country.

Then spread the blanket, break out the goodies, and celebrate this glorious day with the people you love. All you have to add is the lemonade!"

Resources:

- "A Return to Family Picnics" 2005 by Russell E. Cronkhite published by Multnomah Gifts, a division of Multnomah Publishers, Inc.
- <https://www.christianity.com/wiki/christian-life/what-is-the-difference-between-joy-and-happiness.html>
- <https://www.thespruce.com/old-fashioned-picnic-party-guide-2104160>



Fellowship Programs

September 2024 – Deeply Rooted in Tradition

September 1, 2024 By Major Susie Erickson



Tailgates and Touchdowns Football Celebration

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 10:31

Introduction

Tailgating is a beloved American tradition best described as a season-long party on college football Saturdays in the fall. It is a firmly established autumn ritual that has become the

ultimate family reunion, and everyone is invited. Hallmarks of an epic tailgate party are great food, legendary teams, and cherished traditions.

In *The Official Tailgating Cookbook* by Southern Living, Rebecca Kracke Gordon writes, "Everyone wants to be invited to be a part of something grand, spectacular, and rooted in tradition. My policy has always been all-inclusive when it comes to tailgating over plates of barbecues and platters of fried chicken, whether it's shared with friends or even strangers."

Women want the same thing—a place of connection, belonging, and community. They love words like authentic, transparent, and relevant. They want to gather with people who genuinely love them. They want to eat together and tell stories that make them laugh until they cry.

Dust off the lawn chairs, fire up the grill and invite women to gather in the Corps parking lot for a tailgate party. Consider asking the entire Corps family to celebrate the end of summer and kick off the fall season.

Program Ideas

Go all out and create a party atmosphere in the corps parking lot. Work with your local football program to use mascots, tunnels, and jerseys, to create an epic tailgate party. Encourage participants to show team spirit by wearing their team colors. Party supply stores have tailgate accessories too. Think of tailgating as hosting a picnic in the parking lot behind your car. Bring everything needed to make it work, including food, drinks, chairs, canopy, grill, napkins, music, and games.

Tailgating is all about sharing and sampling. Provide essential tailgate foods such as grilled hotdogs and hamburgers but invite women to bring their favorite tailgate side dishes and desserts. Since tailgating is a community thing, could you encourage them to bring enough to share?

Tailgating is a great place to introduce new people to the corps. If you live in a college town, join the festivities on campus, and host your tailgate party. Give away free food and distribute information about the corps.

Share "The 10 Commandments of College Football Fandom" as a fun way to kick off the tailgate festivities. www.southernliving.com/culture/10-commandments-of-college-football-fandom

Devotion:

It's easy to identify a super fan during football season. There's no question about her allegiance. She's the girl dressed in team colors with matching jewelry and lipstick. Her car is decked out with car flags, pom-poms, and a university tag. Don't let the cheeky smile behind

the lipstick fool you. She can go from delightful to diehard at the drop of a hat when her team fumbles the ball.

Our scripture today says, "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" 1 Corinthians 10:31.

Do you see the little three-letter word in the second half of the sentence? The word ALL means that every single aspect of our lives should bring glory to God. Our eating. Our drinking. Our coming and going. And yes, cheering for our favorite team should bring glory to God.

Tim Tebow is an American football player who openly expresses his Christian faith by kneeling for prayer during games. Tebow played college football in Florida, becoming the first sophomore to win the Heisman Trophy and leading his team to two BCS National Championship victories. After his collegiate career, he held the Southeastern Conference's records for career passing efficiency and rushing touchdowns, ALL for the glory of God.

His propensity for kneeling on football fields to offer prayers of gratitude and thanksgiving to God has earned him the trademark title of "Tebowing."

Have you ever considered how you could bring glory to God in your daily living?

- Going to work for the glory of God.
- Interacting with colleagues for the glory of God.
- Sharing Facebook posts for the glory of God.
- Driving in rush hour traffic for the glory of God.
- Eating and drinking for the glory of God.
- Cheering on your favorite team for the glory of God.

I invite you to do some "Tebowing" and pray that God might help you bring Him glory in everything you do.

Resources

- Southern Living: The Official Tailgating Cookbook
- <https://www.southernliving.com/holidays-occasions/tailgating/tailgate-food-safety>

About author



Major Susie Erickson

USA Southern Territory

Service Programs



“But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream.”

Jeremiah 17:7-8





Service Programs

October 2023 – A Cord of Three Strands

October 1, 2023 By Stephanie Bridgeo



Scripture: Ecclesiastes 4:9–12

Introduction

Individually we can work hard and accomplish a lot. But we are much better when we work

together.

Refreshments

Invite the women to bring a dish to share. The corps could provide pink and blue cupcakes.

Decorations

Decorate using a baby shower theme, with pink and blue tablecloths. Place a basket filled with baby care products at the front of the room and an empty basket on each table as a center piece.

Service Project

Invite the women to bring baby products to fill the empty baskets on their table, which will be shared through Community Cares Ministry visits, through the social services office or mothers and children's shelters. Our communities are stronger when we care for the most vulnerable.

As believers, we are called to show friendship with our neighbors. Reaching out to the lost or lonely with the love of Jesus is what being a friend is all about. A baby basket given to a new mother can bring hope and the assurance that she is not alone in raising her child. Baby baskets can be as simple or as elaborate as you want. Remember, it is not about how the basket looks. It is the message behind it that they are not alone.

What Can I Do in My Community to Be of Help?

One of the most vulnerable groups in our communities is babies. Let's support new moms with some helpful resources as they raise up the next generation. You can provide new moms or new baby kits as a service project to your local hospital. A simple basket of diapers, wipes, thermometer, receiving blankets, and a handwritten card of congratulations to the new mom can be a huge deal. Include body wash or lotion in the basket for the mom. Supporting the most vulnerable in our community is a great way to give back. We often think we have nothing to give, but that is not true. We are better together when supporting each other.

Game

Have everyone draw a tic-tac-toe board on a piece of paper. Randomly write the name of a baby care product in each of the nine blanks. As the leader calls out baby items the participants can draw an X over the items listed. The first one to get three X's in a row wins a prize. You can keep playing this game until you reach a "cover all" of the 9 boxes if you have enough prizes and time.

Sharing Activity

Ask the women to share a special memory of how someone helped them when they were a new mother. Maybe even sharing how difficult it was for them ask for help. As we want to be sensitive to those who do not have children, alter your sharing activity as needed. In those instances, ask the women how they could help a new mother even if she has not specifically asked for help.

Other Scripture Verses to Encourage New Mothers:

- "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you." Jeremiah 1:5 (NIV)
- "So, encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing." 1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NLT)
- "For you created my inmost being you knit me together in my mother's womb..." Psalms 139:13-15(NIV)
- "As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend." Proverbs 27:17 (NLT)
- "Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor. If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up." Ecclesiastes 4:9-10(NLT)

A Cord of Three Strands

When I was a teenager, I used to babysit a little girl who was furiously independent. Amy would often say to me, "Do self Stephy, do self." I'm sure you can imagine the kinds of messes or mishaps we got into when I let her do everything herself. There were times she needed a little help, but was too stubborn to accept it. Eventually, she realized that in order to get what she wanted, she needed just a little help. It takes time for us to mature and develop all of the skills we need in life and often, we need a little help.

Oak trees takes 30-40 years before they begin to mature and produce acorn seeds. These seeds then grow into mighty trees that provide food for animals and resources for us. All of these tiny acorns from the one tree provide countless opportunities for use that we enjoy daily. In fact, oak trees provide support for more life-forms than any other trees in North America. The small acorn produces something mighty. In the Bible, we also see an example of strength in numbers.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 says: "Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken."

Oftentimes you and I feel the same as Amy, "Do self, do self." We may have been led to falsely believe that accepting help is a sign of weakness or that we are less when we allow others to

help us. However, the Lord made us to live in community and to be a blessing to each other. We see this example many times throughout the Bible. In Exodus 4 when Moses tells the Lord he is not eloquent and does not feel comfortable speaking to the people, God reminds him that he has his brother Aaron to help him out. In fact, God is irritated with Moses that he did not intend to use Aaron to help him. We have all kinds of people by our side that can be a blessing to us. We tire ourselves out and may even become resentful feeling as if God isn't doing much to help us, when the answer has been right in front of us. He has given us our natural family as well as our spiritual family to help us in time of need. It is truly a blessing to us and those who step in to help. Everyone likes to feel seen and needed. When we overlook the gifts and strengths those around us have, we miss out. We are certainly better together.

Here's a few hints for accepting and giving help:

Accepting

- 1** Don't apologize for asking for help. People can always say no if they are not able to help.
- 2** Make it personal; don't ask via text or email. Call or speak to them face to face.
- 3** Take a deep breath and relax, you are valuable and important and people love to give and help, they are just waiting to be asked.

Giving

- 1** Instead of asking what do you need? Have a few ideas of what you can offer. When people are in crisis, their brain is not able to process problem-solving to fully know what's most helpful, which could stress them out even more. For instance, I would love to mow your lawn for you for the next 2 weeks so you can heal from your surgery. I would love to pay for a babysitter or watch your children so you can get some rest.
- 2** Don't be offended if people refuse help, they may not be ready.
- 3** Be a listening ear of compassion. Sometimes all people need is someone to talk to and listen to them.

Prayer

Thank You, Lord, for the blessing of community. Thank you for creating us to be in relationship with You and with others and to give love to our neighbor. Lord, thank You for blessing us and help us to be a blessing to others. Amen.



Service Programs

November 2023 – History Rooted in the Future

November 1, 2023 By Captain Betzy Hanson



Scripture: Psalm 33:12–15, John 10:18, Romans 5:8, Matthew 25:37–40

Introduction

Each year on November 11, we celebrate Veteran’s Day. We honor those who have served in the military to defend and protect our country and freedoms. This service project is an excellent way to thank them for all they have done for us.

Refreshment Ideas:

The following website gives excellent recipes for patriotic food

ideas: <https://www.tasteofhome.com/collection/patriotic-recipes-4th-of-july-cookout/>

Decorations:

Mason jars can often be found in the corps kitchen, or the women may be willing to donate some from their homes. Add rice that has been dyed red to the jars, along with small American flags. Simple white tablecloths would make the centerpieces pop. Scatter white and blue candy on the tables as a fun snack. Print out Veterans Day quotes and ask the women to share them when they assemble the jars. The following website is a good source for quotes:

<https://www.countryliving.com/life/g24793588/veteran-day-quotes/>.

Service Project:

Crafts Using Mason Jars

The following website has additional items for easy crafts using mason jars, which could be distributed to a VA Facility: <https://www.prudentpennypincher.com/mason-jar-4th-of-july-crafts/>

Hot Chocolate Mugs

Assemble small gift bags containing hot chocolate mugs filled with a hot cocoa mix and marshmallows. Add encouraging cards that the women have written thanking the veterans for their service and assuring them that they have not been forgotten. Deliver the bags to a VA Facility.

Guest Speaker Options:

Asking a local veteran or watching a video of a veteran talking about why they served would be inspiring and informative. The links below contain a testimonial and some historical facts about Veterans Day.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sEvkJRPv4TQ>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n1wwJv_ndGM
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mWD4Oy6fKlo>

A Life of Service

Some of what I learned about Veterans Day I learned at school. But the majority of what I learned was from my Father, who loves history. As a family, we attended Veterans Day

parades, toured old army bases and bunkers in Northern California, and enjoyed seeing old tanks. However, it wasn't until I married my husband that I heard personal stories about military individuals.

My Father-in-law and mother-in-law came from military families. They met at the swimming pool in Fort Benning when they were teenagers. My husband's grandfather served in the U.S. Army. Colonel Don Hanson served faithfully, and even though I never had the chance to meet him, his flag is displayed proudly in our living room. Lieutenant Colonel Don Vest also served in the Army and shared his stories with me every time I saw him. In addition, my husband has many uncles and aunts who are veterans. When I speak to them, I can feel a sense of pride in serving our country. But, as they share their war stories, the pain from losing friends and seeing war casualties are also evident.

Serving our nation comes at a cost. All veterans in our country were willing to lay down their lives for this country and its people. What a selfless act of service. When a new member of the Army joins a military branch, they are sworn in and promise to "support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic."
(<https://www.todaysmilitary.com/joining-eligibility/enlisting-military>)

Our veterans worked hard, spent time away from their families, and encountered dangers that often haunt them for years. Yet, they sacrificed for the freedoms we now have, which is a reason to be thankful to them. We live in a great nation, it may not be perfect, but it is a great nation (Psalm 33:12). We have many freedoms and rights in our country because of the sacrifices made by veterans.

When we look at the Bible, we see that Jesus willingly gave His life for us (John 10:18). Jesus was the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom of sin. Jesus showed His love by dying on a cross. Jesus is the prime example of how we should serve. Knowing that Christ is our example of service and that He sacrificed His life for us should be enough for us to say thank you and live a life of thankfulness. God loved us even while we were sinners (Romans 5:8). Our desire should be to serve others by following Jesus' example. Willingly, we should give of ourselves to help those in need, just like our veterans gave of themselves and dedicated their life to serving our country. We should also give our life to serve our heavenly Father and help those He's called us to serve. When we serve those around us at the corps or in our community, let's remember that we are serving them in Jesus' name (Matthew 25: 37-40).

As the next generation grows, our job is to teach them that Jesus is our ultimate example of living a life of service to others. Knowing this, we can show them that veterans are a modern example of living a life of service. So as we go and deliver these small gifts of appreciation to our veterans, let's remember to thank them for their service personally.

Let's Pray

Father God, I come before You today to say thank you. Thank You for loving us and saving us. Father, thank You for our veterans. God, I ask You to bless the men and women who have

dedicated their lives to serving our country. I pray that You will give them Your peace. Thank you for giving them the desire to serve. God, I pray that You would send Your protection to those still serving and send Your healing hand on those who are suffering. I pray that You will strengthen their families and bring comfort to those who have lost loved ones and friends. We love You, God. Thank You for listening to us. Amen.



Service Programs

December 2023 – O Christmas Tree

December 1, 2023 By Captain Marjorie Miller



Scripture: Isaiah 11:1-10.

Decorations

Put three trees of varying heights on the refreshment table. Place a runner or burlap around the trees. Use wooden rounds as placemats under the snacks and drinks.

Refreshment Ideas

Check Pinterest for recipes for the following suggestions:

- Yule log cake
- Chocolate fondue with pretzel sticks for dipping
- Apple cider with cinnamon sticks

Craft

Cookie-cutter seed bomb cards/tags (see website:

<https://www.backwoodsmama.com/2022/01/heart-shaped-seed-bombs.html>):

Needed Materials:

- Air-dry clay (Crayola makes air dry clay that can be purchased at Michael, Hobby Lobby, Jo-Ann Stores, or on Amazon)
- potting soil
- wildflower seeds
- Christmas cookie cutters

For exact amounts and directions, see the above website.

The finished seed bombs could be used on Christmas cards or as gift tags. The cards can be made using card stock, markers and colored pencils. Include the information that water will break down the capsule when the seed bomb is dispersed into nature, allowing the seeds to germinate and grow—distribute the finished product to Advisory Board Members, the congregation, or troop members.

Service Project Ideas

- Decorate the tree in the corps chapel or social service office. Use this time to also go through the decorations, discarding broken ones.
- Help decorate Christmas trees for corps members or women's ministry members who are shut-in, unwell, or need extra assistance.
- Decorate small tabletop trees as centerpieces for congregate meals served at the corps, a shelter, or a convalescent home.

- As a group, purchase artificial trees and decorations. Donate them to a local woman's shelter. Organize a time when they can decorate the tree with the women living at the shelter as a group.
- If the corps uses real Christmas trees or live poinsettias, coordinate a schedule for volunteers to water them and clean up any pine needles that fall.

Competition Games

- Who can string the most popcorn and cranberries in one minute?
- Who can draw the best Christmas tree by putting a paper plate on their head and drawing without looking?
- Who can build the best tree out of Legos® blocks?

Gift/Prizes

Tie a pair of mittens with ribbon and a cinnamon stick.

Song

"O Christmas Tree." Check YouTube for a video of this song.

Activity

Print Isaiah 11:1–10 and provide each woman a copy. Ask them to write down some things that impress them about the prophecy of the coming of Jesus. Example: The Spirit of wisdom and understanding will rest on Him. Although this scripture will be challenging to understand for many, they should get a better understanding after listening to the devotional. Consider going back to this scripture again following the devotional and discussing or answering questions regarding "the Stump of Jesse" and fulfilling the prophecy in Jesus.

The Stump of Jesse

During Advent, Christians look forward to celebrating December 25, the birth of Jesus. While Christmas joy peaks at the birth of Jesus, sometimes we forget the Old Testament scripture that prophesizes the virgin birth of Jesus, the Messiah, and the hope that it brings to the world.

In the book of Isaiah, the Prophet describes God's wrath against human rebellion and sin. He declares that it will be like God taking an axe to the arrogance of human evil, producing a sad scene like a hillside stripped bare of trees (Isa 10:33, 34). And yet also in this book is the beautiful promise that because of His great love for His people, He would send the Messiah to

be the Savior, not only for Israel but for us all. This promise is found in Isaiah 9:6, 7. (*Ask one of the women to read this scripture.*) God has never lost His love for His people. And because of this love, even though we deserve punishment for our sins, there was still hope in the promise of a Messiah.

After all the wrongs listed against the people of Israel, Isaiah shares: "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit" (Isa. 11:10). There was still hope for Israelites, God's special people. God planned to raise a Savior, both tender and powerful, a promise to Israel and all nations. Isaiah declares, "In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples. The nations will seek Him." When we look at the genealogy of Jesus as recorded in Matthew 1, we see that Jesse was the father of King David, who was a descendant of Jesus (verse 1). In writing to the Romans, the apostle Paul made it clear that Jesus was the "root of Jesse." We read in Romans 15:12, "And once more, Isaiah says: 'The Root of Jesse will appear. One who will arise to rule over the Gentiles; in Him, the Gentiles will put their hope.'" That's a promise for us. We Gentiles can put our hope in Jesus, the root of Jesse.

This month as we celebrate the fulfillment of that Old Testament prophesy in the birth of Jesus Christ, I pray that you know Him not just as a baby in the manger but as your personal Savior who came so you could have forgiveness of your sins. And as Paul went on to say in Romans 15:13, "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." What a tremendous promise that as we trust in Jesus, the root of Jesse, He brings peace, joy, love, and hope.

Let's pray.



Service Programs

January 2024 – Wonderfully Planted

January 1, 2024 By Captain Monica Kyle



Scripture: Matthew 6:25–34; 1 Corinthians 6:19–20.

Introduction

One thing that holds some people back from making healthy changes in their lives is having someone to come along their side as an accountability partner.

Women's Ministries Exercise Group

Explore the possibility of starting an exercise group with the women that attend women's ministries. This could be held on a separate day or the women may want to come earlier on the regular program day.

Refreshments

Share healthy snacks together. Ask the women to bring their favorite healthy recipe to share.

Snack ideas:

- 1 Water infused with fresh fruit
- 2 Fresh fruit slices with yogurt dip – <https://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/fruit-with-yogurt-dip/>
- 3 Oven-Roasted Chickpeas – <https://tasty.co/compilation/roasted-chickpeas-4-ways>
- 4 Banana/Oat/Chocolate cookies (those are the ingredients) – <https://tasty.co/recipe/3-ingredient-breakfast-cookies>

Service Project Idea

Contact a women's shelter, a senior center, or a work location to explore the possibility of starting an exercise program. This group could meet weekly or monthly depending on the needs of the women. This could be simply walking together or something more guided, like working out to a video. The benefit of using a video is that you do not need to have experience leading since the video instructor will take the lead. You only need to invite the women, prepare the space, communicate a time and place and follow up with the spiritual components such as prayer and a short devotional before or after the workout.

There are some helpful ideas and links on YouTube:

- 1 Senior Center – search on “exercises for those with limited mobility.”
- 2 Mom's Group/Women's Shelter/Work—search on “fun exercise videos for beginners.”
- 3 At work, invite others in the office to walk with you or exercise to a short workout video during work breaks.
- 4 At home—search on “fun exercise videos for the whole family.”

Share a devotional with the group. The YouVersion Bible has a lot of devotionals plans that anyone can access. One “Day” in the devotional could be read at each exercise session. Here are a few devotionals on the YouVersion Bible that could be shared:

- 1 “Less Hustle, More Jesus: 5 Day devotional by Shanna Noel”

2 "Hot Mess, Thriving as a Mom"

3 "From Anxiety to Peace"

A Healthier You

Did you realize that videos and photos in magazines, movies, and social media are often edited? Inches are deleted off women's bodies with a click. Legs lengthened, and bodies stretched with a swipe. A woman's face is wiped clean of blemishes in seconds. No matter how much we diet or carefully apply makeup, we won't look like the people on magazine covers. Our self-image is distorted as we compare ourselves to people who are digitally "perfect."

January brings a new year with New Year's resolutions. Many times, those resolutions are to improve our looks and strive to look more like the people that we see on our screens. But we will fail, no matter how hard we try. We are trying to live up to something that is fake. Instead, let's plant our sense of worth on God's word. Matthew 6:25 warns us not to worry. "Therefore, I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink, or about your body, what you will wear." Instead, Matthew 6:33 says, "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." We can put our worries about our looks behind us by seeking God first. We were created in God's image. He likes the way He created us. We are His beautiful daughters. Instead of trying to be skinnier, let's first have a relationship with God. Then instead of trying to be a particular shape or size, let's seek health and wellness.

We can make healthy choices to honor God with our bodies. First Corinthians 6:19, 20 says, "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; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies." It doesn't matter what size you are. Nowhere in the Bible does it say you should be a certain size. We can choose to honor God by what we do with the bodies He gave us. This includes making healthy choices to take care of our bodies. Imagine having even more energy to serve Him. Seek other Christians in your journey to be healthier this year. Become wonderfully planted in God's word. Exercise together, drink more water together, and share healthy recipes. Celebrate together as you honor God.



Service Programs

February 2024 – Grounded in Love

February 1, 2024 By Lt. Perfecta Weeden



Scripture: Ephesians 3:17-18, John 3:16

Introduction

In the month of February, we celebrate Valentine's Day. What better time to share the love of God with others in a meaningful way through the gift of service? This service program will guide you in preparing a special coffee break for your local ARC beneficiaries, Advisory Board, or other groups to show them that God deeply loves them.

Create the Environment

Music

- Create your own coffee house vibe by playing soothing instrumental music in the background as the attendees enter. You can find suitable pieces online or enter “coffee shop instrumentals” on YouTube.

Decorations

- Set up a coffee bar with various flavor options. Using a Keurig machine will help to keep down on the equipment needed.
- Add a set of string lights over the coffee bar to bring warmth to the area.
- Hang a paper heart garland over the coffee bar.
- Use creams, browns, and earth-tone tablecloths and placemats on the tables.
- Use mini chalkboards as centerpieces to write the scripture references about love —“Grounded in Love” or a simple message such as “Welcome,” or “You Are Loved.”
- Sprinkle coffee beans and confetti hearts around the centerpieces; these can also be used for the “Coffee Bingo” activity.

Refreshments

- Make sure to offer decaffeinated options for those abstaining from caffeine and an assortment of creamers and sweeteners.
- Assortment Pastries—Invite the women to participate by bringing their favorite bite-sized pastry/cookies to share with others. Place an assortment on plates near each centerpiece.

Activities

Coffee Tasting

- Invite the group to participate in a mini coffee tasting experience with a few different flavors. For a video on how to professionally taste coffee, watch the following video: <https://youtu.be/4MoAfw9vjLY>

Coffee Bingo

- Use the coffee beans from the table to play coffee bingo. You could use ready-made bingo cards or create your own using coffee terms at: <https://bingobaker.com/>.

How Deep the Father's Love

Read Ephesians 3:17, 18 (NIV).

Finish this famous jingle, "The best part of waking up is _____." I remember as a child singing the jingle, and although I hadn't experienced coffee yet, I could feel myself transform with the people on the television screen. I felt ready to take on the day. As an adult, I delight in the fragrance of freshly brewed coffee, which brings back the nostalgia of my mother's morning cup permeating throughout my childhood home.

In one appointment, I had the privilege of serving coffee at a 3-day Stand Down for Veterans. A "Stand Down" is where veterans come to receive complementary care and services from community businesses and non-profits in honor of them serving our country. The percolators began at 5 am and remained in rotation till 10 pm. With each cup that the veterans received, we witnessed the warmth and comfort overcoming each face that came to our coffee stand. We watched as these once tired, downturned faces lit up as they shared coffee and stories.

What is it about coffee that makes it a staple in our day or a transformative moment? Is it the earthy aroma that awakens our mornings? Or is it the percolating sound that signals a break in the day? Or could it be the comfort of meeting with a friend at your favorite coffee shop? How can a simple bean elevate our senses and completely change our day?

In the same way that a "cuppa joe" can change your outlook, rising every morning and knowing God deeply loves you can be the reminder you need to start your day off right. And how much does God love us? Ephesians 3:17, 18 tells us God's love is immeasurable. It goes with us to the highest moments of our lives and into our lowest, darkest valleys and all the places in between. God's love is complete.

Yet unlike coffee that needs to be warmed up or refilled, God's love never runs out. His Word is active and alive. And what's more, God not only tells us of His love for us, but He has also already shown His love for us through Jesus.

John 3:16 reveals the extent of God's love and master plan for us, "For God so loved the world that he gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." Not only did He make the greatest sacrifice of all for our sins, but He made a way that provided the path of restoration for humanity for all of eternity. He loves us that much. So much that He wants us to extend that same love and gospel hope to others.

Just as the smell of coffee can permeate the air, the aroma of God's love can spread to the most hardened of hearts. Sometimes all it takes is a cup of coffee with a friend to turn your day around. Invite someone to join you and allow the Lord to use you at this moment to tell them how much He loves them too.

Closing Song: "How Deep the Father's Love for Us" by Stuart Townend, video available on YouTube.



Service Programs

March 2024 – Blessed Are the Green Makers

March 1, 2024 By Lt. Danielle Bratton



Scripture: Genesis 16:13, Colossians 3:12, Matthew 5:16, 1 John 1:9, 2 Corinthians 5:17

Introduction

Green makers are community members that help us, but we often tend not to see them or forget about them as they are working behind the scenes. Those people are the ones at sanitation departments, water reclamation plants, gardeners, groundskeepers, refuse

collectors, and custodians. These hard workers make our lives much better, often in unpleasant jobs. Today we are going to celebrate the Green Makers in our community.

Decoration Ideas

Use a green color scheme—everything green. Make centerpieces using gallon jugs filled with potted plants, which can be taken home at the end of the night.

Activities

- Schedule an in-person tour of the water treatment plant in your community.
- See if any gardens or nurseries around you use reclaimed water. Invite someone to talk to the women about how this process works.
- Hydroponic farming is growing plants without the use of soil. There are several videos on YouTube that explain this method of agriculture.
- Learn more about businesses that use reclaimed water and how that helps the longevity of our ecosystem and protects wildlife.

Service Projects to say thank you to those who are Green Makers

- During the summer, place cold water bottles in ice buckets for the refuge collectors.
- Remember to thank the gardeners for their labor.
- Take part in a beach or park clean-up day.
- Be active in recycling in your home.
- Place containers for recycling in the corps building.
- Put together a group gift basket full of goodies enough for everyone (Gatorade, snacks, candies, chips, trail mix, nuts—utilize the dollar stores to get a good variety) to take to a local water treatment plant.

Craft—Paper Flowers

Make paper flowers using recycled paper or newspaper: <https://heyletsmakestuff.com/our-wedding-paper-flowers-tutorial/>

Water

Think about how you got ready for today. Did you wake up, brush your teeth, wash your hands, shower, or have breakfast? Do you ever think about what happens to the water after

using it? Where does it go? If you said to a water treatment plant, you would be correct.

As a child, I took a field trip to our local water treatment plant. Many of my friends say they would be staying home sick that day because they did not want to watch dirty water become less dirty “ew!” However, I loved science and wanted to know the process of what happened to the water. I spent my afternoons watching shows like Dirty Jobs, How It's Made, and Zoboomafoo. This seemed like a great way to find out more about where my water went each day and learn new things. The field trip did not disappoint.

When we arrived, a young woman was ready to show us around, and the best part was that she loved what she did. There was only a handful of people there running a massive operation. She showed us the nitty-gritty and did not leave anything out. She answered all our silly questions. We could test water samples that she had saved for our class and go into the equipment rooms. It was one of the most impactful field trips that I can remember. It may seem strange to be so interested in what happens to our discarded water. However, I think it can be helpful to remember that everything we do affects something else later down the line—not just in water but in our day-to-day lives. It's easy to forget what an impact these great people and the jobs make in our daily lives.

(Watch suggested videos listed below at this point.)

Just like we need to be smart with recycling material things, we also need to be careful with our water usage and make sure we do our best to conserve it for future generations. We can do that best by knowing what should and should not go down the drain. Once you know, share that information with others. By doing this small act, we can be green makers.

Maybe you know someone you can thank who performs one of these green jobs. A simple way to say thank you is to leave out some cold water or write a thank you card for your refuse collector. As a women's group, you can see how many people work at your local water treatment plant and put together a thank-you basket. Have each person from your women's group bring one item to collect for the basket and add handmade personalized notes.

God reminds us that He sees us even if we sometimes don't feel seen. In Genesis 16, we read about Hagar as she runs from her mistress. She is approached by God and is beautifully reminded that she is seen. Genesis 16:13 says, “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.’” When others feel they are unnoticed or underappreciated, we have the opportunity to correct that perception. We can be that nudge of kindness and compassion as it says in Colossians 3:12 “Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.” Showing appreciation to those that work in dirty jobs can reignite their passions and help them see their light shining for Jesus (Matthew 5:16).

Another unique beauty is that our water treatment facilities parallel what God does in our own lives. As we sometimes feel used, broken, dirty, and cast aside, He restores us. He cleans

us and makes us new. 1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." We have to trust in God and be willing to let Him get rid of those things that are weighing us down. If we allow Him to clean our murky water and the darker parts of our life, we can shine brighter for others. In 2 Corinthians 5:17, exclaims, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" Let's go out and say thank you to those who are less seen today.

Videos

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c30_0lGwsMg – Virtual Tour of a Water Waste Treatment plant

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eeip7L_G7-0 – Women in Water Treatment Plants

Additional Videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lWNz-tH3gp0> -Trying to be a refuse collector

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Lzsu8SXaWY> -Recycling center

Additional Recourses: What is reclaimed water – (great information and infographics)

<https://tataandhoward.com/reclaimed-water-from-toilet-to-tap-infographic/>

<https://www.epa.gov/waterreuse/basic-information-about-water-reuse>



Service Programs

April 2024 – Seeds of Change

April 1, 2024 By Lt. Katherine Hernandez



Scripture: Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23

Program Focus

This program aims to encourage women to listen, understand, and obey the teachings found in God's word. This practice can bring growth and a beautiful change in our lives.

Decorations

Decorate tables with vibrant colored plastic tablecloths. Use a 7" to 9" round rustic wood slice as a centerpiece, and add small flowers, plants, or succulents in small pots. Lastly, add various gardening tools.

Service Project

Plan a day for the women to come and spruce up the corps by helping to do some yard work. An alternate suggestion is to help a corps member who is elderly or unable to do the yard work around their house. If the corps has a community garden, the women can help by watering, pruning, and weeding. They can also plant new veggies and flowers. If someone in the community has tree stumps that they would be willing to donate, they can be painted and added to an outside area, providing a pop of color and a place to sit.

Once the craft has been completed, the pots and plants could be distributed to nursing homes.

Craft: Painting Terra Cotta Pots

Materials:

- Terra Cotta Pots and saucers any size
- Acrylic Paint (Various Colors)
- Paint Brushes
- Krylon Clear Sealer (can be purchased at craft stores)
- Planting Soil
- Succulents (can be bought on amazon or contact a local nursery).

Instructions

- 1 Paint the Terra Cotta pot and saucer being as creative as you want.
- 2 Allow the pot to dry.
- 3 Once it's dry, spray it with Krylon to seal the paint.
- 4 Add potting soil and a succulent.

Seeds of Change

Read Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23.

Do you enjoy gardening? I do! I have always been drawn to gardens, especially those full of beautiful flowers and lush plants of various colors. In the last couple of years, my desire to learn more about gardening has grown. I find that there is truly something special about gardening. Not only does it reduce stress, but it promotes happiness and other health benefits. Watching a flower bloom, a seed sprout, or a tree produce fruit is enjoyable. It is also a great reminder of how amazing our God is.

If you are familiar with gardening, you know that there are steps that need to be followed for what we plant to grow and bloom. The same is true in our Christian faith. We must do things for our Christian faith to grow and bloom. This is why I enjoy reading the parable of the sower found in Mathew 13. Jesus loved teaching and speaking in parables. It allowed His listeners to not only relate to what He was teaching, but also comprehend, internalize, and apply the lessons to their daily lives.

In the parable of the seeds, Jesus speaks about a farmer who went out to scatter his seeds. In Jesus' time, farming looked slightly different from the customs we are familiar with in modern-day North America. Then farmers didn't live on the farm; they lived in nearby villages and would walk to the plot of ground they farmed. Also, the farms were not very big. They only consisted of a few acres. Farmers also didn't have all the fancy agricultural equipment available today. When it came time to plant, the farmers carried the seeds in a bag slung over their shoulders. They would grab a handful of seeds and scatter them by swinging their arms across the ground in a sweeping motion. This vivid depiction of the farmer scattering the seeds allows us to imagine how some of the seeds could land somewhere other than in the good soil. Jesus knew that His listeners were very familiar with farming. He knew they would understand and relate to the parable, as farming was part of their culture.

What is interesting is that Jesus rarely interpreted His parables. However, He does with this one. Verse 18 begins with the word "Listen," which is the same Greek word as the word "Hear," used repeatedly in verses 13–17. Therefore, in the interpretation of this parable, Jesus is encouraging us to listen, understand, and obey the parable's teaching. (*Read Matthew 13:13-18.*)

The application of this parable indicates that we have to be alert to how we respond to the gospel message. It may be that the busyness of our daily lives hinders us from truly receiving or responding to the gospel message in the way God would like us to. In addition, some receive the message with great joy but lose focus due to life's demands, fears, or worries, which prevent them from being fruitful. Lastly, those who receive the message hear it, understand it, and obey it. Thus, becoming fruitful individuals, who strive to continue growing in their Christian faith, and encourage and draw others to know Jesus.

In life, we may encounter times of growth and fruitfulness and times in which some pruning, weeding, and change need to happen. Wherever you may find yourself today, know that you can look to Jesus, He will provide the "seeds" you need to produce the change God desires. My prayer and encouragement for you today is to plant yourself in a place where you can grow

and bloom into the best and most beautiful version of yourself—the version that God sees every time He sees you.



Service Programs

May 2024 – Beautifully Rooted and Wonderfully Made

May 1, 2024 By Lt. Felicia LeMar



Scripture: Psalm 139:14

Purpose

This program aims to celebrate women and their beauty through knowing that God created each of us uniquely different. It will allow us to see ourselves and others through God's perspective, giving us a purpose to bring all the glory to Him.

Decorations

Colorful tablecloths in spring colors with vases of fresh flowers.

Refreshments

Serve lemonade, iced tea, and flower-shaped cookies.

Service Project Ideas

- Contact a local beauty school to see if they could offer their services to women in a local shelter. Facilitate the arrangements making transportation available to the women.
- Hold a Spa Day at the corps, offering manicures and facials to social service clients, women who live in a shelter, or young women in your community.
- Hold a beauty supply collection drive. Place the supplies in toiletry bags to be distributed through the corps social service office or given to women in a local shelter.

Discussion Questions

- 1 Was there a time in your life when you felt particularly beautiful? (Wedding day, prom)
- 2 Do you remember when it was even difficult to look at your reflection in a mirror? (Overweight, time of self-doubt, rejection, criticism)
- 3 What helped you overcome negative thoughts?
- 4 How does the Lord view us? (1 Sam. 16:7, "But God told Samuel, "Looks aren't everything. Don't be impressed with his looks and stature." Proverbs 31:30, "... Beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.")
- 5 How can I be more beautifully rooted in Christ?

Beautifully Rooted and Wonderfully Made

Read Psalm 139.

This beautiful Psalm of prayer is an excellent reminder to us as women of the beauty and purpose we each have. God reminds us that He wants to be involved in every aspect of our lives.

This Psalm holds a very special place in my heart. Growing up, it was always hard for me to see my worth. I was told that I would never go anywhere in life. The constant disapproval and judgment I felt from my family made me feel worthless, and I went through a period of depression. This has also led me to spend most of my life worrying about what others

thought of me and trying to prove my worth. However, through these times of depression and seeking approval, I was reminded of God's message to me when reading Psalm 139.

This Psalm reminded me that God is with me wherever I go and that I am never alone. It allowed me to know my worth and purpose in life. Even when I try to hide my shame and guilt from God, He knows and speaks to me. Isn't it amazing that God knows and helps us through any problems? No matter what you are going through, God knows, and He will guide you through your challenges and struggles. All this is to help us grow in Christ and be beautifully rooted in Him. Being beautifully rooted in Christ means living a life in God's presence and not being worried about any fears, doubts, or comparisons.

Verse 14 says, "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made." God made each of us with purpose and to have meaning in this world. We were made to bring glory to Him. We were made to worship Him. We can do this by recognizing that God made us in His image. He fashioned each of us beautifully and wonderfully. When God created us in our mother's womb, He intentionally made us each unique. So, when you look at yourselves in the mirror, know that you are beautiful the way you are. The way God created you. When you look at your friend next to you, know that she is beautiful the way she is. The way God created her!

Today, it is so easy to judge ourselves from the way we look, speak, or by our gifts and talents. However, if we truly know how much God sets us apart by making us unique, we can be fully confident in the beautiful life He gave us. As we continue to grow in Christ, let's be reminded of how beautifully rooted and wonderfully made we are as children of God.



Service Programs

June 2024 – Rooting for Reading

June 1, 2024 By Major AnnMarguerite Jones



Scripture: Joshua 1:8, John 20:31, John 1:1, 1 Timothy 4:13

Reading Fellowship/Party

Party theme ideas (<https://www.playpartyplan.com/reading-games-and-activities>)

- Pajama Time – Wear pajamas, play pajama party games, eat breakfast items for refreshments, and have a pillow fight.

- Harry Potter – Make butterbeer treats, play Harry Potter games, make homemade “potions” (perfumes), pass out essential oils as gifts, and make chocolate frogs or edible wands.
- Seuss Books – Talk only in rhyme for a limited amount of time, eat Green Eggs and Ham, play a Dr. Seuss activity, and make a bucket list of places you still want to go (or have already been).
- Act out your favorite book or play charades using book titles
- Make treats based on a book
- Make a craft from a book
- Pictionary—draw a book title

Craft Ideas

Make bookmarkers using supplies on hand: ribbon, contact paper, cardstock, shipping labels, cord, yarn, buttons, felt tip markers, watercolor paints, felt, paper clips, embroidery floss, needle and thread, elastic, rubber bands, beads, paint samples, charms, washi tape, duct tape

- <https://www.sparklesofsunshine.com/ribbon-bookmarks/>
- <http://www.things-to-make-and-do.co.uk/other-stuff/bookmarks/decorated-ribbon-bookmark-project.html>
- <https://www.personalized-ribbons.com/ribbon-news/ribbon-bookmark-for-summer-reading/>
- <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/368943394445032160/>
- <https://momhelpbuddy.blogspot.com/2019/06/diy-creative-bookmark-ideas.html>

Field Trips

- Go to your local library—have a tour, get a library card, and check out a book.
- Explore downloading books from the library to read on a kindle.
- Go to a Sylvan Learning Center or an optician who provides vision therapy to learn about some health or learning disabilities that may affect someone’s reading ability.

Service Project

- Host a book drive for your corps nursery, Sunday School room, or office library

- Host an Usborne Book Party to benefit a daycare center, crisis nursery, childcare, WIC office, or hospital for newborn babies and their families
- Read to seniors at an Alzheimer's unit, rest home, care home, or children in an elementary school.
- Volunteer to read and grade lessons for the mail-in Prison Ministries Bible Studies
- Start a Book Club—decided to read a book together (a chapter at a time) and discuss what you read weekly.

Extra Challenge: Read the Bible in a Year

- YouVersion Bible App has different plans to choose from.
- Give the women a journal to record their thoughts or prayer requests
- Print out Bible Reading Bookmarks for each person – <https://www.etsy.com/listing/1084800001/bible-reading-bookmarks-read-the-bible?gpla=1&gao=1&>

10 Free Bible Apps

<https://justdisciple.com/bible-app/>

- 1 YouVersion
- 2 Blue Letter Bible
- 3 Bibl e.is
- 4 Bible App by Olive Tree
- 5 BibleGateway
- 6 Logos Bible Study Tools
- 7 Bible App for Kids
- 8 Faithlife Study Bible
- 9 ESV Bible
- 10 NIV Bible App+

Free Subscription to The Chosen ® Multi-series about the life of Christ.

<https://watch.angelstudios.com/thechosen>

18 Best Book Apps for Reading on the Go

<https://smallbiztrends.com/2021/10/best-book-apps.html>

- 1 Amazon Kindle App
- 2 Google Play Books
- 3 Audible
- 4 Libby
- 5 PocketBook Reader
- 6 Kobo
- 7 Apple Books
- 8 FullReader
- 9 AlReader
- 10 Media365 Book
- 11 NOOK
- 12 ReadEra
- 13 Scribd (\$9.99/month)
- 14 KyBook 3 (\$4.99/month)
- 15 Bookmate (\$9.99/month)
- 16 Bluefire (\$4.99/month)
- 17 Moon+ Reader Pro
- 18 24symbols (\$8.99/month)

So Many Books, So Little Time



“Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.” (Joshua 1:8, NIV)

As a young girl, I was always fascinated with books. The words became images in my mind, almost movie-like. I tried to picture the characters as they moved through the storyline—the scenes in which action took place, the conversations that happened, and the emotions sensed

and experienced throughout the rise and fall of the plot. Whether I was on a farm with Laura Ingalls Wilder, solving a mystery, or adventuring in another country during another time, I was taken away by the words on the paper.

Do you remember the Choose Your Own Adventure Books? I liked those! You, as the reader, were given options as to how the story would unfold, depending on what choices you made for your character. If I didn't like the ending or outcome, I would go back and change my choices. If only we could do that in real life!

There are a few stories in the Bible that include an element of reading:

- The Holy Spirit prompted Philip to run up to a chariot where an Ethiopian eunuch was reading a passage from Isaiah. He asked him, "Do you understand what you are reading?" It gave him an opportunity to speak to him about the good news of Jesus. He was so moved by this, that he paused his journey to get baptized. (Story found in Acts 8.)
- King Xerxes was having trouble sleeping, so he ordered that the chronicles of his reign be read to him. (Imagine someone reading your biography aloud.) During this passage, he was reminded of how Mordecai (Esther's cousin, King Xerxes' wife) had exposed a plot by two of the king's officers and spared King Xerxes from assassination. He ended up rewarding Mordecai, and ultimately Haman was executed for his devious plot that had been revealed. (Story found in Esther 6-7.)
- Ezra read from the Book of the Law (Torah) for seven days from morning to midday, after the Nehemiah and the Israelites completed rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem after being in exile for 70 years. When he read, the people stood. The Levites helped to translate and explain what was being read. They were so moved and convicted in their hearts. Maybe they felt remorse for falling short of God's laws. But the Levites encouraged them and said let the "joy of the Lord be their strength" (Nehemiah 8:10, NIV). They were reminded of what to do and how to observe His laws. They rejoiced in their understanding.

If these events had not been recorded, they wouldn't have impacted either those who were reading or hearing the words that were being read aloud. The written word is powerful and transforming.

John, the apostle, wrote about his gospel, "These [signs or miraculous works] are written that [we] may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing [we] may have life in His name" (John 20:31, NIV). "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1, NIV). Jesus Himself is "logos"—the written word in the flesh.

Read your Bible daily. You will get to know Jesus and His ways better. I challenge you to choose a reading plan that will get you through the Scriptures. And as Paul encouraged Timothy in his ministry, "Devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching" (1 Timothy 4:13, NIV) so that we can continue sharing the transforming, good

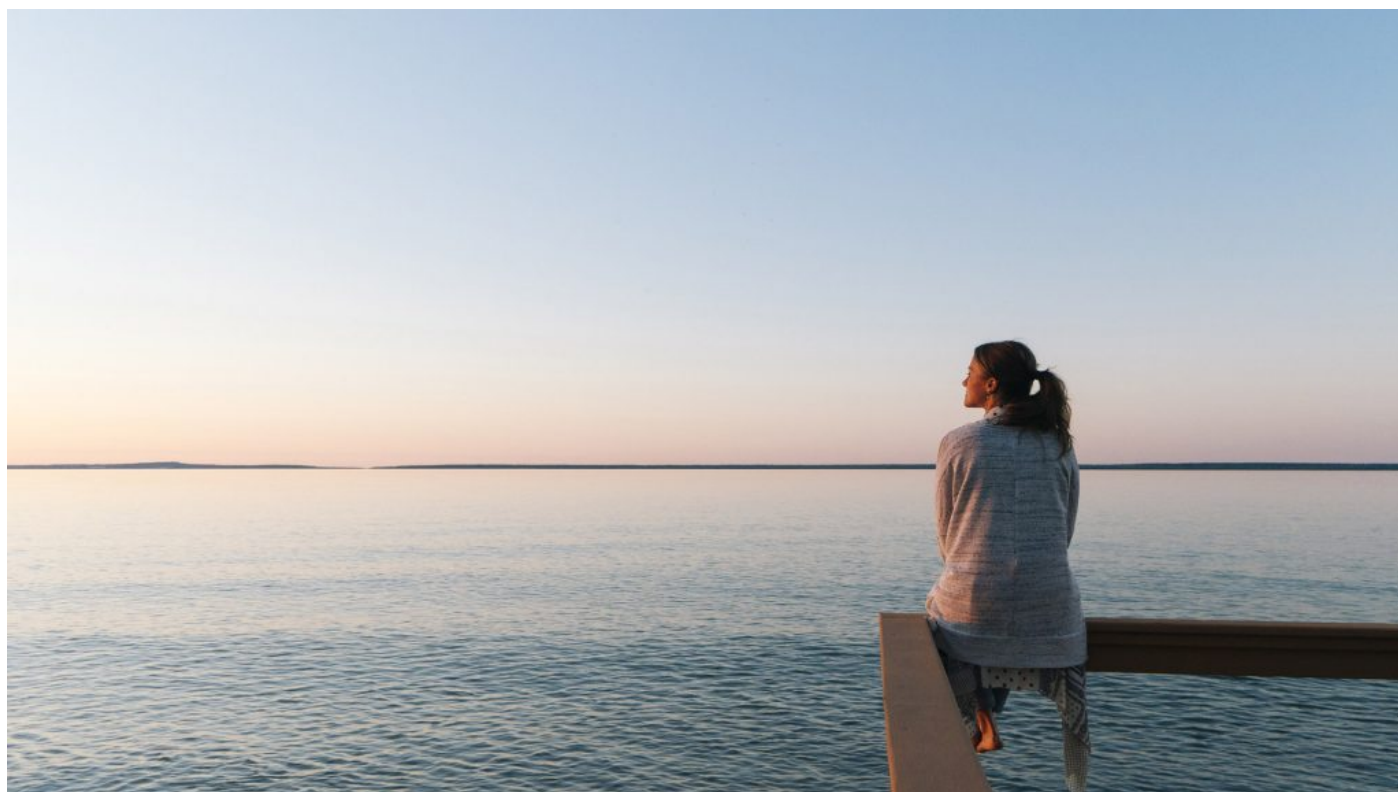
news of Jesus. Not only will the text become internalized, but it will impress those who hear it too



Service Programs

July 2024 – Life-Giving Water

July 1, 2024 By Captain Corrin Perry



Scripture: John 4:4-28.

Refreshment Ideas

Set up a water station using clear glass pitchers filled with different kinds of infused water. The following link has the ingredients for eight infused waters: <https://www.culinaryhill.com/8-infused-water-recipes/>. Serve a fruit tray or place fruit in scooped-out watermelons, along

with a dip. Scatter an assortment of saltwater taffy on the tables as a treat. For other food ideas, check www.pinterest.com. Search on Water-themed party food."

Decorations

Use white or blue tablecloths, coordinating with the flowers and greenery used. Some flowers could be floated in small fish-bowls. Check the dollar stores or craft stores for the centerpiece items needed. For other ideas, look on Pinterest.

Service Ideas

Check for upcoming community events—a marathon run or a 4th of July parade or picnic. Pass out water bottles to the participants and those watching the event. This is an excellent opportunity to serve something crucial during one of the hottest months of the year.

Other opportunities could be at a farmer's market or to the homeless at a nearby park. Your kindness in providing a bottle of water shows them we are acting as Christ's hands and feet. Use the distribution as an ice breaker to start a conversation. Invite them to a special event at the corps or to the Sunday worship service. Affix a sticker to the bottle identifying that it is from The Salvation Army and giving the times and location of the Sunday service. You could also add: "You are loved by the One who is the living water!"

Life-Giving Water

Water is something that quenches our thirst like nothing else. It sustains life and yet can be used to wash things, making them clean. It comes in multiple forms: vapor, liquid and solid. Water is so simple, readily available in America, and yet complex. It is often taken for granted yet is essential for all inhabitants of our planet.

John 4:4–28 records the account of a Samaritan woman who comes to a well during the heat of the day to draw water. She is a familiar figure in the town, but not for the positive aspects of her life. She probably comes during the heat of the day to avoid the stories whispered about her actions of being with more than one man. Expecting to be alone, she is surprised to find a Jewish man sitting beside the well. He asks her for a drink of water. She is shocked that He spoke to her and responded: "' You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?' (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)" (verse 9). Jesus is well aware of these practices but continues the conversation by responding, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked Him and He would have given you living water" (verse 10).

Still not understand what Jesus was saying, she answers, "' Sir,'" the woman said, "' you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?'" (verse 11). The conversation continues as Jesus patiently replies:

“Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life (verse 13).” Clarity starts to creep up on her face, and though still not fully understanding what Jesus means, she replies, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water” (verse 16).

Jesus already knows all about the woman but still asks her to go and get her husband. She replies that she does not have a husband. Jesus responds, “The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true” (verse 18). I can imagine that the woman stares at Him for a moment, awestruck. Jesus knows all about her. Possibly trying to turn the conversation away from herself, she responds by saying that she can see that He is a prophet, but that there are different beliefs between the Jews and the Samaritans, specifically where to worship (verses 19, 20).

Jesus gently states that someday people will neither be worshipping on a mountain nor in Jerusalem. He goes on to say in verse 23, “The true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in the truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is Spirit and His worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.” Still not fully understanding the woman responds that she understands that the Messiah will come and explain everything. Jesus softly declares “I, the one speaking to you—I am He.”

As the realization that this man, Jesus, is the Messiah, she goes to share what she has seen and heard. “Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, ‘Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?’ They came out of the town and made their way toward Him” (verses 28, 29). Gone is her fear of being seen. She goes into the town and tells what has happened to her, and those whom she witnesses came to see Jesus for themselves.

Have you had a large soda or juice drink but still felt thirsty? Nothing can quench our thirst like water, H2O. Often when we are spiritually thirsty, we try to fill our lives with things – alcohol, food, clothes, entertainment. But they just don’t satisfy. We are left thirsting for more, trying to fill the emptiness. We need to go to Jesus for the living water that He freely offers to all who ask. When you do, you will never thirst again. Have you accepted His gift?



Service Programs

August 2024 – Rooted in Relationship

August 1, 2024 By Major Julie Feist



Scripture: John 15:12–15

Introduction

The first Sunday in August is National Friendship Day, a day undoubtedly worth celebrating.

Refreshments

PAL (Potluck Appetizers Loved)

Invite everyone to bring their favorite appetizer to share. Serve "Friendship Punch." Mix fruit punch and lemon-lime soda in a punch bowl. Add a few scoops of sherbet on the top.

Decorations

Cover the tables with solid primary-colored tablecloths. Put together a *LEGO*[®] Friends Mini set for the refreshment table. These are available at Amazon.com or local stores. They vary in price, starting at \$7.99. Or check to see if some of the women's children or grandchildren have sets that can be borrowed. Make signs on construction paper with friendship sayings. Have 20-30 *LEGO*[®] bricks at each table. They are like friends in that they come in every color, shape, and size and can connect.

Service Project

According to most experts, Central America is thought to be the actual birthplace of Friendship Bracelets. These bracelets use decorative knots associated with the symbols of friendship. Some other bracelets can be traced to China, circa 481– 221 B.C.

As believers, we are called to friendship with our neighbors. Reaching out to the lost or lonely with the love of Jesus is what being a friend is all about. These bracelets can be as straightforward or as elaborate as you want. It is not about how the bracelet looks. It's the message behind the bracelet, which is to introduce a friend to Christ. Invite the women to make a Friendship Bracelet. Please discuss with the women how they plan to share their bracelets. Any extra bracelets could be shared through the Community Cares Ministry, with Sunday school members, or through the social services office. The following website demonstrates how beginners can make Friendship Bracelets: <https://youtu.be/u5knLsLjlaE>.

Sharing Activity

Invite the women, as a group, to build something with the *LEGO*[®] bricks on their table. At the end of five minutes ask a representative from each table to share about the process, what they created and what it represents.

Friendship

Take a moment and think about your closest friends. What role have they played in your life? Does your heart grow warm when you think about them? Do you thank God for the good gift He has given you in them? The Apostle Paul made it a prayer habit to thank God for others (see Philippians 1:3-4 and Colossians 1:3-4, for example).

Friends can bring more happiness into our lives than virtually anything else. Friendships have a significant impact on our mental health and happiness. Good friends relieve stress, provide

comfort and joy, and prevent loneliness and isolation. Developing close friendships can also have a powerful impact on your physical health.

What is Friendship?

Friendship is, first and foremost biblical. God designed us for friendship, fellowship, and relationship. The very essence of God is relational. As our triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, He is in constant, connection. We were created in His image. We were created to be in a relationship with our Creator and with others. Each one of *us* longs to be more connected with *friends*. And this is because *God* created *us* for true friendship.

God knew that we should not be alone (Genesis 2:18). The creation of Eve was the beginning of human companionship (friendship). God's people are a body, not created to function on our own but relationally—together.

Jesus gave everything to His friends—His knowledge of God and, sacrificially, His own life. Jesus is our model for friendship. Because Jesus loved without limits, He has created us so that we can live a life of fellowship with Him and others.

Jesus said, "This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn't confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me" (John 15:12-15) NLT.

Other Scripture Verses on Friendship

- "The heartfelt counsel of a friend is as sweet as perfume and incense." Proverbs 27:9 (NLT) "So, encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing." 1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NLT)
- "A friend is always loyal, and a brother is born to help in time of need." Proverbs 17:17 (NLT)
- "As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend." Proverbs 27:17 NLT
- "Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor. If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up." Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 (NLT)

Friendship is also chemical. Scientists have discovered that our brains release neurotransmitter chemicals called oxytocin and dopamine when we enjoy time with friends. These chemicals help us feel calmer and happier. Why do you suppose that God created our brains to release chemicals that us feel calmer and happier when we spend time with friends?

Closing Activity

Have everyone stand in a circle and say one nice thing about the person on their left. Then close in prayer.

Prayer

Thank You, Lord, for the blessing of friendship. Thank you for creating us to be in relationship with You and with others. Thank You for teaching us by example how to be a true friend and thank You Jesus for calling us Your friend. In your precious name, Amen.

About author



Major Julie Feist

USA Western Territory



Service Programs

September 2024 – Give a Hoot!

September 1, 2024 By Major Maggie Laubach



Scripture: John 13:34, 35 (NIV).

Introduction

What does it mean to “give a hoot?” We often use this phrase to express a negative feeling: “I don’t give a hoot about what they think of me.” However, I would like to suggest that as Christians, we are told to *give a hoot*—a very strong hoot about each other.

Create the Environment

- Place inspirational birthday cards and blank encouragement cards at each table for the women to sign. The birthday cards can be mailed to members on their birthday, and the encouragement cards to those who need an extra word of encouragement.
- As we are about to celebrate each other, decorate the room with a celebratory theme. Use streamers, bright-colored tablecloths, and balloons.
- Invite the women to bring a snack to share, which reminds them of their childhood or family celebrations.

Practical Ideas to Serve and Celebrate Others

- Write encouraging words and phrases on poster boards and post them in the social service office.
- Put together an “encouragement basket” containing words or sayings of encouragement. Place it in the social service office with a sign that says, “Need encouragement? Help yourself.”
- Go to your local school district’s webpage and get the teachers’ names in the community. Write them encouraging cards signed by the women in the group. Deliver them to each school with home-baked goods.
- Deliver birthday cards each month to the local shelter or ARC. Even if you don’t know the names of those who will be receiving them, you can still encourage someone who may not have received a birthday card in a long time.

Love One Another

You don’t have to read many articles or watch more than a minute of the news to recognize that our society tends to be self-centered and selfish. It seems that everyone is just looking out for number one—me, myself, and I. We often neglect the biblical mandate to care for one another. Paul wrote to the Galatians and said, “Carry each other’s burdens” (Gal. 6:2 NIV). Jesus said, “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:34-35, NIV). It seems that our very identity as His followers is reflected in how we give a hoot about others. That’s how the world will recognize us, not by our church attendance or even monetary giving, but by how well (or poorly) we love each other.

We cannot call ourselves Christians and ignore the plight of our neighbors. We cannot turn a blind eye to their need and pretend it is not there. But how do we demonstrate love? How do we give a hoot? Maybe you think that you have limited resources, so you cannot give large amounts of money to a specific ministry or project, or your physical health impedes you from spending hours at a shelter serving dinner. We often think of significant ways to help and

when we're not able to fulfill them, we justify ourselves and end up not doing anything. We are ending up acting as if we don't give a hoot.

One way we can be of service to others is by intentionally using words of encouragement. Remember the little ditty from childhood, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me." I'm sure we can all agree that nothing could be further from the truth. Our words are compelling. It isn't enough to refrain from saying anything hurtful or offensive. We need to be intentional in using words of encouragement that build others up and remind them of who they are in Christ. There are so many people around us, regardless of their age, gender, financial status, or any other descriptions, that do not know or don't believe that they are loved, cherished, and matter to God. What better way to serve others than by reminding them that they are seen and heard, not just by you and I, but by their Creator.

When we make service and encouragement a regular practice in our lives, we are also doing ourselves a favor. Serving others profoundly affects our brain chemistry as it promotes joy and gives us a sense of purpose. Contributing to the greater good can build self-esteem and helps us to realign our thoughts and attitudes. I encourage you to go out of your way to use words that will bring joy and peace to those around you.

If you're looking for ways to serve but don't know where to begin, you could start by listing your skills, talents, and abilities. This is not the time to be shy; this is not a boastful list but rather a way of acknowledging how God has equipped you personally. Then turn it around and ask God to help you use your strengths to benefit others. Also, this is not a competition to see who has more talents; this is a private conversation between you and the Lord. Once you have the list of ways in which you can serve, think about some of these other practical aspects:

- How much time do you have each week to dedicate to the service of others?
- What are some specific ministries or groups at your corps or community that could use your set of skills?
- What do you have in your home that could be useful to others?
- What group of people do you feel most comfortable with—children, teens, mothers, the elderly?

Some think that this is not something that comes naturally to me. You're just not a "lovey-dovey person" who finds it easy to encourage. This practice comes easier to some people than others. However, remember Paul's words in Romans 15:5 NIV, "May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had." Just as God encourages us in our relationship with Him, through His Holy Spirit, we can have that same attitude towards others. So, if this isn't easy or natural to you, don't despair; ask the Lord to give you that attitude and the words to build up others. When

we do this, our service is transformed from a chore to something we enjoy and are fulfilled by doing.

I pray that as you become more intentional in being of service and encouragement. Then you will begin to sense the joy that comes from fulfilling the Lord's command. We never know when a word of encouragement or a simple act of kindness can make a difference in the life of a person who is feeling isolated. Give a hoot and give the glory to God!

Worship Programs



THE SALVATION ARMY WOMEN'S MINISTRIES RESOURCES

Deeply Rooted

2023-2024 PROGRAM YEAR

**“But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him.
They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream.”**

Jeremiah 17:7-8





Worship Programs

October 2023 – Deeply Rooted in Love

October 1, 2023 By Captain Karissa Zumwalt



Captain Karissa Zumwalt

Scripture: Matthew 22:37--39; 1 Peter 3:8

Purpose

Learning to love the people who surround us by first loving God with our whole being.

Décor Ideas

Use a village theme to represent a neighborhood by placing little houses or Christmas village pieces on the table.

Snack Idea

Make a mix that includes M & M's, raisins (or craisins), popcorn, and wrapped candies. This mix reminds us that our neighbors come in many different colors. The raisins remind us that some neighbors may be older, with wrinkled skin. Popcorn reminds us that our neighbors may be loud or quiet and speak a different language. The wrapped candy reminds us that some of our neighbors may be hard to reach. Love your neighbors; love them all!

Opening Call to Worship

Loving God – <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2018/10/call-to-worship-loving-god.html>

Opening Activity: “Love–Your–Neighbor Hearts”

Give each woman a piece of paper shaped like a heart. Encourage them to take a few moments to write down the name of someone they have difficulty being around. These names should not be shared with the group. Encourage the women to take them home and place them somewhere where they will be reminded to pray for that person in the coming week.

Allow them to reflect on these questions as they think about this person:

- 1 Do you believe Jesus loves the person whose name you wrote down?
- 2 How does it make you feel that Jesus loves them just as much as He loves you?
- 3 Why do you find it hard to love them?
- 4 What can you do to learn to love them?

Program Ideas

Getting to Know Your Neighbor

To play the game, each person sits across from another at the table. Player 1 rolls the die; if they get a 3, then Player 2 (who didn't roll the die) will ask Player 1 (who rolled the dice) a question from the group of questions. Continue this for 1 minute, the same people asking

and answering as before, each time they are rolling and requesting a new question. Then they trade rolls. Person 1 asks questions and Person 2 rolls the die and answers questions.

#1. Funny

- 1 What is the weirdest thing you notice about a person when you meet them?
 2. Would you rather go 30 days without your phone or your entire life without dessert?
- 2 If you could trade one year of your life for \$30,000, how many years would you trade in?
- 3 Where is the funniest place you have ever fallen asleep?
 5. Share a time that you were the most embarrassed.

#2. Stories

- 1 What isn't real, but you wish it was and why?
 2. What is your favorite vacation you've ever taken?
 3. What is the best practical joke you have pulled on someone?
 4. What is the fastest you have ever driven a car, and who was with you?

#3. Childhood

- 1 How many children were in your family, and what number are you?
- 2 What is something you hated as a child but now love?
- 3 Where were you born, and what is your very first memory?
- 4 Tell me about your worst date!
- 5 Would you let your parents pick your spouse?

#4 Seasons

- 1 Would you rather go snow skiing or read a book on a beach?
 - What is your favorite season and favorite thing to do during that season?
 3. What smells do you think of with each season?
 4. If you could eliminate one season, what would it be and why?
 5. In what season did you dream of getting married, and if you are married... did it happen?

#5 Food

- 1 What's the weirdest food you've eaten?
 2. What is your favorite dinner and dessert that you make at home?

- 2 What crazy food combination do you enjoy?
 4. What is your favorite restaurant, and what do you order?
 5. What is the most you have ever paid for a meal, and was it worth it?

#6 Hobby

- 1 Would you rather play a sport, work out, cook food, play a card game, or do a craft?
- 2 What is your most unusual hobby?
 3. What is your favorite hobby, and how were you introduced?
 4. Share your favorite way to spend your free time.
- 3 Do you collect anything? If so, what is it?

Recipe for Kindness Treat Bags

Invite the women to fill treat bags with candy/snacks/gift cards and place the “recipe for kindness” tag on it. Please encourage them to pass them out to random people or put the bags in your corps’ food pantry boxes. For directions, see

<https://thecraftingchicks.com/random-acts-of-kindness-treat-bags/>.

Worship Element

Share the song: **“Love God, Love People” by Danny Gokey** on YouTube at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-29WLQ3trA>.

Love

Over the last few years, “random acts of kindness” and “pay-it-forward” chains have become a big part of our society. I recently heard a story about a Dairy Queen in Minnesota where someone sparked a 2-day “pay-it-forward” chain with more than \$10,000 worth of food being paid for by others. Think about if you have ever received this kind of kindness. Did it bring you joy? Did it encourage something within you?

Matthew 22:37, 39 says, “Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.”

God commands us to love Him with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength and to love our neighbor. Who is your neighbor? It’s the person you sit next to on the bus, the cashier at the grocery store, the older woman who lives next door to you. It’s the family who comes to the food pantry. The man who needs help with his rent. The child who comes to the youth programs. These are our neighbors and the people we are commanded to love. And how do we love them? We love them by offering a smile, a hot cup of coffee, or a listening ear. We

love them by taking their trash can to the curb, dropping off some cookies, or asking them how their day is going.

As Danny Gokey says in his song “Love God, Love People”:

*“Keep it real simple
Bring everything right back to ground zero.
'Cause it all comes down to this
Love God and love people.”*

Loving others isn't always straightforward. It only works when it flows out of our hearts and when we are aligned with God's heart. God loves all people. No matter what their race, gender, or ethnicity is. He doesn't care about their clothes, how they smell, or if they've made mistakes. He loves them. And he commands us to do the same.

1 Peter 3:8 says, “⁸ Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble.” In this passage, Peter gives Christians five commands to obey as we live in a relationship with one another.

The first is to be like-minded or harmonious with one another. God wants the Church to be unified in its thinking which is through the mind of Christ. Next, Christians should be sympathetic. We should be genuinely interested in one another. This happens when we offer to listen to someone—truly listen to them, without distraction or interjecting our thoughts and feelings. Then, Peter commands us to love one another. This kind of love is a family kind of love. If you have siblings, you know you don't always like each other, but for the most part, you would go above and beyond for your siblings. That is how we should treat our brothers and sisters in Christ. Next, we are to be compassionate. Show one another kindness. Always have the desire to do good for others. Do not have ill-intent.

Finally, Christians are to be humble in spirit or mind. This means we put off selfishness within us and make others the focus of our attention. We should encourage and lift others up. Support others without making it about us.

As the song says: “Love God. Love People.” It's as simple as that.

About author



Captain Karissa Zumwalt

USA Central Territory



Worship Programs

November 2023 – Deeply Rooted in Faithfulness

November 1, 2023 By Major Nancy Mead



Introduction

The goal of this program is to be imitators of Christ. We do that by walking in love. Because Christ gave Himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God, we must be deeply

rooted in faith so we can imitate that love.

Decorations and Visual Aids:

Select a small pumpkin for each of the women. Drawn a heart on them and write, "Christ loves you." Or use a large pumpkin with a heart carved into it with the same wording. Use table clothes in Fall colors.

Refreshments:

Serve caramel apples with hot or cold apple cider.

Environment:

Worship around the tables

Engagement:

Assign the women to lead various elements in the meeting. It builds leadership and a sense of belonging when you engage them in this way.

Meeting Outline

Welcome and Prayer

Praise and Worship:

- Great is Thy Faithfulness | Maranatha! Music (Lyric Video): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ErwiBz1QA4o>
- How Great is Our God | Maranatha! Music (Lyric Video): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9FLiAK3WV7U>

Testimony

- Ask a couple of women to share about God's faithfulness in their lives.

Ephesians 5:1-2: Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children ²and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Being Imitators of God's Love and Faithfulness

(Start with the game of follow the leader.)

Did you notice how you imitated everything I did? You followed the leader. God is our leader, and we must have rooted faith in Him so we can imitate His love to others. I think most people find imitating God's love to be very hard. It's about loving our neighbors more than ourselves. That can be hard.

That's where we must have deeply rooted faith in Christ. Roots that are so deep, they can't be pulled up. We need to live each day to be like Him. I think of 1 Corinthians 13:1-13, where Paul starts by saying "And now I will show you the most excellent way."

This passage explains how we should imitate Christ's love for each other. If you keep this scripture deeply rooted, written in your heart and have faith, your relationships with others can weather any storm.

You can examine the parts of this chapter and apply them to your marriage, friendships, and other relationships. My favorite part is that love keeps no records of wrongs. That is hard, especially when someone mistreats you or hurts you or a loved one. But this scripture tells us that we must be deeply rooted in faith and trust God to handle those situations. You must reflect and imitate His love.

The Bible contains many heroes of faith that were imitators of God's faithfulness and love. Hebrews chapter 11 tells their stories. They are Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses. (Discuss some of these individuals and why they are recorded because of their faithfulness.) They were God's dearly loved children. They lived a life of love just as Christ loved us. Christ gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God on our behalf.

Ask the woman these questions. Record their answers on a whiteboard.

- How can we imitate Christ's love?
- What area in your life do you need to improve to be deeply rooted in Christ?

(This can be shared with the group or noted on a card to be prayed about at home.)

Benediction

About author

Major Nancy Mead

Central Territory





Worship Programs

December 2023 – Peace on Earth

December 1, 2023 By Major Cyndi Shiels



Introduction

Probably all of us this past year have been deeply affected by at least one of the following: civil unrest, pandemic, unemployment, financial troubles, health troubles, painful

relationships, or depression. So have our friends, family, coworkers, and neighbors. So many voices today tell us this world is lost to strife, anger and suffering. What the world needs right now is peace. What you need right now is peace. Today, we're going to remind you of a peaceful truth. This world is not lost. The powers of good have already and will continue to win. Two thousand years ago, God came into this world to bring peace that transcends our understanding. Angels declared that first Christmas. "Peace on earth!" What could they have meant?

Song: "Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful." (Salvation Army Songbook #116)

The Promise of a Prince of Peace

Some 700 years before the birth of Jesus, the Jewish people found themselves surrounded by enemies tearing down the walls of their city, carrying them off as enslaved people into foreign lands. Amid their crumbling society, God gave them a message through the prophet Isaiah as armies descended on them. He said, "God with Us." God had not left His people but would come closer through this child. Through the same prophet, God said a child would be born, one called, "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isa. 9:6). Somehow, this coming child would bring peace. How?

Despite the hardships the Jewish people faced from their enemies, they had a deeper problem: They were divided from their God. Their rebellion against God had created a divide they could not fix. They needed God to fix it. And if God could heal that divide, they knew they could be at peace with whatever hardships the world threw at them. This child, God told them, would fix that divide and give them peace: not only peace with God, but peace knowing God is with them whatever life is like. And so, for 700 years, the Jewish people waited.

Our first reading comes from the Old Testament book of Isaiah, where God promises as a Prince of Peace. God let it be known that it was time for the Prince of Peace to come.

Reading: Isaiah 7:14; 9:2, 6, 7 and Matthew 1:18—24

Song: "Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel (Salvation Army Songbook # 117)

A Child Brings Peace on Earth

The time had come. God told Joseph he was finally sending that child, the Prince of Peace. He would bring peace by "saving his people from their sins." God tells us the historical circumstances surrounding the event. The child was no ordinary child, but both entirely God and yet wholly man. He needed to be completely human, so He could live the perfect life we can't. He needed to be fully God because His perfect life could count for the lives of all people and so bring peace to the world. He's here: the one who would give us peace with God and peace in life.

Angels will sing, "Peace on earth upon whom His favor rests." This is a poetic way of saying: if you believe Jesus is the Savior who can save you from your sins, you will have peace and forgiveness.

Song: "Silent Night" (vs. 1 and 2). (Salvation Army Songbook # 124)

Reading: Luke 2: 1-20

Song: "Silent Night (vs. 3). (Salvation Army Songbook # 124)

Peace

Peace can only be found when we spend time seeking the face of God. The world can't offer us peace because it has nothing in which to place its hope, trust, and security. Kingdoms come and go. World leaders move in and out of power. What societies values changes all the time. Our only constant is God. He has been, is, and forever will be the Creator, Sustainer, and Lord. All authority has been given to Him. He governs the change of the seasons. He thwarts the plans of the enemy. And He longs to offer total and sustained peace to all who place their hope and trust in Him.

Isaiah 26:3 says, "You will keep in perfect peace; those whose minds are steadfast because they trust in You." Our God offers peace in every situation if we keep our minds focused on Him and trust Him. The world says peace can only come when you've worked your fingers to the bone and finally attained all you want. You can only have peace when you have enough money, friends, the right job, or a spouse. You can only have peace with friends, family, and bosses like you. However, God's way is to draw you into Himself and offer you peace amid your circumstances. He doesn't want you to wait until everything gets worked out before you can have rest. He's offering you rest right now.

Psalms 23 says, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. ... you prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows." God longs to prepare a table for you amid whatever troubles surround you. He calls you to keep your mind focused on Him no matter what lies before you. And He is asking you to seek His face and find your rest in Him rather than toiling and striving for circumstantial peace.

Romans 8:6, "To set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace." It's by the spirit alone that you will find life and peace. Stop looking for your fulfillment in the things of the world. Stop asking the world to offer you what it never had to begin with. Look towards your heavenly Father for the peace that surpasses all understanding. May you be filled with rest and peace today as you spend time in prayer seeking the face of God.

Prayer

- 1 Meditate on the truth that God is your sole source of peace and rest. God's word to mold and shape your perspective.
 "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul." Psalm 23:1-3
 "To set the mind of the Spirit in life and peace." Romans 8:6
 "You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you because he trusts in you." Isaiah 26:3
- 2 Where have you been running to for peace? Have you had much peace and rest in your life lately? Acknowledging your past pursuits will help you make present changes.
 "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight." Proverbs 3:5, 6
- 3 Seek the peace that comes from placing your hope and trust in God alone. Ask the Spirit to fill you with peace amid your circumstances. Let your requests be known to God and receive the peace that comes from casting your burdens on your heavenly Father's loving and capable shoulders.
 "Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:5-7

Go

You will be robbed of peace as soon as you turn your trust away from God and begin to live in your own strength. The only source of consistent peace is keeping your mind stayed on God. You can trust in the reality of God's desire and ability to keep you. If He tells you to wait, you can wait. You can move when He tells you to move. Offer Him your understanding, actions, and emotions, and allow Him to be the Lord over them all today.

Reading: Luke 1:26-35, 38

Song: "Go, Tell It on the Mountain" (Salvation Army Songbook # 106).

Pray for Peace, God's Blessings

Song: "Joy to the World" (Salvation Army Songbook # 113).

Resources:

- [Experiencing God – Blackaby Ministries International](#)
- <https://blackaby.org/experiencing-god>
- [The Resourceful Church Musician: Home](#)

- <https://theresourcefulchurchmusician.com>



Worship Programs

January 2024 – Deeply Rooted in Patience

January 1, 2024 By Major Paula Pyle



Scripture:

“Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him” Ps. 37:7 (NIV).

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God” Phil. 4:6 (NIV).

Introduction

The goal of this program is for women to have a greater sense of how to practice patience.

Program Outline

Welcome

Worship Songs -

- 'You are my Strength' from the Hillsong Worship album "Savior."
- 'Still' by Hillsong United with Lyrics (<https://youtu.be/pSZH4d8UfEs>)



Arise For the Light Has Come (by Major Paula Pyle):

We dream to arise to lift the hurting, lost, and fallen
With clear vision and passion, to show the way to heaven
We pray to arise and tell them there is healing
A spiritual balm in Gilead, who knows their inner being.
We chose to arise from all the ills of the past.
The light has surely come and is always shining very fast
We pledge to arise and stand for healthy living
For the wellness of the mind, spirit, soul and body.
We dare to arise and let the Holy Spirit lead us
As our faith is awakening in Him, we surely trust
We resolve to arise and fear no disappointment
For we have victory in Jesus, who gives us the enlightenment.

Decorations and Visual Aids

Set up the main worship center or use centerpieces on each table with the word Patience. Incorporating the following, which will be used during the interactive prayer time.

- Praying bear
- An hourglass
- Tablecloth
- Inkpad and craft stamps
- Earpiece (to represent listening)
- Notebook and pens
- Candle (different colors or just white if using a colored tablecloth)

- Envelope with card

Cell Group/Prayer Walk

Play worship music. Create scripture cards using the verses mentioned in the devotion. These can be used to give to a shut-in women's ministries member or during Community Care visitation.

Slow Down

How often do we seem to be in a hurry to complete a list of daily tasks? When was the last time we slowed down to spend an intimate time with God? Often at the start of the New Year, we set New Year's resolutions promising to make a fresh start and spend more time with God.

During the pandemic, many of us were forced to slow down due to either contracting the COVID-19 virus or because we were taking care of someone close to us who was infected. God sometimes causes situations in our lives to slow us down. If we are not deeply rooted in Him, we can feel dejected, depressed, frustrated, and hopeless. It will seem like each day, we get up and say, "Are we there yet? When is this ever going to end?"

In Psalm 46:10, David reminds us to "Be still and know that I am God." We find it hard to wait on people; often, it is even harder to wait upon God. However, in Philippians 4:6, we are reminded. "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."

In the Poem "Arise for the Light has Come," the actions can only be achieved if we spend quality time with God so we can be "Deeply Rooted in Him." This acrostic can assist us as we practice patience.

P – is for Prayer

Make it a habit each day to devote yourself to personal prayer time. Matthew 6:6 says, "But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."

A – is for Acceptance

Learn to accept the trials that God is taking you through. Romans 12:2 says, "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."

T – is for Time

Take time to smell the roses. God created a beautiful world for us to see and enjoy. Incorporate getting out of our comfort zone and breathing in free air each day. Do some simple exercises that fit your physique or even a short walk around the house or block to see something different and give your eyes something positive. Ecclesiastes 3:11, "He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart, yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end."

I - is for Ignoring Distractions

Sometimes we're so consumed with technology we only acknowledge God right before we go to sleep with a quick 20-second prayer.

N - is for No Negativity

Keep thinking positive thoughts; don't let the enemy steal your joy. Ephesians 6:10, 11 says, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and His mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can make your stand against the devil's schemes."

C - is for Calmness

Try to be calm in your situations and let God fight your battles for you. Ecclesiastes 10:4 states, "If a ruler's anger rises against you, do not leave your post; calmness can lay great offenses to rest."

E - is for Empowerment

Let God empower you with His Holy Spirit and teach you, His Word. When you seek His face and confess your faults and weaknesses, He will purify you and give you the patience to persevere in your Christian walk.

Closing Exercises

Label a basket "Patience." Invite the women to place a card in the basket of an area in their lives where they need God to help them have patience.

Play the song "God Will Make a Way" during this time – <https://youtu.be/1zo3fjYtS-o>

Conclude the time together by praying over the cards.



Worship Programs

February 2024 – Community of Pray-Ers

February 1, 2024 By Captain Kristina Sjögren



Scripture:

“You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” (Gal. 5:13, 14).

Supplies Needed

- Craft sticks (tongue depressor size)

- Mason Jar
- White index cards
- Blue, green, and yellow index cards
- Blank envelopes
- Basket
- Posterboard
- World Map/Globe
- Markers (variety of colors)
- Pens
- Card stock for station signs (tent fold)
- Printed directions for each station
- Blue tooth device/phone/computer/speakers for Meditative background music

Welcome

Welcome and explain the time of worship. As the women arrive, have them each write a prayer request on a large craft stick and place it in a Mason Jar labeled "requests for intercession." Place the jar on the table labeled "Intercession." Also, ask them to write their names on a blank envelope and put it in the basket at the "Cards of Joy" table. After the devotional, break the women into groups of no less than three people to participate in the prayer stations. They should spend between 5-7 minutes at each station.

Set-Up Prayer Stations

Set up five areas for the prayer stations. Identify each station with a card stock/tent fold and printed instructions.

Cards of Joy

Supplies: envelopes, blank notecard, pens, basket

No matter what, you can never share enough joy and encouragement with others. Chose an envelope which has a women's name on the outside. Take a blank card and write them a note or Scripture verse to share the joy of the Lord with them. Seal and leave it in the basket at the table. These will be mailed to them at a later date.

Intercession

Supplies: jar labeled “requests for intercession.”

Ephesians 6:18 tells us to: “Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people” This station is for prayers of intercession. Take a tongue depressor out of the jar and pray for each request as a group.

Love Your Neighbor

Supplies: Poster board, colorful markers

Galatians 5:14 says, “For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: Love your neighbor as yourself.” Take a moment to think of a neighbor for whom God might call you to pray. You don’t need to write their name, but rather a phrase to describe them (my next-door neighbor, my child’s bus driver, the Starbucks barista). Add them to the prayer poster, and then take time with your group to pray for these people.

Responsibility

Supplies: World map or globe

First, Timothy 2:1-4 reads, “I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession, and thanksgiving be made for all people— for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.” As a group, pray for people in other countries. Pray for God’s protection, for those in authority, for peace, and for our brothers and sisters in Christ to boldly proclaim the Gospel story to their neighbors.

Unity

Supplies: blue/green/yellow note cards, pens

Psalm 133:1, “How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity!” This station provides an opportunity for prayer over The Church to live in harmony as one body— seeking to build bridges among believers, acting as a peacemaker within the body of Christ. You have the choice to pray for unity with three different aspects of The Church: your local church, the global church, and those who do not yet know Christ as Lord and Savior. Choose a colored note card (Blue– Local Church, Green–Global Church, Yellow– those who don’t know Christ yet). Write on that notecard what you desire for that individual/group/country and take turns praying for these things together as a group. Save your notecard and take it with you as a reminder to continue in prayer for these things.

Serve One Another

What does it look like to “serve one another humbly in love?” The phrase “one another” implies that serving happens in the community context. If we think about our community context, we can all think of many opportunities to serve. So often, we serve on our own only to realize that our energy is being drained quickly. As a community of believers, we need others to speak to us words of love and encouragement when our tanks start getting empty. We also benefit from serving together in the community with one another.

Hebrews 10:24-25 says it well: “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

It's our privilege as a body of believers to be connected, love one another, and spur each other on to do the good work God has for us. We can only do that through the power of His Holy Spirit. We serve “in love” by inviting God's Holy Spirit to give us the strength we need to do His work. It is only possible to serve one another in love when we continuously invite God's power to work in and through our lives.

What better way to do that than through communication and prayer with God? Ephesians 6:18 tells us to: “pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.”

Today as we consider loving one another and living in community, we're going to practice just that by joining in prayer at the prayer stations that have been prepared for us.

Other Resources

Prayer Stations/Prayer

- <https://consumedbycreativity.blogspot.com/2016/03/unique-prayer-stations-for-womens.html>
- <https://www.crosswalk.com/faith/prayer/a-prayer-of-intercession.html>
- <http://mentoringwomeninministry.com/womens-retreat-prayer-ideas/>
- <https://www.missionalwomen.com/discipleship-build/missional-women-prayer-mosaic>
- <https://www.busypastorsermons.com/a-corporate-prayer-plan-for-the-church-using-prayer-stations/>

Music

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGOH0-Fallo>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iKb0GTI9T7Y>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=74ZHHfQLj4o>

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NVhl0tCzFTc>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p-LomsBQ8hA>



Worship Programs

March 2024 – Cultivate Goodness

March 1, 2024 By Captain Rhegan Stansbury



Scripture: Jeremiah 17:7, 8

“But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit” (NIV).

Psalm 34:8

"Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in Him."

Galatians 2:20

"I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

Decorations

Gather recipe books, self-help books, and magazine covers that promise to change your life in no time.

Activity

Show the trailer for the show "Nailed It" on Netflix <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pb7CBZ952zs>

Play your own game of nailed it. Have a sample (real-life or photograph) of what you want the women to create. Provide the supplies, set a time limit, and go. For larger groups, you can have teams of 2-3 people.

Example: Decorate a Spring or St. Patrick's day cupcake or a beehive cupcake.

- <https://www.aboutamom.com/st-patricks-day-rainbow-cupcakes>
- <https://www.bettycrocker.com/recipes/beehive-cupcakes/cb66d9ec-16a3-4032-8c0a-cacb6985b550>

Christ's Goodness in My Life

I've learned over the years that my family and I do best when there is a menu to follow. It helps with grocery shopping and answers the never-ending question of "Mom, what's for dinner?" Day to day, this question can be exhausting for me. When there is no plan, it is much easier to hit the drive-thru.

My girls are getting into their teenage years, and there is new pressure to make sure they are ready for adulthood. So, we started a new way to menu plan. Every person in the house chooses a meal and is responsible for cooking or helping cook that meal. Not only does this take some pressure off of menu planning for me, but it teaches them some essential cooking skills. It's incredible how much more willing kids are to try the things they cooked themselves. My middle daughter has discovered the joy of trying new things, especially when she has a recipe that tells her exactly how to do it.

Sometimes we wish there was a recipe for the perfect life. Add one college degree, a spouse and three kids. A specific job that pays top dollar. Have this person and also this person as

your friends. Run 5 miles each morning. Acquire a dog and cat. Drive the perfect car. You get the picture. What does it take to have a perfect life? The answer doesn't come in material things or relationships. The ideal life comes from knowing God and living a life that is pleasing to Him. Psalm 34:8 says, "Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in Him."

I grew up going to church and attending a Christian school. In these spaces, I learned how to be godly and cultivate Christ's goodness in my life. I memorized Scripture, read the Bible, learned how to pray, learned how to defend my faith, learned how to tell others about the gospel, learned how to act and what to say. As humans, we aren't automatically godly; our sinful nature prevents that. We have to learn and train and work at it, just like we prepare for many things in life. Why? Because we want to be successful. As kids, we might train for various sports, musical instruments, or speech classes. As we enter adulthood, we prepare for a career, and most of us continue to train and improve as the years go on. If we choose to get married or have kids, we prepare for that by reading books and blogs and asking friends and family how it's done.

We might train for a marathon or even prepare to get healthy or lose weight if we are ambitious. There are thousands of books out there that teach you how to lose weight, how to unclutter, how to be a great parent and how to get rich. How many times are we looking for a quick fix? Add the words "in 30 days" to your book title, and you'll probably double your book sales. I recently read a book titled "How to declutter your life in 7 days." Sure, there was a 7-day plan, but the expectations were ridiculous. The author wanted me to clean out my entire wardrobe one morning before work. Even she admitted she did this plan in the span of 6 months.

The same goes for our spiritual life. We want a quick fix from God for all our problems. We don't want to change our lives but want all the benefits of a healthy spiritual life. We don't want to spend quality time in God's word and prayer, but we want God to make our life perfect. We must be willing to follow God's how-to book- the Bible. Only His recipes of salvation and holiness will create changes in our life. If we don't exercise our faith, we will only get fat on all the knowledge we are accumulating. The excuses are easy, but training is necessary for our growth, godliness, and witness to others. Thank goodness we have the example of Jesus Christ and the Spirit to guide us down the path of righteousness. No luck is involved, just dedication and hard work to cultivate Christ's goodness in us.

Song

"Build My Life" <https://youtu.be/Z32HiCoFzIU>.



Worship Programs

April 2024 – Deeply Rooted in Joy

April 1, 2024 By Major Judy Tekautz



Decorations

Use spring colors and different items with the word “Joy” written on them.

Program Outline

Welcome and Prayer

Sharing Time Questions

- 1 What season brings you the most joy?
- 2 What type of music improves your mood?
- 3 If you associated color with the word joy, what would it be and why?
- 4 What do you do to bring yourself some joy if you feel down?

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

Leader – Developing deep roots of joy is what will sustain our hearts and faith when we face times that are not necessarily easy or pleasant. Joy is founded in our relationship with the Lord, not in the circumstances we face.

In 2018, the Christian music group "For King and Country" recorded a song called "Joy" Let's watch it. Video – <https://youtu.be/IA7n7TwPDmw> (If it's challenging to show the video, print the words.)

"Some people only focus on the difficult things happening in life. Easy to do when you watch the news. However, with Jesus' help, we can choose joy!"

Responsive Scripture Reading – Psalm 98

Chorus – "I've Got the Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy, Down in My Heart"

I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy.
 Down in my heart (where?)
 Down in my heart (where?)
 Down in my heart
 I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy.
 Down in my heart (where?)
 Down in my heart, to stay

I've got the love of Jesus, love of Jesus....

I've got the peace that passes understanding...

I've got the wonderful love of my blessed Redeemer

Way down in the depths of my heart...

Optional Activity

Paint "joy" on small pots, or use stickers. Place starter plants in the pot. Or make small signs or gift bags with the word "joy" on them. Take them, along with a card, to someone needing a touch of joy.

Developing Roots of Joy

The Word of God refers to joy or the act of rejoicing on many occasions. The word "joy" in some variation is found in 244 times in the NIV translation. Throughout the Bible, God tells us to rejoice, be joyful, and sing praise. However, if we are honest with ourselves, there are many times when we don't "feel" joyful. In James 1:2, we are told, "consider it pure joy when you face trials of many kinds." When I was new to my faith and read this, I'm sure I wasn't alone when I responded, "Really?" How realistic is it to expect me to be happy about the trial?

Joy is one of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). The fruit grows as we spend time with God and allow His Spirit to teach us about Him and His love and care for us. The roots of our relationship with Him grow deep. This is why Jesus tells us in John 15 that we are to remain in Him, much like the vine and the branches. If we don't, our faith will wither away, and our joy in the Lord will come also. In the 11th verse of that chapter, Jesus says, "I have told you this so that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."

Earlier, we sang "Joy to the World," traditionally sung as a Christmas carol. It wasn't originally written as such. It was based on Psalm 98, which we read earlier. Both the song and the carol tell us the origin of our joy. We are filled with joy when we recognize God's love and salvation for us, shown in and through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and the provision of constant care and protection.

What can we do to assist in the joy-growing process? I think back to another Sunday School chorus we used to sing.

"J-O-Y, J-O-Y, this must surely mean,

Jesus first, Yourself last, and Others in between"

This simple chorus gives us a profound basis for how to intentionally choose joy each day.

- 1** Make your relationship with God the priority of your life. Spend time reading and studying His word so you can see all the reasons to rejoice in Him. He is our joy. He is the one who gives us joy. Listen to songs of joy each day.
- 2** Do something for others. It is an excellent boost to our spirit when we help others. My challenge is that when you do it, be sure you are sharing the joy of Jesus with them. Take time to encourage them and pray with them. Spread the joy!
- 3** Take care of yourself. It is hard to feel joyful or spread joy to others if we are not caring for ourselves spiritually, physically, emotionally and mentally. Find the help you need in these

areas to have good soil for the roots of joy. Difficulty in any area of our life can work to choke out these roots.

So, friends, even during those times of struggle and pain, ups and downs, when our joy is not perfect, let's remember that our joy here is only a taste of what is to come. As we grow in the Lord, He reminds us that our joy will be complete one day. First Peter 1:8-9 says, "Though you have not seen Him, you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the result of your faith, the salvation of your souls."

Joy is not an option in the life of the believer, but the good news is that God is the one who gives and grows our joy. We need to choose to be good soil in which it can grow.

Close in Prayer.

About author



Major Judy Tekautz

USA Central Territory



Worship Programs

May 2024 – Deeply Rooted in Gentleness

May 1, 2024 By Lt. Karen Felton



Prayer Stations

Preparation

You will need eight separate spaces. Make it work by using the hallway and dividing up rooms. You will also use a bathroom with mirrors for one of these activities. Set up the prayer stations before women arrive.

Invite the women to meet in the chapel where the lights are low and candles have been lit to help them experience quiet and rest. Open in prayer.

Pass out the prayer station booklets and instruct the women to choose a station they want to begin with. They can work through them in any way that feels comfortable, taking as long as they like in each station. It is not important to finish all the stations but to take time to listen to God's leading. After the allotted time, invite anyone who would like to share during the prayer time what God has put on their heart. Before asking the women to visit the various prayer station, share the following.

Scripture and Thought

"Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30). Do you hear Him? Jesus is urging you to enter into His rest. He is waiting for you to lay your burdens at His feet and remain with Him. For this hour, allow yourself to stop comparing yourself to others. Stop the self-judgment and interior critique that is so common for women. Tonight, we are going to be gentle with ourselves as we lean into our Father, who loves us with such tender mercy.

Station 1- Burdens - Chapel

Supplies needed: backpacks with heavy books—some smooth stones. A couple of sharpies are on the holiness table. These rocks represent the women laying down their burdens.

Give your burdens to the LORD, and He will take care of you. He will not permit the godly to slip and fall (Ps 55:22). We are not meant to carry our burdens on our own, yet we continuously pick them up, determined to power through them on our own. Or we fear burdening others. We often give it to God for time, only to take it back up again. At the station, try picking up one of the backpacks. If you can, walk the hallway quietly with it. While you are walking, notice how quickly the weight of it seems to get bigger. Pray and ask God what burdens you carry around that He wants you to give Him or ask for His help.

Station 2 - Appreciation

Hallway. Use half-size posterboards and have a variety of colored sharpies for women to leave their messages for one another.

"And let the peace of Christ rule in your heart, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful." (Colossians 3:15). In the hallway, you will find the names of your fellow sisters in Christ. Please take a moment to walk the hall and stop at each name. Offer an intentional prayer for each one, and after that prayer, please write a word of encouragement to that woman on her poster board. At the end of this time, each woman can take home words of encouragement with the knowledge that they have been prayed for intentionally.

Station 3 – Self Worth

Station Three – bathroom. Have scripture verses stuck to the mirrors (Suggested scriptures are listed below.) Invite the women to add their verses.

“You are altogether beautiful, my darling. There is no flaw in you.” (Song of Songs 4:7). This one won't be easy. Take some time and look in the mirror. Look at your eyes, your nose, your lips, your cheeks, the way your ears are set, how high or low your forehead, your hair—curly, straight, fine, thick, dark hair, grey hair, thinning? Take it all in. What do you tell yourself immediately? What messages about your image do you whisper to yourself? What about your reflection keeps you from whispering the word beauty when you see yourself? Write down a comment or two that you tell yourself on one of the post-it notes and stick it on the mirror. When did you forget you are God's masterpiece? Formed and created in your mother's womb by His perfect design. When you look at yourself, read the scripture verse attached to the mirror and pray for God to help restore your vision to see yourself as He sees you: beautiful and without flaw. You are His beloved daughter.

Station 4 – Promises of God

A table with chairs. Place a list of God's promises to His people that we find in the Bible, along with papers with individual scripture. (A list of God's promises is available at <https://garmentsofsplendor.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/100-promises-printable.pdf>.)

“Blessed be the Lord, who has given to His people Israel, according to all that He promised; not one word has failed of all His good promise, which He promised through Moses His servant” (1 Kings 8:56). The Bible contains 8,810 promises of God to His people. That is a huge number. What a wonderful God to make so many promises to us and to keep them all. One Bible scholar is quoted as saying, “the genius of the Gospel is that everyone can share in the Promises through Christ. God's Son, Jesus. At this station, take some time to look around the table at some of the promises of God. Take time with one of them that jumps out at you. Pray over it. How do you think this promise applies or will apply to your life? Is there something He wants you to do? Believe? Confess? Keep the paper with the verse to pray over. At the same time, you are at the station, draw or write a word on the poster board to represent your response to His promise!

Station 5 – Thanksgiving

Set up a table. No chairs are necessary. Place grain in a beautiful bowl, and provide small cloth pouches and paper hearts for women to write what they are grateful for. Affix the hearts to a wall.

When Joseph's brothers were starving, they went to Egypt to get grain for their families. Today we are nourished not only by food but also by our faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus tells us in John 6:35 that “I am the Bread of Life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.” At this station, touch the grain and think about what sustains you in your life. What do you need? Whom do you depend on? As you pour the grain

into a pouch, reflect on how you are nourished. Take the pouch with you to remind you of Christ's love.

In return, leave behind a paper heart with words to represent those grains in your life that you are grateful for and add them to the wall of gratitude.

Station 6 – Confession

A cross in a quiet corner.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us of our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Approach the cross in this station. Take some time to show reverence for what the cross represents. Jesus' ultimate sacrifice and death on the cross. There He paid the price for all of our sins. And the incredible thing is that He would do it all just for you. He took your sins so that you would not suffer the full consequence of those sins. He paid your price.

Are there things you are holding on to and must confess to Him? Never be afraid to tell your Father where you feel you have stumbled or fallen short. One thing we can always ask ourselves is, have I loved enough? Take a few minutes and pray this prayer from Psalm 139:23, "Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting." After you pray, notice if there is anything that jumps out at you. Write down one word to represent each of those offensives, then attach them to the cross and know that He has already forgiven you. He loves you so much!

Station 7 – Family Tree

Table and chairs, colored pencils or markers, and printed outlines of a tree.

https://www.printablee.com/post_tree-branches-with-printable-pattern_263061

"But Ruth replied, 'Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go, I will go, and where you stay, I will stay. Your people will be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me'" (Ruth 1:16-17). At this station, you will find the outline of a tree. Take the time to fill the root, trunk, and branches with the names of the people you want to pray for in your family. If you feel led, add a word or two to represent what you are praying about. Hold on to this sheet, take it out during your daily devotional time, and continue praying for your family. Your family is part of God's lineage, and it is so important that we keep our families covered in prayer.

Station 8 – Rest

Beautifully set the table (with chairs), jars of candy and small treat bags—adult coloring pages and

crayons.

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Matt. 11:28-30). In the life of busy women, self-care is not an option. Let me say it louder for those in the back SELF CARE IS NOT AN OPTION. It is essential to learn how to rest when we need rest, to feed ourselves spiritually, spend time with other women, and practice whatever self-care works for you. Do not neglect self-care or relegate the time you have left over. Put it on your calendar, and make it a priority. You can only pour from a full cup. So, at this station, take some time and fill your cup (literally). Sit at the beautifully decorated table, fill your cup with the special treats, and sit, color if you want, and chill! You are a beloved daughter of the King of Kings.

Scriptures on Women’s Dignity and Beauty

- “I am Beautiful.” You are altogether beautiful, my darling; there is no flaw in you. (Song of Songs 4:7)
- She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come. ([Prov. 31:25](#))
- You will be a crown of splendor in the Lord’s hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God. [Isa. 62:3](#)
- My beloved spoke and said to me, “Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, come with me. ([Song of Songs 2:10](#))
- She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. ([Prov. 31:26](#))
- Those who look to him are radiant, and their faces shall never be ashamed. ([Ps. 34:5](#))
- You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother’s womb.
Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! ([Ps. 139:13-16](#))
- Your workmanship is marvelous – how well I know it. ([Psalm 139:13](#) – 14)
- For we are God’s masterpiece... ([Eph. 2:10](#))
- “I am Valuable.” ...Created to do good works which God prepared in advance for us to do. ([Eph. 2:10](#))
- Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her! (Lu. 1:45)
- God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at the break of day. ([Ps. 46:5](#))
- And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm, and steadfast. ([1 Pet. 5:10](#))

- And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this? ([Es. 4:14](#))
- But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ([1 Peter 2:9](#))
- For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. ([Phil. 3:20](#))
- But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart. ([1 Sam 16:7](#))
- Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. (Mt. 5:8)
- Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. ([1 Cor. 12:27](#))
- You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. ([1 Cor. 6:20](#))
- "I am Created as Beloved, and Christ Lives in me."
- She is worth far more than rubies ([Prov. 31:10](#)).
- But by the grace of God, I am what I am ([1 Cor. 15:10](#)).
- See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands ... ([Is. 49:16](#)).
- I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by [faith](#) in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me ([Gal. 2:20](#)).
- And, "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty" ([2 Cor. 6:18](#)).
- For in Christ Jesus you are all sons (and daughters) of God, through faith ([Gal. 3:26](#)).
- ...the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory ([Col. 1:27](#)).
- I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you (John 15:15).
- Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you ([1 Cor. 15:58](#)).
- But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God (John 1:12).
- For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God ([Col. 3:3](#)).
- And to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness ([Eph. 4:24](#)).
- So, God created mankind in His own image... ([Gen. 1:27](#)).



Worship Programs

June 2024 – Deeply Rooted in Self Control

June 1, 2024 By Major Tammy Whitney



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But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things, there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit” (Gal. 5:22-23).

This worship program is intended to provide a space for contemplative prayer and meditation. The décor should be simple and undistracting. The video at the beginning can

seem like quite an odd choice to begin a meeting focused on contemplative prayer and meditation. Still, it is meant to capture the women's attention after a time of fellowship and greeting. As the meeting progresses, you may want to slow things down a bit, speak a little softer, and you can dim the lights. One candle lit in the center of the room can serve as a reminder of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Self-Control

A few years ago, videos were cropping up all over the internet with the #kidscandychallenge. The idea is that parents would put a treat in front of their small children with the instructions that they may not eat the treat until the parent returns and tells them it's ok. The parent leaves the room, and a struggle ensues.

Watch for a few minutes to see how the children handle it.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BQvUsqB-6eU>

Self-control is not an easy thing! Paul says in Romans 7: 15-20, "I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do, I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me. For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For I do not do the good, I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. Now, if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it." Paul's will was not enough to overcome the temptation and sin in his life. I think that if we examine our own lives, we can agree with Paul.

So, what are we to do? We can let the Holy Spirit help us. Galatians 5:7 says, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things, there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit."

This is great news. When our will fails, if we have allowed the Holy Spirit to take up residence in our lives and work in and through us, self-control is one of the fruits of that partnership. We enter that partnership by daily choosing to interact with the Holy Spirit and intentionally partnering with Him with the end goal of transformation. That might seem to be a lot of words and an overwhelming concept, but as the old saying goes ... how do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time.

Choosing to practice various spiritual disciplines can help you to be attentive to the moving of the Holy Spirit and your spirit. Spiritual disciplines are those daily practices that we put into place that lead us to a place where we can work with the Holy Spirit with the goal of transformation.

There are a lot of different spiritual disciplines. If you are interested in exploring more about the spiritual disciplines. I recommend reading "Celebration of Disciplines" by Richard Foster and "Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices that Transform Us" by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun.

Today we will look at a couple of different spiritual disciplines that can lead us to the spiritual fruit of self-control; the prayer of examen and creating a Rule of Life.

Prayer of Examen

The Prayer of Examen is a contemplative prayer time in which you and the Holy Spirit review your day together. St. Ignatius established this prayer practice. This does not have to be a complicated process or even take a lot of time.

The Soul Care Urban Retreat Center outlines these steps to practice the Prayer of Examen:

- 1 Become aware of God's presence. Look back on the events of the day. Even if your day seems to be a blur, a jumble, a muddle, ask the Lord to bring clarity and understanding.
- 2 Review the day with gratitude. Gratitude is the foundation of our relationship with God. Walk through your day and note the joys and delights. Focus on the day's gifts. Look at the work you did and the people you interacted with. What did you receive from these people? What did you give them? Pay attention to small things—the food you ate, the sights you saw, and other seemingly small pleasures. God is in the details.
- 3 Pay attention to your emotions. One of St. Ignatius's great insights was that we detect the presence of the Divine in the movements of our emotions. Reflect on the feelings you experienced during the day. Boredom? Elation? Resentment? Compassion? Anger? Confidence? What is God saying through these feelings?
- 4 You may be shown and remember some ways that you fell short. Make a note of these times but look deeply for other implications. Does a feeling of frustration perhaps mean that God wants you to consider a new direction in some area of your work? Are you concerned about a friend? Maybe you should reach out in some way.
- 5 Choose one feature of the day and pray about it. Ask the Lord to direct you to something during the day that is particularly important. It may involve a feeling—positive or negative. It may be a significant encounter with another person or a vivid moment of pleasure or peace. Or it may be something that seems relatively insignificant. Look at it. Pray about it. Allow the prayer to arise spontaneously from your heart—whether intercession, praise, repentance, or gratitude.
- 6 Look toward tomorrow. Ask God to give you a light for tomorrow's challenges. Pay attention to the feelings that surface as you survey what's coming up. Are you doubtful? Cheerful? Apprehensive? Full of delighted anticipation? Allow these feelings to turn into prayer. Seek guidance from the Lord. Ask for help and understanding. Pray for hope.

That can be a lot to remember, but there are different prayer apps available that will walk you through a Prayer of Examen. <https://www.experiencesoulcare.com/2020/5-steps-of-the-examen/>

Pray as You Go is a free app with various prayers, including the Prayer of Examen.

<https://pray-as-you-go.org/retreat/examen-prayer-review-your-day>

At this point, you may walk them through the Prayer of Examen yourself or use an app to walk through this exercise.

Rule of Life

A Rule of Life is how we want to order our lives to present to God and be open to the transformation of the Holy Spirit. Your Rule of Life should work in conjunction with your natural rhythms of life. This is not a complete overhaul of your life and schedule.

The format of your Rule of Life can be what you want it to be. The website <https://ruleoflife.com/myrule/> is a fantastic resource for creating your Rule of Life. There are two worksheets that you can print to begin crafting your personal Rule of Life. Once you have done that, you can put it in a format that serves you best. It can be a document with bullet points, written in narrative form, or something more visual. The Rule of Life website has lots of examples. Remember, your Rule of Life is just that it's YOUR Rule of Life. As you grow and change, don't be afraid to update it.

Closing Prayer: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the cry of our hearts are to be transformed into the fullness of whom You have created us to be. We recognize that self-control is necessary for transformation. But just like Paul, we struggle, we want to do what is right and good, and yet we find ourselves falling prey to temptation and sin. Holy Spirit comes and is present in our lives. We welcome Your presence and transformation that will result in the spiritual fruit of self-control, creating more space for change. Help us to continue to seek You and dig deep. Thank you that in Your gracious goodness, You don't leave us to struggle alone. You give Yourself to us. Your love is deep and wide and transformational. We yield ourselves to Your love. Amen.

About author



Major Tammy Whitney

USA Central Territory



Worship Programs

July 2024 – Deeply Rooted in Mission

July 1, 2024 By Viki Payton



Scripture: Jeremiah 17:7, 8.

“But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit” (NIV).

According to this scripture, there is a direct relationship between being deeply rooted and bearing fruit. We will explore the idea of being “deeply rooted in ... mission.” A mission is a

“strongly felt aim, ambition, or calling.” As Christians deeply rooted in Christ, our calling and mission is to know Him and make Him known. Our roots come from knowing Christ. Our fruit comes from making Him known to others.

Personal Life

Since we cannot bear fruit without being deeply rooted, we must embrace our personal mission first—to know Christ fully. We will find ourselves in a different place on our journey to know Christ. Regardless of where we are, we all have areas we need to grow. As flawed human beings, none of us have it all figured out. There will always be new things to learn about God and new areas of our lives to surrender.

Our mission, our calling to know Him, means we must be committed to growing in our understanding and love of Jesus. Let's consider how we can individually commit to knowing God more.

Apply: Take 5-10 minutes to allow the women to reflect on how they can go deeper in their relationship with Jesus. Provide them with suggestions and supplies such as paper, journals, and devotionals that they can use. Suggestions could include: meeting with a spiritual mentor, using a new devotional book, joining a small group Bible Study, or attending a Sunday School class.

Community

From the beginning, our mission as God's people was to make Him known to others. Have different women in the group prepared to read the following Scripture passages:

- Genesis 18:17, 18
- I Chronicles 16:24
- Psalm 67
- Isaiah 6:8
- Isaiah 42:5-8
- Matthew 28:16-20
- Acts 1:8
- Revelation 5:9-10

Throughout the Old and New Testaments, God always gave His people the mission of making Him known to others—their neighbors, allies, and enemies. The same is true for us. When deeply rooted in Christ, we cannot help but share Him with others around us and the world.

Apply: How can we make Him known in the groups and communities we are a part of? In groups of 3–4 people, take time to brainstorm ways you can share Christ with others. As a leader, take a few moments with each group and help them think through both big and small ways they can make God known to others. Planning evangelistic events is part of this list, but so is acknowledging God as the creator when you see a beautiful sunset or an intricate flower. There are so many ways to share our faith with others personally.

World

God invites us to know Him, to make Him known to the people we interact with regularly, but it doesn't end there. He also allows us to be a part of making Him known across the globe. We can be a part of making Him known worldwide without leaving home.

As a part of The Salvation Army, we have an opportunity to give to World Services Self-Denial, which helps fund The Salvation Army's international work. Participating in offerings and fundraisers for World Services allows us to actively be a part of sharing Christ with others. As The Salvation Army continues to share God's love with people in over 130 countries, we walk alongside them not only with our financial support but with our prayers.

Apply: Take time to guide the women in planning a World Services fundraiser. Provide coin banks, allowing them to share financially. Then facilitate a time of prayer for your Partner in Mission locations, your territory's overseas personnel, and persecuted Christians worldwide.

We have considered what it means to be deeply rooted in a mission. Before we close today, I want you to take the next few minutes to think about how you will fulfill your mission "to know Him and make Him known." Commit to knowing Jesus more deeply. Commit to a new way of making Him known in your community. And commit to being a part of making Him known around the world. How will you strengthen your roots and bear fruit?

To close your time of worship – (choose a worship song video and allow them time to reflect and commit to being deeply rooted in the mission.)

Additional Program Ideas

To awaken your senses: (Use as either an introduction or an ending to the night's worship time)

- **Taste and Smell** – Provide a snack that is either fruit-related or celebrates another culture's culinary roots. Invite the women to bring a snack from their family's cultural heritage to share with the group.
- **Sight and Sound** – Prepare a slideshow of pictures from around the world. Include many different countries and cultures, including our own. Or look up and show videos from Salvation Army events around the world. Most territories have Facebook pages that post pictures and videos of their special events. Show how God is worshiped around the world.

- **Touch** – Bring a globe to the gathering. Allow the women to explore the planet, seeing where different countries are found. Print a few world maps with countries marked. Have them play a game (in teams) to see who can find countries on the map.



Worship Programs

August 2024 – Deeply Rooted in Kindness

August 1, 2024 By Major AmyJo Ferguson



Call to Worship

<https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/kindness-videos/18-the-science-of-kindness>

Song: “10,000 Reasons” Hallelujah Choruses 23-246.

<https://samusicindex.com/brass/10-000-reasons-bless-the-lord/10194>

Scripture – Responsive Reading

Leader: The Message Bible describes the fifth Fruit of the Spirit as *"a sense of compassion in the heart."* It is commonly referred to as kindness.

Response: *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things, there is no law.* (Gal. 5:22-23 NASB)

Leader: Kindness is often cited as one of the personality traits which distinguishes believers from non-believers.

Response: *Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, which may benefit those who listen.* (Eph. 4:29)

Leader: **Do** not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage, and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.

Response: *Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ, God forgave you.* (Eph. 4: 29-32 NIV2011)

Leader: It is no coincidence that the Apostle Paul begins his famous definition of love by pointing out that it is related to kindness and the opposite of envy.

Response: *Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.* (1 Corin. 13:4 NIV2011)

Leader: Of course, the greatest example of kindness is the sinless Son of God, Jesus Christ, who, out of his great compassion, came to earth and provided for us a way of salvation.

Response: *And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus* (Eph. 2:6-7, NIV 2011).

Song # 618, *The Salvation Army Song Book*, "O To Be Like Thee"

Kindness Mugs Project

Purchase plain ceramic mugs, which are often available at the dollar store. Use permanent markers (Sharpie® brand works well) and invite the women to write "kindness" phrases on the mugs.

Examples of sayings:

- You are loved. (John 3:16)
- You are a limited edition. (Psalm 119:73)

- You are one of a kind. (Psalm 139:14)
- God is with you. (Isaiah 41:10)
- You are God's masterpiece. (Ephesians 2: 10)
- Do not fear. God is with you. (Joshua 1:9)
- Smile. (1 Peter 1:8)
- You will still bear fruit in your old age. (Psalm 92: 14)
- All will be well. (Romans 8:28)
- Do the next right thing. (Galatians 6:9)

Once the mugs are decorated, bake them at 350 degrees for 20 minutes to set the marker. Cool completely.

Fill the mugs with candies, a package of hot cocoa, or any other little gift and give them to people in the community, folks in a shelter or the women who could not make it to the meeting that day.

Song: "Mighty to Save," #26-272, *Hallelujah Choruses*

<https://samusicindex.com/brass?series=Hallelujah+Choruses&title=Mighty+to+Save>

Negativity

Scientists talk about negativity bias. Humans are naturally inclined toward negativity. Early humans were better served as a survival mechanism by being suspicious of dangerous situations. If our early ancestors missed something dangerous like an enemy in the camp or a lion in the grass, they might not have survived to live another day.

On the other hand, if our ancestors missed something good like a beautiful sunset, they would at least live to see another beautiful sunset. This negativity bias is even wired into our language. We have one word for the bad, but it's harder to express the good. For instance, the opposite of "lying" is "telling the truth" and the opposite of "stealing" is "leaving the item where it belongs." (That's a mouthful!) Technology has only magnified our negativity bias. We know that the algorithms that power social media cause negative sentiments to get more engagement and spread faster than positive sentiments.

Authentically, it's hard to be kind. Kindness is not our natural inclination. Kindness takes more time and energy. It is quickly squashed. Even on social media, our kind words and deeds get less attention, fewer likes, shares and views. Struggling with kindness is natural.

Perhaps this is part of the reason that Jesus came to earth and walked among us—to demonstrate genuine kindness, to teach us what it looks like to live counter to the pervasive negativity in our world. Romans 12:21 instructs us, “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” Jesus went so far as to suggest that when slapped in the face, we literally “turn the other cheek” (Matt. 5:39). Over and over in the gospels, we read of Jesus showing kindness to those in the world who had cast aside. When others tried to silence Bartimaeus, Jesus offered him wholeness and healing (Mark 10:46-52). When the disciples turned away the children, Jesus welcomed them (Mark 10: 13-16). Christ’s example of kindness was passed on to the early church. Paul urged the Galatian believers, “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers” (Gal. 6:10). In an unkind world, the Bible challenges believers to be marked by kindness.

Unfortunately, showing kindness is not easy. It takes effort to be kind. The very idea behind kindness is allowing the compassion in our hearts to be expressed in our actions. It is not enough to merely feel for another; we must act on those feelings. Each time Jesus fed the crowds, the Bible records, He “had compassion on them.” (Mark 6:34; Mark 8:2; Matthew 14:14). Jesus put His compassion into action.

The challenge for us is much the same. We must push against the negativity and act in kindness on the gentle nudges the Holy Spirit has placed on our hearts. We must stop and act when tempted to walk away from the needy and hurting. When tempted to spread more negativity, we must push against the darkness with goodness. With each kind of act, we not only emulate our Savior but spread joy and love to a world that needs it.

Over the next week, challenge yourself to act with kindness at least once daily. To help us, we will spend a few minutes brainstorming ways to be kind this week. (Below are some ideas to get your group started.)

- Bake cookies for your work crew
- Pay for the meal of the car behind you at a fast-food restaurant or coffee store.
- Write a note of encouragement
- Pick up the litter in your neighborhood
- Invite a friend to a meal
- Post an uplifting verse every day on social media
- Offer someone a compliment every day
- Offer free childcare for an evening

Song: “Living Hope” # 27/288, *Hallelujah Choruses*

<https://samusicindex.com/brass?series=Hallelujah+Choruses&title=living+Hope>

Benediction

Colossians 3:12-14 (MSG) *“So, chosen by God for this new life of love, dress in the wardrobe God picked out for you: compassion, kindness, humility, quiet strength, discipline. Be even-tempered, content with second place, quick to forgive an offense. Forgive as quickly and completely as the Master forgave you. And regardless of what else you put on, wear love. It’s your basic, all-purpose garment. Never be without it.”*

About author



Major AmyJo Ferguson

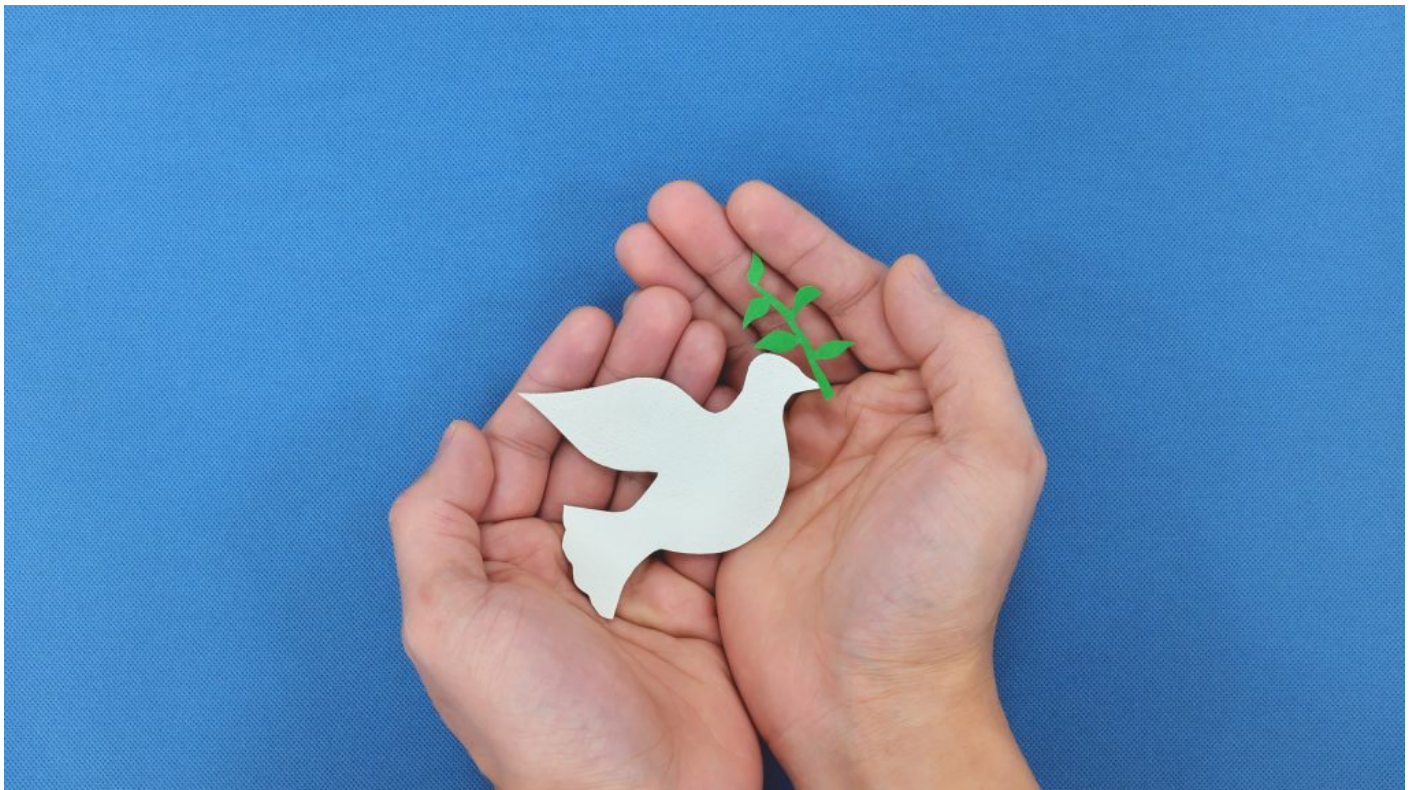
The Central Territory



Worship Programs

September 2024 – Deeply Rooted in The Holy Spirit

September 1, 2024 By Major Joyce Gauthier



Scripture: If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit” (Gal. 5:25).

Open with the song “Holy Spirit You Are Welcome Here.” A video with the words can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3zARVp3420I>

Opening Prayer/ Worship Center

To illustrate the Holy Spirit, place on a table a lit oil lamp surrounded by white doves, symbols of flames of fire, water and wind.

Bible Search on The Holy Spirit

Make sure that everyone has a Bible. To begin, the participants raise the Bible in the air. Once that scripture verse is given, they look it up, raise their hand and then read the portion out loud. The first one to find the Scripture is awarded a piece of candy.

Bible Verses

- Luke 4:1 – Jesus led by the Holy Spirit
- Acts 1:8- Receive Power
- Romans 15:13- ope by the power of the Holy Spirit
- Luke 12:11,12- Holy Spirit will teach you
- John 14:26- Holy Spirit will teach you
- Acts 15:8,9- Holy Spirit for everyone
- I Thes 4:7,8- Called to live the Holy life
- Titus 3:4-6- Renewal by the Holy Spirit
- 1 Thes 1:6- Gives us joy
- II Cor 13:14- Fellowship of the Holy Spirit
- Acts 7:32- Given by God to those who obey Him
- Galatians 5:25- Live by the Spirit

Word Search

Create a word search puzzle using the words: Joy, God. Given, Fellowship, Teach, Filled, Fire, Dove. Set Apart, Gift, Holy Spirit, Receive, Speak, Baptize, Power, Wind

<https://thewordsearch.com/maker/>

Object Lessons

There are several object lessons on the Holy Spirit found on YouTube.

Live by the Spirit

Galatians 5:25 "If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit."

To understand this portion of Scripture, we need to read the whole letter from Paul to the people of Galatia. Paul started the church in Galatia on his first missionary journey. Upon completing this journey, he was informed that the people of Galatia had been influenced by other Jewish leaders who taught the Galatians that, being Gentiles, they must obey all the Jewish Laws. Laws that not even the Jews could follow completely. This confused the Galatians and led them away from believing God's grace saved them. Paul reminds them, "Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law" (Gal. 5:1 NLT).

Paul was distraught that this had happened. He urged them to "let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves" (Gal. 5:16 NLT). He goes on to tell them the consequences of living in a sinful nature and the blessings of the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Paul further explains: "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to His cross and crucified them there. Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives" (Gal. 5:24, 25 NLT). The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God that abides in us after we have repented of our sins and accepted Christ as our Savior. However, we do not receive the full power of the Holy Spirit until we choose to give ourselves wholly to God and follow His plan for our lives. When we do this, He guides us to keep Christ as the center of our lives.

In the Scripture portions we read earlier, we find some benefits of living in step with the Holy Spirit. God gives us the power to be His witnesses. He teaches us what to do and gives us joy and hope. I pray that we will choose to follow Christ and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Benediction

1 Th. 5:23-24 "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; He will surely do it."

About author



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