

Women's Ministries Resources 2024-2025



THE SALVATION ARMY WOMEN'S MINISTRIES RESOURCES

PRICELESS

2024-2025 PROGRAM YEAR

**God, your thoughts about me are priceless.
No one can possibly add them all up**

Psalm 139:17 (NIRV)



Women's Sunday



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Women's Sunday

Women's Sunday 2024 – Celebration Luncheon

August 16, 2024 By Major Dr. Eva R. Geddes D. Min



Celebration/Fellowship/Luncheon

Design table decorations reflecting priceless service and individual gifts. Perhaps use a treasure chest sitting on an open Bible as a centerpiece with small bags of costume pearls as favors.

Decorate the Room for a Priceless Recognition Party

- Set up tables around the room.
- Place seashells with pearls on clear plastic saucers with sand.
- Borrow tea pots from the women to use on each table.
- Check thrift stores for China cups and saucers or use clear plastic cups.
- Designate a corner of the room for individuals to bring in memorabilia which is priceless to them.
- Share why the item is priceless during the luncheon.

Refreshments

- Finger sandwiches
- Potato or Macaroni Salad
- Small cakes or cookies
- Fruit salad
- Tea and coffee

A month prior to the event send out invitations to each of the women. Ask them to invite a friend.

Assign a hostess to each table.

Priceless (Table Activity for the Tea)

- 1** Invite the women who brought memorabilia to share why these items are priceless to them.
- 2** List 5 items that are priceless to you.
- 3** List 5 items that are priceless in the world.
- 4** What words go with priceless? Synonyms for the word priceless.

Responsive Scripture Reading

Based on Isaiah 43:1-7

This responsive reading might be appropriate either as a Call to Worship or as a reflection before the Call to Response/ Altar Call

1st Reader: I fear nothing, my God,
for you have made me yours.

All: You know me by name.

2nd Reader: If I must pass through a raging river,
you will be at my side.

All: I will not be overwhelmed.

3rd Reader: If I must pass through a roaring fire,
the flames will not burn me.

All: I will not be devoured.

4th Reader: My God, my Savior—
you purchased my freedom from slavery.

All: You paid a high price!

5th Reader: Because I am precious in your sight,
because you love me—

All: you are always watching over me.

6th Reader: You gather your beloved people to you
from every part of the earth—

All: **East, West, North, and South.**



Women's Sunday

Women's Sunday 2024 – Drama: A Gift We Can't Buy

August 16, 2024 By Major Dr. Eva R. Geddes D. Min



“A Gift We Can't Buy”

Calvary Chapel Dallas

Theme: Salvation the Priceless Gift

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 9 :15

Synopsis: A young woman new in town welcomes an old friend and tells her about the birthday where she met her father for the first time—a father who loved her and wanted a relationship with her. Salvation is a priceless gift that we are given.

Characters:

Narrator

Lady 1 – A bit confused; not where she wants to be, but knows she wants love and acceptance.

Lady 2 – A very busy lady with little belief.

Props/Sound Effects: Birthday decorations, a bible, and a gift from her father.

Setting: Set can be as simple or complex as one wants to make it. Two chairs and a table with the props. Hang up birthday party decorations with items to make the stage eye-catching.

Length: 5-7 minutes.

Skit

Narrator: Meet Miranda. She has recently returned to her hometown after being gone for years. Yesterday was her birthday.

Girl #1: (welcomes her friend) I can't believe you're here! How did you find me? How did you know where I live?

Girl #2: It's the beauty of social networking. I was able to track down the name of your street, and then I saw you right here on the patio. I remembered that yesterday was your birthday, and I figured you haven't been back here long enough to know people who would celebrate your birthday. I sure didn't think you would seek out anyone from the "old" neighborhood—those creeps! So, I thought I'd take you out.

Girl #1: Funny you should mention my birthday. I have been in such a funk; I just wasn't thinking about my birthday ... until yesterday.

Girl #2: What happened yesterday? That was your actual birthday, wasn't it?

Girl #1: It was my birthday, but nobody around here knew about it since I haven't been back in town for very long. But you won't even believe everything that happened. I got up like normal, went to gym, picked up some pastries and went off to work, like every other day. Work was as dull as ever, and I was watching the clock all day, even though I had nothing else going on. I left work, picked up my dinner for one, and headed home.

Girl #2: What? Tell me what happened!

Girl #1: Well, I parked the car in the driveway and decided to eat my dinner on this side patio. I was just eating, all alone, when I heard someone knocking at the front door.

Girl #2: Really? Was it a neighbor or coworker? Did they bring you all of this? (Indicates decorations)

Girl #1: No ... better! It was a perfect stranger!

Girl #2: You're kidding!? A perfect stranger?

Girl #1: Seriously. He was the perfect stranger. He's the father I have never met. Turns out he had been wanting a relationship with me all these years. He sought me out in all the different places I have lived over the years, but all the other times when He knocked on my door, I never answered. He had always loved me, and I never knew it!

Girl #2: Wow! that's unbelievable! Did He have a gift for you?

Girl #1: He did! Just to know His love would have been enough. I've never even tried to find Him or get to know Him. But it turns out, He is a very successful and wealthy man, and He wants to give me a whole new life! He has the means to do it. I so did not deserve a gift like He gave me. I could never have earned it on my own. Can you believe this? I am going to be taken care of for the rest of my life. He told me how much He loved me, and He always believed that we would find each other. He lives in a mansion, and eventually I'm going to go there and stay forever. But for now, He has offered to give me total security and everything I need. I can call on Him at any time.

Girl #2: (skeptical) Are you sure? Have you checked Him out? He could be a scam

artist. Remember that time when we bought six cases of the Belly Busting Bands

that were guaranteed to flatten your flabby front in forty days, supposedly able to sell themselves to your friends and neighbors??

Girl #1: (chuckles) You're right, they didn't sell, but I did lose weight using them...

Girl #2: Really? How?

Girl #1: I strapped every last one of those bands around my refrigerator door. It was actually three whole days before I got them off.

Girl #2: Back to your Father ... you had never met Him before, had you? I've never heard you mention him. How do you know He really is your Father? And what do you have to do to get all of this? Do you have to pay something?

Girl #1: That's the beauty of it. It is a free gift. And look what else He gave me. He gave me this bundle of letters that He had written to me, all bound into a book. I've just read a few, but I am convinced that He is my Father. These letters are full of promises that He has made, and

now that I know Him, those promises are mine! Finally meeting my Father is like being born again! I can hardly wait to get to know Him better.

Girl #2: What's going to happen when He finds out about all the trouble you've been in, and all those bad choices you made? That's why you left our hometown in the first place. When He finds out the truth about you, is He still going to want to do all that for you?

Girl #1: I didn't even have to tell Him. He already knew everything, and it didn't change how He felt about me. One of those promises in the letters said that He would forgive me, and not only that, but He also promised that He wouldn't even remember all those terrible things anymore. Can you believe that?

Girl #2: Sounds too good to be true.

Girl #1: Can you stay and meet Him? He said that He would meet me here every day, I just need to wait for Him. I know He'd love to meet you. His arms are wide open, and He says He will accept anyone who turns to Him. Let's face it ... we all need Somebody to rely on in life.

Girl #2: I am glad to see you so happy and that your life is turning around. I think I'd like to meet your Dad. If you're sure He wouldn't mind.

Narrator: This gift, of course, is salvation. It can't be purchased. It can't be earned by our good works and good intentions. It was purchased by Jesus' blood on the cross, and it was His perfect life that made Him the perfect sacrifice for our sins. He lived the perfect life so that we would be able to come to Him freely. And now He is pursuing those He loved and died for. He wants them to know of His free gift of salvation. He is your heavenly father. You are priceless in His eyes.

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Women's Sunday

Women's Sunday 2024 – Enrollment Ceremony

August 16, 2024 By Major Dr. Eva R. Geddes D. Min



Enrollment Ceremony – “Priceless Leadership”

Speaker:

Today we are going to enroll women to be a part of The Salvation Army's Women's Ministries programs. The Salvation Army Home League/Women's Ministries is one of the largest

organizations for women in the world.

The purpose of Women's Ministries is to encourage women to be:

- Transformed and empowered by the gospel to lead a Christ-like life.
- Engaged in social justice and action to positively impact our world.
- Equipped to fulfill their potential through life-long learning and development.
- Enriched mutually through local and global connections and support.
- This four-fold purpose is not something that we are able to accomplish alone. We need others to join us in this vision. We have gathered today to enroll new members who will join us in worship, fellowship, education, and service to make our group into a beautiful, God-created masterpiece.

Call forward flagbearers and leaders.

Scripture: *Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God which He bought with His own blood. Acts 20:28 (NIV)*

Introduce each leader and share her position, providing a brief description of the responsibilities.

State to all the leaders: "If you are willing to accept these sacred responsibilities, please raise your right hand and say, "I will." (Together, they will raise their hands and witness, "I will.")

State – to the audience: "Will you promise to pray for and accept the leadership of these dedicated women?"

"We will"

State: We accept you now as leaders in these ministries and charge you to be faithful.

Prayer of dedication

Testimony:

[Select someone who can speak on the theme of connection and its importance to self, community, and God]

Congregational Song

"He Knows My Name" Hallelujah Choruses #182

"How Deep the Fathers Love for Us," Hallelujah Choruses #127

"Knowing You," Hallelujah Choruses #89

Scripture Reading – Psalm 139

Devotional – "Priceless"

Time of Reflection (Video)

"How He Loves Us" with Lyrics – Dave Crowder – <https://youtu.be/GzfPHnoT0-0>

Additional Optional Song

"God's Love is Wonderful," The Salvation Army Song Book #25

"I Can Sing of His Love Forever," Delirious w/ Lyrics – <https://youtu.be/zeCwwaciAA8>

Benediction

Lord, we thank You for this time spent together—together with each other and together in Your presence. As we go from this place today, help us to be encouragers. Help us to build each other up in ways that carry over into our private moments when we are doubtful and lonely. Help us to feel complete, knowing we are part of a body of people who long to make each other better, becoming more like Christ.

And so now, "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" (Col. 2:6-7, NIV). Amen.



Women's Sunday

Women's Sunday 2024 – Outline

August 16, 2024 By Major Dr. Eva R. Geddes D. Min



Women's Sunday
Priceless
by Major Dr. Eva R. Geddes D. Min

Holiness Meeting Outline

Preliminary Music Video

"King & Country – Priceless" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2cXa2MnV3Qk>

"Who Am I," w/Lyrics – *Casting Crown* – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mBcqria2wmg>

"God" w/ Lyrics – *Chris Tomlin* <https://youtu.be/-ak0OoFBw3c>

Drama – "A Gift We Can't Buy" (Could be used at the beginning of the service or just before the sermon. See separate file.)

Call to Worship

You are precious,
to your Creator priceless
for, He has made you
wonderfully flawless.

He knitted you together,
in your mother's womb
His very own breath
was your life-giving fume.

You are valuable,
more so than all the birds for,
Your Creator made you
to be a sheep for His herd.

He molded you together,
with His mighty hand
in His providence
your life He has planned.

You are precious,
priceless and valuable
to your Creator . . .
you are indispensable!

Welcome, Announcements and Offering

Responsive Reading: "Priceless Possession"

Leader: You were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.

Response: Having believed, you were marked in Him having a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.

Leader: Who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of His glory.

Response: For we are God's workmanship, created in Jesus to do good works.
Leader: Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant...you will be My treasured possession.
Response: ...you are a people holy to the Lord your God.
Leader: The Lord has chosen you...to be His people, His treasured possession
Response: ...you were bought at a price, therefore honor God...
Leader: How priceless is Your unfailing love!
All: How precious of me are Your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!

(Eph. 1:13-14, 2:10, Ex. 19:5, Dt. 7:6, 1 Co. 6:20, Ps. 36:7, Ps. 139:17, NIV2011)

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Praise and Worship

"Eyes of My Heart, Lord" Hallelujah Chorus #135, Salvation Army Song Book #130

"The Love of God" w/Lyrics Mercy Me, <https://youtu.be/Vq9LpAVysbM>

"Reckless Love" -w/Lyrics Cory Asbury, <https://youtu.be/Sc6SSHuZvQE>



Women's Sunday

Women's Sunday 2024 – Sermon

August 16, 2024 By Major Dr. Eva R. Geddes D. Min



Women's Sunday Sermon

Priceless

Text: Psalm 139

Introduction: What is priceless to you? Your family? Some cherished possessions? Life itself?

Transition: You are treasured by God. Worth everything to Him—even to giving his Son to die on a cross to redeem you. He came to buy you back from the enemy who aims to capture God's priceless treasure—you. It cost Him, but you are priceless to Him and worth it all.

Why? Because . . .

1 He knows you (v.1-5)

Our God is omniscient. He sees all and knows all – past, present, and future. He is the eternal “Present,” unconfined by human, earthly time, or space. He sees and knows our:

- **Actions – sees all:**

Actions flow from our will, whether good or ill. Our intentions determine our actions – whether they are under the control and influence of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will inspire holy actions as long as we are surrendered to His will.

- **Thoughts – knows all:**

We are fully known by Him. It may be scary to realize God knows our thoughts, life – all the intimate details. Even the temptations that come to us are known to Him.

- **Words – hears all (not like monkey who covers eyes, ears, and mouth)**

Our words reflect what or who lives in us and that is not limited to words that are considered “off-limits.” Are my words kind or hurtful?

Illustration: some say that “words can kill” ...

- **Location-** so tied to the other three – but “do I need to hide from God?” Of course, I cannot, but I do deceive myself and try. This is usually when I know where I am and what I am doing would not please him.

Illustration: GPS – can tell us where we are and how to get where we want to go. But it does not know us or care to know us.

2. He created you (v.13-16)

- **“Inmost being”**

It's amazing to ponder the creation. Not just natural creation of skies, birds, trees, animals, but the ultimate creation of people who are made in God's image. He went above indicating this was a "good" creation to a "very good" creation. (Hebrew: tov meod – exceedingly good.)

This "inmost being" is the "breath breathed" in us humans that gave us His life and essence. This is beyond respiration – it is inspiration – sharing His very essence with His creation. Wow!

- **Wondrous creation**

Sometimes I may not like the looks of my created body, but that is the result of my misuse of His creation. How can I dare despise His wondrous creation? Instead, it calls me to steward it and care for it.

- **Loves you – (Illustration: – newborn baby love)**

God thinks of you like a parent anticipating the birth of their baby. He has no need of a sonogram. He created us, sees us, loves us. We are precious in His sight.

Illustration: – Mothers? Does it not seem love is automatic when you are aware of that life growing inside you? To not immediately love is to go against all God created you to be.

3. He treasures you (v. 17-18)

- **Thinks about you.**

Think of when you first fell in love. You could not stop thinking about him/her.

- **Present with you – wants to be with you (illustration: – lovers)**

Illustration: lovers – hate separation

1 My Response (v.19-24)

- I begin to identify with Him and hate sin.
- Ask for cleansing.
 - **"Search me"** (refer back to v. 1 where Psalmist states that Lord has searched him – opens and closes his psalm with this idea of the Lord searching, knowing, loving (being present.)

And desires more and more of this searching/cleansing

- **"Lead me" – indwell me, teach me, walk with me...**

Application: The Lord knows you, created you and treasures you. How will you respond to Him – right now and every day . . .

Invitation – “All that I Am,” The Salvation Army Song Book #568

Close in Prayer

Education Programs



THE SALVATION ARMY WOMEN'S MINISTRIES RESOURCES

PRICELESS

2024-2025 PROGRAM YEAR

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Psalm 139:17 (NIRV)





Education Programs

October 2024 – Let Your Light Shine

October 1, 2024 By Lt. Amanda Hoscheit



Scripture: Matthew 5:14-16

“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone

in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Craft – Luminaries

Make tea light luminaries with mason jars, mod podge, and tissue paper.

Supplies:

One mason jar per participant

One paint brush per participant

Tissue paper (fall colors suggested) cut into squares or other shapes.

Small container (medicine cup size) of Mod Podge for each participant

One tea light per participant

Black paint/sharpie (optional)

Directions can be found at <https://www.sandiegofamily.com/for-the-kids/crafts-for-kids/fall-mason-jar-luminary>).

Paint the words “Let your light shine” in black paint or sharpies directly on the glass before adding the tissue paper so that when the light is placed in the luminary the words showed through the glass.

Decorations

On each table place small pumpkins with tea lights and a placard with the verse Matthew 5:14-16 on it.

Program Idea

This time of year can be a tricky for many Christians. We want to honor the Lord with how we celebrate. Many Christians have a difficult time with Halloween because everywhere you look you can find cultural associations with Satan and other scary things that are not of Christ. You have the choice to avoid and “sit out” this holiday. An alternate idea is to hold a “Light Party” or a “Trunk or Treat” party at the church instead of handing out candy at your home. Use this time as an opportunity to amplify the love of Jesus to your neighbors. Jesus used common cultural things to point to the Father in heaven and we can do the same.

Demonstrate positivity, kindness, love, and generosity as you greet those who are trick or treaters. You could:

- Have a warming station with cocoa and coffee.
- Be excited when kids and parents show up at your door.
- Ask children and teens about their costumes and what they like about it.
- Tell them "I'm praying God keeps you all safe tonight! Have a great time!" People rarely remember the words you say, but they always remember how you made them feel.
- Don't skimp on good candy. Kids remember who gives out what!
- Give out reflective balloons for the kids to wear on their wrists.
- For early trick or treaters set up a pumpkin decorating station in your yard with paints and foam stickers. They can take it with them or decorate your yard with them.
- To 99% of people Halloween is simply about having fun. Kids and adults alike get very excited about planning their costumes and put a lot of effort into them. Think about things that you can do to increase fun, especially for children.

Be a good neighbor by:

- Go door to door before Halloween and offer reflective tape that can be attached to any costume.
- Consider helping the elderly or sick by buying candy for them or offering to help them answer the door so that they can take part.
- Offer to take a child with your family whose parent works or cannot take part in trick or treating.
- Invite trick or treaters to an event or Sunday service at the corps.

For Devotional

One medium pumpkin (Hollowed out but with the lid intact and no carvings)

Screwdriver

LED light

Glow sticks (at least one per participant)

Rope

Let Your Light Shine

In Jesus' most famous speech detailed in Matthew 5 He tells believers how they are supposed to interact with the world around them using everyday objects—a hill, a bowl, and a stand. The main point of what Jesus is saying is that for something to be useful it cannot be hidden away. When you need to light up a room you don't hide the light under a bowl, but instead put it on a stand so its light can shine brighter. Let's explore this a little more with an object that is familiar this time of year—a pumpkin.

This pumpkin represents the world. God has a beautiful plan for it and all that live on it. We will use this little light to represent that Hope. *(Place the light into pumpkin turned it on. Put the lid back in place.)*

Let's turn out the lights for a moment and see what impact it has on the darkness. Nothing happened, did it? That's because our pumpkin world has a thick shell of sin that is keeping the light of God's hope from coming to the surface. That's how things were for our world before Jesus entered into it. In John 8:12 Jesus says "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life."

Let's use Jesus' example and make a mark on our pumpkin world. *(Take the screwdriver and make a hole about dime sized.)* Again, we are going to turn out the light and see what happens. *(Turn out the light and show the hole where the light is shining through.)*

This time we can see the hope of God shining through. When Jesus came and died for our sins, He broke through the wall so that God's hope and promise could be with His people and to show them that through Him there was a way out of the darkness. We are called to follow Christ's example. Let's see what happens when we all let Jesus cut through our sin. *(Make holes all over the pumpkin.)*

Now let's see what it looks like. *(Turn out the lights.)* It is starting to light up this room! *(Take the pumpkin top off and make two holes in the sides and place the rope through- this should enable you to hold it up high like a disco ball)* Look at all this hope shining through. What was in darkness has turned into a glorious party. I want to take this one step further. One of the greatest blessings is that we are all different, with different gifts, talents, and dreams that God wants to use to make our world brighter for Him. If you are a Christian, He has broken your wall of sin that separated you from Him. Now you can allow the work of the Holy Spirit to brighten up the unique person that He made you to be. I want you to take your glowstick and add it into the pumpkin and stick it into any of the holes that were made. This is the unique body of Christ who uses all kinds of different people to brighten up even the darkest places.

Let's pray together:

Lord, I thank you for reminding us not to hide the hope that You have given us from the world. Help us to use the gifts You have given us to shine bright in a dark world. Show us the places that need hope and help us to break the barriers of sin that keep us from it. Give us courage to speak up for what is right and to not allow our lights to be hidden away. Amen.



Education Programs

November 2024 – Sacrifice is Priceless

November 1, 2024 By Kathleen Pinkston



Introduction

What do you know about Flanders Field? It's a cemetery in Belgium where American soldiers from World War I are buried. There is information on Wikipedia which give highlights on this memorial https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/In_Flanders_Fields. The American Battle Monument

Commission <https://www.abmc.gov/Flanders-Field> also provides a YouTube video and 6 other publications that can be shared with the women.

Poem

There is a poem, which was later made into a song about Flanders Fields. This was written by a Canadian doctor, Major John McCrae, in the early years of the war. This poem and song can be used to provide an enhancement of how we can memorialize those who gave their lives during this conflict. Both the poem and song can be accessed on YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K6BIOkpdkg8>. The song was also sung by a Salvation Army group called FourHymn, which was recorded in 2016 and 2022 during a Christmas concert: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rl-LXdvxTt8>.

Refreshments

Serve a pull apart cupcake flower. The basic instructions can be accessed on YouTube at: <https://www.confessionsofaconfectionista.com/2012/01/flower-bouquet-pull-apart-cupcake-cake.html>. Use brown, green, and red icing to make the shape of a poppy flower. As the women take their cupcake, they can share the name of a loved one who has served in the Armed Forces.

Crafts

Coffee Filters

Make poppies using coffee filters. Check the website <https://youtu.be/aVKXUvZzxhl> for instructions.

Poppy Rocks

Provide each woman with two river rocks and ink pens in red, black, and green. For basic painting instructions visit: <https://youtu.be/0n2ACxR1Rwl>

Remember the Days of Old

When he reached the age of 120 years the Lord told Moses that he would not lead the children of Israel into the promised land. After reading the Lord's instructions to the people, he was now to hand over leading the people to Joshua who had served as Moses' assistant and now was divinely appointed as Moses' successor.

Before handing over the leadership, he reminded the people that were about to enter the land that the Lord had promised to them. However, there were commands, decrees, and regulations that the Lord had commanded him to teach the people. If they were obedient, they would enjoy a long life. Probably the most important command was in Deuteronomy 6: 4, 5, and 6. "Listen, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. And you must love the Lord

your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength." Like the children of Israel, we are to love God, think constantly about His commandments and teach His commandments to our children. We are to be guided by His Word. Jesus said that loving God with all of ourselves is the first and greatest commandment (Matt.22:37-39).

Moses reminds the people in Deuteronomy 32:7 "Remember the days of long ago; think about the generations past. Ask your father, and he will inform you. Inquire of your elders, and they will tell you." They should not be fearful as the Lord would go before them as He had in the past. All they needed to do was to ask the elders who would remember that the Lord had always been faithful to them.

Change of leadership is always hard. We become used to the way someone leads. We know what to expect. But change is inevitable. It is important to remember the past and the lessons that we have learned. But we must move forward trusting in God's faithfulness and follow His directions. We must build on the groundwork of the previous leader but ask for God's continued guidance for the future. Joshua would not lead in exactly the way that Moses had, but he built on the groundwork that Moses had laid down. He consulted the Lord for His directions and moved forward leading the people into the promised land.



Education Programs

December 2024 – A Priceless Christmas

December 1, 2024 By Major Melody Hamelund



Introduction

All around the world, Christmas carols are an important part of the Christmas season. They have been written and sung for hundreds of years. We all have our favorite carol. Often when we hear the music start, we drift into nostalgic memories of childhood wonder.

Christmas carols have sprung from a variety of inspirations. Some started out as folk songs and were given Christmas words. A true Christian Christmas carol is one that describe or honors Christ's birth. The word "carol," until the fourteenth century, was associated with dancing and derived from the Italian "carolare," which was an Italian dance song.

The most likely origin of the tradition of Christmas caroling was that the churches thought the music or words were not reverent enough to be sung inside the church. They considered such songs to be too peppy and not holy enough. Since the songs were so enjoyable, their banishment from the church did not get rid of them, but merely pushed them to the outside. In England, the groups of singers are called "waits." These groups went around neighborhoods on Christmas Eve singing in front of doors and windows and receiving goods and money from the residents. In Wales, carolers begin their rounds at dawn, awaking the residents, who in turn invite them in for refreshments.

Many Christmas carols have interesting histories. "O Little Town of Bethlehem" was written by Episcopalian preacher, Phillip Brooks. He was inspired after making a horseback journey from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, where he joined others in a five-hour long Christmas Eve celebration at the Church of the Nativity, which is the location revered as Jesus' birthplace.

"Good King Wenceslas" commemorated the charitable acts of Wenceslaus 1, Duke of Bohemia, who ruled from 924 to 935 A.D. The carol tells the story of a kind man going out in terrible weather on St. Stephen's Day to give help and cheer to poor neighbors. He was declared a king after his death, and eventually was declared a saint. Presently, he considered the patron saint of the Czech Republic.

Many of us recognize the name Isaac Watts as the author of "Joy to the World." In 1719, he wrote a poem based on Psalm 98. More than 100 years later, Lowell Mason came upon the poem and set it to music. The song hit public popularity when the Trinity Choir performed it, and it has been a must-sing carol ever since. Joy to the World was intended to be about Christ's second coming. We can accept it amongst the Christmas carols by the truth that without a first coming of Christ, there could be no second coming. In that way, during the Christmas season, we can celebrate the birth of the One who will one day return. It is also interesting to note that in his day, Isaac Watts was looked upon as a maverick, He wrote new songs for the church after getting tired of hearing the monotone strain of the voices and the glazed, sour looks on the singers' faces.

The following YouTube video gives a history of Christmas carols:

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=pYQjHTF3h4U>.

This website gives information about the origins of some popular Christmas carols.

<https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/60596/origins-10-popular-christmas-carols>

Activities

Clap-a-Carol

Pass out paper and pens and have everyone write down their favorite carol. One person starts the game by clapping out her favorite carol. The one who guesses correctly then gets to clap her carol.

Name that Carol

Play the beginnings of any traditional carol. The first person to guess correctly gets a point. The person with the most points at the end is the winner.

Picture Depiction

Ahead of time, see how many pictures you can find that can match up with carols. For example, a picture of a drum could depict the "Little Drummer Boy." Put a number in the corner of each picture. Pass out lists of the Christmas carols used and invite the women to match the carol with the picture.

Cookie Exchange

Invite the women to participate in a Christmas cookie exchange, which is a fun way to share Christmas favorites. Easy recipes can be found at <https://www.myrecipes.com/holidays-and-occasions/easy-christmas-cookies-with-few-ingredients?>

Go Caroling

Compile a list of shut-ins and plan a night to carol at their homes leaving a bag of Christmas treats. You could also carol indoors at the local nursing homes leaving Christmas treats for the residents.

All Christmas Music

Every year, I look forward to one of our local radio stations who turns into an "All Christmas music" station. The first time I hear a Christmas song, no matter which one, my mood lifts. I'm not quite sure what it is about the first Christmas song that has this power. If it is "White Christmas," it instantly brings me back to my childhood days when my dad sang along with Bing Crosby as he crooned from the console record player. If it is "O Little Town of Bethlehem," I imagine the scenes around Jesus' birth and my heart swells with gratitude. When I hear "Deck the Halls," it fills my imagination with upcoming warm and joyous times with loved ones. Which Christmas carols evoke memories or emotions for you?

There's no doubt, songs can be powerful. "Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before Him with thanksgiving" (Ps. 95:1-2).

In this passage, the psalmist invites us to join with him in singing joyfully and thankfully to our Lord. We all love to sing songs that spring from the good parts of our being—our joy and thankfulness.

Sometimes, though, even during the Christmas season, we may not feel like singing. Trials, difficulties, uncooperative people, long lines at the grocery store, lack of sleep and bad weather does not take a break for Christmas. To top it all off, December has the fewest hours of sunlight of the year. During times like these, we have more reason to turn on the Christmas channel.

In Psalm 30, we see that the act of singing praises to God was significant to David. He found many reasons to sing, and on those difficult days when he was filled with dismay, he reminded the readers of God's care and intervention of the past. He chose to dwell on God's faithfulness, believing that God will continue to take care of him. May we, too, bring forth songs and carols, of praise to our God. He is faithful!

About author



Major Melody Hamelund

USA Central Territory



Education Programs

January 2025 – God's Word is Priceless

January 1, 2025 By Captain Carmon Camp



God's Word is Priceless

Scripture Focus: Psalm 139:17

"How precious to me are your thoughts God! How vast is the sum of them!"

Purpose:

Scripture journaling is a creative way to respond to reading, hearing, and receiving God's Holy Word and then applying it to our daily life.

Program Idea

Like the word of God, scripture journaling is personal. There are different ways to express your responses to what you hear God saying to you. Journaling can be as simple or as elaborate as you want. You can use multiple supplies, or you can use one. Be open to using words, prose or poetry, drawing, painting, collages, or whatever else you need. Your journaling response becomes your worship. First Corinthians 10:31 states "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."

To make scriptural journaling easier the women may want to consider purchasing a Bible that has a wide margin. Have a couple of examples for the women to see as this type of journaling might be new to them. There are many available on Amazon and vary in price from about \$20 on up.

There are many ways to approach scripture journaling. Following are a couple of the more traditional approaches.

- 1 Verse-by-verse: Select a scripture verse maybe one you have a want to memorize. After reading it, copy the verse as many times as you want to. Then write your thoughts and insights about what the verse says and how it made you feel when you read it. You might also write down any questions the scripture may bring up.
- 2 Topic focused journaling: Select a theme to focus on like forgiveness, love, faith or maybe the fruit of the spirit. Search for verses that support the theme and write your reflections about the verses, the theme or both.
- 3 Devotional journaling: After reading your favorite devotion, respond to what God is saying to you in the devotion. This can be in writing, drawing, painting, stamps, or whatever creative medium you want to use.

There are many decorating options. When setting up the supply table, bring any item that you think will spark the women's creativity.

Supply List:

- Bible
- Notebook

- Magazines
- Color pencils, markers, gel pens
- Stickers
- Ink pads and stamps
- Washi tape
- Paper tags
- Glitter
- Glue
- Yarn and string

How Good it Feels

How many times have we sat in a place whether it was in our hearts, minds, or physical space with a sadness covering us and it feels like we are all alone. We think about how it feels for somebody to reach out with a text or a card to remind us that they are thinking about us. I don't know about you, but when I get a note or a card in the mail or on my desk, a text, or a phone call for no other reason but for somebody to tell me that they are thinking about me, I get excited and, in that moment, it's hard for me to even believe that I could be sad ever again. If this is the exuberance, and joy that can be felt from a notification that a person is thinking about you, image what the attention of God the father will make you feel like.

The idea that I am important to God can sometimes be an overwhelming thing. We appear to be very small and insignificant when we think about our status in this world. But when we remember the omniscience of God, we know that we have a place, a significant and a special place that nobody else can fill, where no one else is present. That place is in God's thoughts. We know that nothing is too big, and no one is too small.

Psalm 139:7 tells each one of us that as individuals we are constantly in God's thoughts, not just once a day, but constantly. How magnificent is it that the One that created something so vast and expansive as the universe finds us precious in His thoughts. He created you and me one at a time, individually, and specifically according to His thoughts, according to His purpose for us.

God's thoughts about us don't just run on the surface. According to Psalm 92:5 God's thoughts are very deep. Jeremiah 29:11 tells us that God designed us according to the plans that He has for each one of us. Plans for good and not for evil, to give us a future and a hope. These plans were designated long before we were ever even born. Ephesians 1:4 (NIV) tells us, "For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight." Not

only did God have plans for our activities, but He also had a purpose for each one of our lives. These things He already knew before even the creation of the world.

In Psalms 139:13-14 we read, "For You created my innermost being. You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful. I know that full well." Psalm 139:17 tells us, "How precious to me are Your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them!" These scriptures identify for us, and remind us, how much God loves us that He took all His deep thoughts and put them into creating us, not as a collective of humanity, but each one as a child of God, made in His image specifically, beautifully, and individually. How good does it feel to know that we are loved and thought about constantly by God our father, Jehovah, the one true God, God Most High, El Elyon. There is nothing that fills that dark space of sadness and loneliness that we might sometimes experience more completely than this.



Education Programs

February 2025 – There's No Friend Like a Good Book

February 1, 2025 By Captain Nikki Hughes



There's No Friend Like a Good Book

Back to Reading

When was the last time you read a book? There are a lot of different ways to read/hear a story. There are many different opportunities which can be found at a local library. The adventure is yours. Pick the genre which you find enjoyable, but also expand your mind to something new. In the words of Ernest Hemingway, "There is no friend as loyal as a book."

Below you will find some suggestion to encourage you get back to the love of reading.

- 1 Library cards are free and offer so much more! Looking at my local library's web page I found this wealth of information: calendar of events which host special speakers, crafts, STEM activities, book clubs, puzzles, and activities sorted out by age groups. There were ways to sign up for electronic books (called eBooks) and they can be downloaded to your device (tablet, laptop, phone). You will never have a late fee.
- 2 Audio books. This is something new for me within the past year. I currently have a 45-minute drive to work. What could I do during this time besides drive? I decided to give audio books a try. I was worried my mind would be preoccupied with other things and I would miss out on the storyline. It does happen, but you can conveniently rewind. Also, the speed of the dialog can be changed to faster or slower.
- 3 At my library I found the Libby app (which is free). I entered in my library card information, which gave me the option of an audio book or eBook. For certain books there may be a wait depending upon availability and popularity. If waiting is not for you then check out Audible (app) at [audible.com](https://www.audible.com). There is a free trial but eventually you pay a fee.
- 4 Goodreads (app) is also free. This allows the reader to discover and track their reading. For instance, books can be added which you have read or want to read. Friends can be added so you can see what they are reading. They will also have a list of the most anticipated books to read and recommendations. I like to use their list of "Popular 100 books to Read Before You Die Books." This list will include the classics all the way to current books.
- 5 Also available is a list Amazon puts out for the top 100 book list.
- 6 BookBub will notify you when eBooks go on sale. Prices vary from free to 99 cents to \$4.00. You can personalize what genre you would be interested in purchasing. Sign up at: BookBub <info@bookbub.com>

So Many Books, So Little Time

Reading is something that I've always loved. I remember as a child going to the library and the smell of books was in the air. I always checked out the most books I was allowed. When we moved to an area where the library was not accessible, I received an allowance to wander over to the local bookstore to purchase a book. The women there were always so kind and would help me in picking my next selection.

Books can take you to a place only accessible in your imagination. It can give you a break from day-to-day living. It can transport you to a different land, a different time, or even a different culture. It gives you rest from the mundane of daily living.

The selected scripture states, "Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty" Ps. 91:1 (NIV). When was the last time you gave your mind a rest? We all need a break. When you read/listen to a book it automatically sends your mind somewhere else. It gives you moments of excellent self-care. In this scripture God is instructing us to rest in His shadow. Many of us find resting difficult. Our minds keep moving to the next thing that we should be doing. So instead, take a deep breath and let your imagination wander.

Picture a huge shade tree. You are sitting at the base in the shadow that it's branches cast. Feel the cool breeze on your face. Listen as the crickets sing in their choir. Smell the lingering scent of the flowers. See the ants as they work tirelessly. Taste the berries from a nearby bush. You are relaxed, you are comfortable. All your worries or anxieties have left. Quietness has taken over. This is how I picture resting in the shadow of the Almighty. This is what God invites us to do. It's not always easy. We tend to want to do things ourselves instead of giving them to Him. He has promised that He will never leave us or forsake us. Dwell in Him. Peter 5:7 states, "Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you."

I encourage you today to find a book, light a candle and grab a cozy blanket. Take time for yourself and rest in the shadow of the Almighty!



Education Programs

March 2025 – Works of Art Around Us and Within Us

March 1, 2025 By Lieutenant Amber Morin



©Andrea Matczak

Works of Art Around Us and Within Us

Read Ephesians 2:10.

Introduction

Our goal is to explore and interpret the world around us through the arts, and to discover how God created us as His masterpiece.

Program Idea

Alphabet Photography

This project requires a little creative, and for the women to pay attention to the world around them. Invite the women to look for items that are in the shape of letters. For example, the hands of a clock might form the letter "L," or the handle on a mug might look like the letter "D." For example go to Pinterest and search on "alphabet in nature." When the women see a letter, ask them to take a picture using their phone.

Show the video from this site that gives further explanations:

<https://www.theschoolofphotography.com/tutorials/alphabet-photography>.

Use this concept to form one of the following words about what God says about us as His work of art:

- Handiwork (Eph 2:10, NIV)
- Workmanship (Eph 2:10, ESV)
- Masterpiece (Eph 2:10, NLT)
- Chosen (1 Peter 2:9)
- Friend of God (John 15:15)
- Daughter (Galatians 3:26)
- A New Creation (Eph 4:22-24)
- Loved (John 3:16)

Tips for the project

- 1 If you have a large group, consider choosing one of the larger words or phrases and have them work as a team, and use a shorter word if you have a smaller group.

- 2 You can search for letters by going on a walk through your neighborhood, going on a fieldtrip, or just looking around your corps building.
- 3 When they are finished, printing the pictures in black and white, which will help make the composition read more like a word and less like a photo.

Origin of the Alphabet

For information on the origin of the alphabet visit this site:
<https://www.daytranslations.com/blog/origin-english-alphabet>.

Work of Art

When was the last time you stopped for a moment to take in the beauty around you? In the busyness of our lives, it's so easy to block out the world around us as we focus on our to-do lists. It's almost as if we are wearing blinders. Just stop for a moment and be still. Think, can you hear the birds chirping in the trees, the gentle coolness of the wind, the magnificent array of colors in a sunset? What a shame it would be to pass them by. Today we are reminded to step back and take some time to notice the works of art around us and within us.

Ephesians 2:10 (NLT) tells us this, "For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things He planned for us long ago." When you look in the mirror, do you see God's masterpiece? We look at the world around us and recognize that God made everything for a purpose, but do we believe that about ourselves? He says it right there in His Word, that He made us as a beautiful work of art, and that He has a plan and a purpose for our lives.

Occasionally I find myself watching the birds outside my window. They are always so beautiful and delicate. It's incredible to see them search for food and to hear their songs. Someday, I could see myself really getting into bird watching and learning all about the different kinds of birds. Through watching them I see God's grace and creativity through His creation.

I am reminded of the scripture, Matthew 6:26. "Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?" It is easy for us to see the beauty of such a beautiful animal, but sometimes it's difficult to see the same in ourselves. God tells us that we are so much more valuable than the birds. God made us as His masterpiece, and He loves us so much that He sent His Son to die for us. He gave us the gift of Salvation, but He also gave us a beautiful world to live in until the day that we will join Him in heaven.

My hope for all of us is that we take a moment to see the beauty around us, in nature, in others around us, and in ourselves. We are truly His work of art.



Education Programs

April 2025 – Every Day is Earth Day!

April 1, 2025 By Charlsie Godwin



Every Day is Earth Day!

Read John 15:5.

Purpose: Our environment is priceless. We need to make every effort to protect our

environment through protecting water and clean air.

Suggested Activities

Check the following website to look up the air quality in the city where you live.

<https://www.lung.org/research/sota>

Tower of Terror

In weeks prior to the meeting, ask women to collect items such as milk cartons, gum wrappers, egg cartons, toilet paper rolls, soda cans. On the day of the meeting have a competition to see who can build the tallest/most creative/ most colorful centerpiece for your program tables. Provide tape and glue guns for crafting.

Plastic Pollution Quiz

<https://www.earthday.org/plastic-pollution-quiz/> Have the women take this quiz. It could be projected on a screen, or the questions could be read out loud. The women could respond on paper or verbally, and then share the answers at the end of the quiz.

Fashion Quiz

<https://www.earthday.org/sustainable-fashion-quiz/> The following is another quiz regarding to the fashion industry that the women could complete.

Clean Up

Host a 15-minute clean-up inside and outside of your meeting location. Have the group separate items between what can be recycled and what is trash. See attached recycling guide.

<https://www.howlifeunfolds.com/sites/default/files/2023-02/Paper%20Recycling%20Printable.pdf>

Fashion Garment Swap

Host a sustainable fashion garment swap. Before this meeting, invite the women to bring a few items of clothing that they no longer wear to swap with other women in the group. Donate all leftover items to a Salvation Army Family store or local thrift store.

Wastefree Grocery Shopping

Describe what a wastefree grocery shopping trip might look like.

<https://www.treehugger.com/steps-zero-waste-shopping-routine-4858644>

Recycling Paper

Visit this site for tips of paper products that you can recycle.

<https://www.howlifeunfolds.com/tips-for-recycling-paper>

Earth Day

Read Psalm 51: 10-13.

The original observance of Earth Day began on April 22nd, 1970, when citizens realized that our planet was in danger. As pollution of water and air increased, so did the concern of scientists, politicians, and the public.

Show the short news report regarding past Earth Day observances.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/almanac-the-first-earth-day/>

Everything on our earth needs water and air to live. According to Earthday.org, the amount of plastic in the ocean will outweigh the population of fish in 2050. This may seem far away, but our children's generation will most likely see this come to fruition. Our fish will die. The world's water supply will be even more at risk, and the affects of worldwide pollution could be devastating. It can be discouraging to hear the large numbers associated with the amount of plastic waste and clean water being carelessly used, but even the small act of using a reusable straw could make an impact in the future of our Earth. When we begin to remove waste from our daily living, it can help improve the quality of life for the world around us.

Our relationship with Christ is similar to our dependency on water and air. John 5:15 says, "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." Without Christ, we are unprotected from attacks that the evil one brings. If we turn a blind eye to sin, our relationship with God will falter.

If we allow spiritual impurities such as jealousy, hate or unforgiveness to take up residence within our hearts, the fruit of the Spirit will no longer have room to live. Galatians 5:22 says, "But the Fruit of the Spirit, is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." This is the fruit that our lives produce when we remain connected to the Lord. When our lives begin to produce the fruit of the Spirit, that is when we can impact the world around us. Love, joy, and peace—who wouldn't want that? Our lives begin to reflect Jesus, and He has the power to change hearts. Just as we are responsible for taking care of the Earth the Lord so beautifully created, we are accountable for what we allow in our hearts. May we begin again today, in caring for the world in which we live and for our souls within.

Discuss

1. What does it mean to “remain” in Him?

- 1 When the world around us seems overwhelmed with distractions, what are ways that we can stay connected to Christ?
- 2 Is there a place in your heart where you have allowed pollution in? Take this time to pray and ask the Lord to remove any impurities and to replace them with the Fruit of the Spirit that comes only from Him.

Optional Time of Prayer Music: “Create In Me a Clean Heart” written by Keith Green

or “Broken Vessels” written by Hillsong United available on YouTube.

Close in Prayer



Education Programs

May 2025 – Priceless Gems

May 1, 2025 By Major Barbara Owen



Priceless Gems

Psalms 36:7 "How priceless is your unfailing love, O God! People take refuge in the shadow of your wings." God's love for us is priceless.

Program Ideas

There are over 300 different types of gems. See how many the women can name. The following website shows a picture and gives a brief description.

<https://www.gempundit.com/gemstones>. This site list 10 of the rarest and most valuable. [10 of the Rarest and Most Valuable Gemstones in the World \(thesprucecrafts.com\)](https://thesprucecrafts.com/10-of-the-Rarest-and-Most-Valuable-Gemstones-in-the-World)

Gemstone Kit

The following National Geographic kit is available from Amazon at a cost of \$25.00. It contains games, bingo, gemstone trivia and over 150 rocks and minerals.

https://www.amazon.com/NATIONAL-GEOGRAPHIC-Gemstone-Collection-Educational/dp/B08MJ5KZYP/ref=sr_1_11?keywords=geology+party+decorations&qid=1678120595&sr=8-11

Borax Crystals

Check YouTube for video demonstrations on how to make crystals using Borax. The following are a couple of the sites: <https://youtu.be/BHRFBKjqEvg> and <https://youtu.be/J-kUYFEtVh4>.

Kindness Rocks

Provide smooth river rocks and pens. Invite the women to write encouraging messages on the rocks and leave them in various locations for others to find. Check the Internet for ideas.

Decorations

Cover the tables with blue table clothes. Scatter fake gemstones in the center of the table or use glass bottles with mini-LED lights. These are available from Amazon and some craft stores.

My Favorite Stone

When my husband and I started looking at wedding rings we knew that we wanted to include Celtic knots because of my husband's background. We also wanted to go with some other stone rather than a diamond. We started to look at a tourmaline stone, which is also one of my husband's favorites. We decided on a pink tourmaline stone for my wedding ring.

Tourmaline has a complex and varied chemical formula that is characterized by the presence of boron, one of the naturally occurring elements of the earth. The major source for the boron atom is cooling molten rock, called magma. Along with the boron, tourmaline contains silicon, aluminum, and several hydrate molecules. Tourmaline may also contain sodium or calcium, but not both. In addition, lithium, iron, or magnesium may be present.

Understanding the volcanic formation of pegmatite is basic to knowing how tourmaline is created. Most specimens of the colorful gem are found in veins that run through this kind of igneous rock. Pegmatite is characterized by being coarse-grained and often containing very large crystals. It occurs when magma undergoes a cooling process, but in contrast to other igneous rocks, pegmatite develops from aqueous solutions within the molten magma. These veins of hot liquids tend to be rich in certain earth elements such as silicon and iron. As the watery mix of elements cools and crystallizes, it forms the pegmatite rock, which can contain several different mineral crystals, one of which is tourmaline.

Ephesians 1:13, 14 states, "And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of His glory." Often in Paul's writings he spends time admonishing the people for their bad behavior, lack of faith or for false teachings. In this portion of scripture Paul is addressing truth of the gospel and to encourage people in their faith.

It begins with the "... hearing the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation." Truth can only be found in scripture. It is where we find the plan for salvation. This the beginning of a firm foundation is in God. Only those who have heard the word of God can make a choice of accepting salvation. Unlike the formation of tourmaline, where the sources of the gems come from a variety of things, the truth of the gospel only comes from Scripture.

Once the gospel is heard, the reader must believe in the scripture. According to Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary, the New Testament Greek word *pisteuo* (believe) means "to be persuaded of" and "to place confidence in, to trust." This means that we believe so strongly in God that we are willing to commit our lives to Him and live the way we know He wants us to live. He has bridged the gap between us and Him by sending His Son to remove the barrier of sin and become that "bridge."

Paul goes on to tell the believer they are sealed by the Holy Spirit. This is His claim on us as His own. The Greek word translated "earnest" in these passages is *arrhabōn* which means "a pledge." The gift of the Spirit to believers is a down payment on our heavenly inheritance, which Christ has promised us and secured for us at the cross. It is because the Spirit has sealed us that we are assured of our salvation. No one can break the seal of God.

The ring that my husband purchased as a symbol of the covenant we made on our wedding is valuable to me, but I know it pales in comparison to my relationship with God, the trust I put in Jesus, and the work being done by the Holy Spirit.

My Prayer

Heavenly Father, how I praise and glorify Your holy name for the immeasurable riches that have been bestowed on me, at Christ's expense. Thank You that You have placed Your seal of

ownership on me so that none can pluck me out of Your hand. Help me to live in the power of the Spirit, to Your praise and glory, all the days of my life. In Jesus' name, Amen.



Education Programs

June 2025 – It Happened in the '50s. Our Memories are Priceless

June 1, 2025 By Major Judy Tekautz



It Happened in the '50s.

Our Memories are Priceless

Scripture: Philippians 1:1-11

Decoration Ideas

Use old vinyl records, black and white or red and white checked tablecloths to create a diner look. For centerpiece use wrapped old fashioned bubble gum or soda glasses filled with carnations to represent ice cream sodas. These are available at:

<https://www.amazon.com/WILLBOND-Artificial-Carnation-Carnations-Decoration/dp/B097BNDTJ4>). Anything popular in the 1950s would also be suitable.

Table Favors

Make candy treat bags with 1950s-type candy—rock candy, candy lipstick, candy necklaces, wax lips, root beer barrels, atomic fireballs, cherry and orange slices, and Pez[®].

Attendee Participation

Encourage the women to wear a 1950's style outfit—anything to get in the mood.

Program Ideas

Educational trivia quiz – 1950's People, Events and Religious Happenings

Copy and paste the following onto handouts for women to fill in the blanks. When giving the answers, provide supplemental information from online sources. Ask the women to share any memories they may have from these people/events.

People

- 1 This person became Queen of England in 1952 when her father, King George ___ died. She was _____ years old. When she died in 2022, she was the longest reigning monarch in UK history...70 years. This woman's name is_____.
- 2 On December 1st, 1955, _____ refused to move seats when the bus driver changed the location of the "colored" section sign to the row behind her to make more room for "white" passengers. Other "colored" folks moved. She did not and was arrested. This began the _____ that lasted over a year before a court decision ruled bus segregation unconstitutional.
- 3 _____ shot to fame as one of the most iconic performers of the time and made the "Rock and Roll" genre of music popular. He began in Memphis, TN. He appeared on numerous TV shows, released many hits, and starred in several movies in the 50's.

Events

- 1 Following World War II, Japan had to relinquish control of this country_____. The Soviet Union administered the northern zone, and the US administered the southern zone (it was divided at the 38th On June 25, 1950, troops from the northern portion invaded the south and began the _____. No official treaty has been signed so, technically, this war has never ended.
- 2 The space satellite known as _____ was launched by the Soviet Union in October 1957. This event led to the funding of _____ and began what was known as the "Space Race."
- 3 In 1959, _____ declared victory after Batista fled and became the dictator of _____. His reign led to many other situations between his country and others in the 1960's. He remained in power until 2008 and his Communist Party remains in power today.

Religious Happenings

- 1 As a result of the victories of communist armies in 1949, suppression of religion resulted in missionaries being expelled from the country of _____.
- 2 In 1950, Pope Pius XII declared the _____ official dogma of the Roman Catholic Church. The Catholic Church teaches that the _____ "having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory."
- 3 On October 7, 1950, _____ and the small community formed by her former pupils Diocese of _____ to identify as a Catholic organization. Their mission was to care for "the hungry, the naked, the homeless, the crippled, the blind, the lepers, all those people who feel unwanted, unloved, uncared for throughout society, people that have become a burden to the society and are shunned by everyone."

Answers:

- 1 VI; 25; Elizabeth II
- 2 Rosa Parks; Montgomery Bus Boycott
- 3 Elvis Presley
- 4 Korea; Korean War
- 5 Sputnik 1; NASA
- 6 Fidel Castro; Cuba
- 7 China
- 8 Assumption of Mary; Virgin Mary
- 9 Mother Teresa; Calcutta, India

Physical Activities

Do the Hula. Clear a spot at the center of the room and hand out hula hoops. Start the '50s music and see who can keep her hula hoop going the longest.

Jump and Jive. Provide jump ropes and see who can jump longer than a minute.

Lucky Limbo. Grab a broomstick and see how low the women can go.

As I Remember You

As we get older, we tend to become more aware of how the people and events of our past have affected our present and our future. Some of these memories can have a positive influence, some can be negative. Some affects are short lived, some make changes that are long-lasting. We have spent time reviewing memories from the 1950's and have been reminded of this "cause and affect" activity.

As believers, we should be able to look back on our spiritual lives and see those moments or people who have influenced us in our journey. In Philippians 1:1-11, Paul tells the people of the church at Philippi, "I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." He goes on to say that even during difficult times, the memory of them and their grace brings him joy. He shares that he continues to pray for them and their ministry.

May you take time to remember those events and people in your spiritual journey that are "priceless." Maybe you could do as Paul did and write a note to those individuals and tell them how thankful you are to God for them. As you write, say a prayer for them that they may continue to grow and have a lasting effect on others as well. Take time to also contemplate what impact you may be having on those around you. When they recall you in the future, will the memory be considered "priceless?"

About author



Major Judy Tekautz

USA Central Territory



Education Programs

July 2025 – Beat the Drum

July 1, 2025 By Captain Heather Montenegro



Beat the Drum

Read Psalm 150:1-5.

Suggested Activities

- Watch, "The Brass Behind the Salvation Army": (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xXZWojKibfs&t=12s>)
- Make a "Songbook Angel" using old Salvation Army songbooks. Use the following link for instructions: <https://susiej.com/how-to-make-a-hymnal-angel/>
- Have a hymn sing with women. Share the history behind the hymns. Visit the following website for "The Top 10 Hymns (and How They Were Inspired)" <https://www.ibelieve.com/faith/the-top-10-hymns-and-how-they-were-inspired.html>
- Invite your Divisional Music Director to come and provide a hands-on experience for the women to touch and play different types of instruments.
- Invite your youth music groups to put on a performance for the women. Provide refreshments following the performance.
- If you don't have youth music groups, perhaps there is a young person who is taking music lessons that could perform a recital for the group.
- Learn the history behind the timbrel at: <https://www.salvationarmy.org.au/hurstville/our-history/the-salvos-in-hurstville/the-timbrels/>. Allow the ladies to hold and feel a tambourine, teaching the different parts and proper care for this instrument. Then watch a timbrel brigade perform by searching on YouTube. Download the parts of a tambourine handout at: <https://artsphere.org/blog/musical-instrument-handouts-tambourine/>.
- Watch the history of The Joystings – The Salvation Army Christian Pop Group at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jlt33ekuf7w>.
- Use the following "Did You Know?" facts to teach about the history of music in The Salvation Army. Put together a "Music in The Salvation Army" word search.

Did You Know?

- The first Salvation Army band was formed in 1882 by accident. Charles Frye and his sons offered their services as bodyguards for Salvation Army street preachers. They began playing music on their brass instruments to give them something to do while they protected the officers, and soon after quitting their family business, to lead the Army's music department.
- The Salvation Army has approximately 2,500 brass bands worldwide.
- Since the 1920s, a Salvation Army brass band from Southern California has marched in the Tournament of Roses Parade, the longest participant of any music group.
- The Salvation Army was on the Top 50 chart in the UK. Started as a contemporary group at the International Training College, the Joystings combined old-fashioned gospel with new rock sounds. In April of 1964 the group shared the UK Top 50 chart with the English rock band the Beatles with their song, "It's an Open Secret."

- Timbrels, also called tambourines, became part of The Salvation Army when a converted Romani (Gypsy) brought her musical talent to The Salvation Army march.
- The drum has been called the “church bell of the Army.” Not only is it used for music, in the open-air it is often turned on its side to provide a place for penitent people to kneel and pray.
- “Strawberry Fields Forever” is the Beatles 1966 song. It is John Lennon’s nostalgic reference to a Salvation Army orphanage called Strawberry Field in Woolton, England. Lennon is said to have played with childhood friends in the trees behind the orphanage when he was a boy. The facility closed in 2005 but reopened in late 2019.
- With the boom of brass music, The Army’s Trade Department opened a Musical Instrument Factory in 1889 at the Trade Headquarters. It mainly produced instruments for brass bands, but they also manufactured other types of instruments to Salvation Army requirement, including those for timbrel groups.
- General William and Catherine Booth compiled several hymnbooks: The Christian Mission Hymnbook, Hymns for Special Services, The Penny Revival Hymn Book, and The Children’s Mission Hymn Book. In 1876 The Christian Mission Hymn Book contained 531 standard hymns, spirituals, and songs set to popular and national tunes, even old bar tunes.
- The chorus, “All that I Am,” was written by a William Himes s Salvationist in the Central Territory.
- The primary function of a corps band is to support the Sunday worship services of the corps, members are usually soldiers of the corps, and they use The Salvation Army Tune Book for their music.
- The first band to hold the designation of Staff Band was the US National Headquarters Staff Band (Now the New York Staff Band) which was formed in 1887.
- There are eleven Staff Bands that have been given that designation by the General. The International Staff Band is considered to be the premier band of the Army: Amsterdam (Netherlands) (1962), Canadian (Canada and Bermuda) (1907-1914, reformed 1969), Chicago (USA Central) (1904), German (Germany) (1989), Hong Kong (Hong Kong and Macau) (2008), International (United Kingdom) (1891), Japan (Japan) (1902), Melbourne (Australia) (1890), New York (USA East)(1887), USA West (USA Western) (Formed in the 1920’s and Designated a Staff Band in 2012), USA Southern Staff Band (USA South) (2022).

Additional Websites:

- The Story Behind Salvation Army Music: <https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/article/story-behind-salvation-army-music>
- Music in The Salvation Army: <https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/about-us/international-heritage-centre/virtual-heritage-centre/music>

Music as Worship

Since the beginning the Salvation Army has a long, rich history of music. As an integral part of our identity, we have used brass bands, choirs, worship teams, timbrels, and free music lessons as a vehicle to win the world for Jesus. In fact, our founder General William Booth declared in his first "Order for Bands" in *The War Cry* (1880), "Whereas . . . we have proved the great utility of musical instruments in attracting crowds to our open-air and indoor meetings, we do here express our desire that as many of our officers and soldiers generally, male or female, as have the ability to learn to play on some suitable instrument."

Music is a universal language that portrays every emotion that all humans can relate to. Music dates to Neanderthals with the oldest instrument found, the Neanderthal flute, which was 60,000 years old. Music also plays an integral part in Bible history with music being referenced over 800 times in scriptures from worship and praise, to mourning and dancing, grief to celebrations. Music is a way to express deepest fears, greatest joys, and sincerest adoration to God.

Psalm 150:1-5 states, "Praise the Lord. Praise God in His sanctuary; praise Him in His mighty heavens. Praise Him for His acts of power; praise Him for His surpassing greatness. Praise Him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise Him with the harp and lyre, praise Him with timbrel and dancing, praise Him with the strings and pipe, praise Him with the clash of cymbals, praise Him with resounding cymbals." The Psalmist reminds us of not only the reasons why we praise God but also physical ways we can praise Him. What is amazing about this scripture is that it doesn't add on, "if you have the talent to do so" or "if you have taken lesson and are good enough to play." No, it simply states, you have a reason to praise Him, so do it. Your praise is music to God's ears regardless of what instrument you use how it may sound to you or others.

Take the next few moments to write down reasons why you should worship God today. Then as we worship God, use the instruments to worship Him this morning. (Suggested Songs found on YouTube are: "Come, Now is the Time to Worship," "Here I am to Worship," or "How Great is Our God").



Education Programs

August 2025 – Honor God with Your Body

August 1, 2025 By Captain Carolina Yanez



Honor God with Your Body

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.

Supplies

- One beach ball (or more depending on the size of your group)
- Bluetooth speaker
- Practice the workout ahead of time. Use the workout suggestions provided or your own version. This link is for armchair exercises.
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLgvL3aGzMByecNYtMcyK_g
- Place the chairs in a circle.
- Play upbeat Christian music as the women arrive and during the workout. (See suggested music below.)

Low Impact Exercises

Warmups

- Sit and extend arms up over your head, stretch fingers. Bend arms in front of you and extend again. Repeat 10 times and stretch forward.
- Extend legs forward together, then with each foot touch your neighbor's shoe to your right and to your left. Repeat 5 or 10 times.
- Exercise 1
- Extend your arms in front of you. Then bring your right knee up to your right hand, then down. Now your left knee to your left hand and down. Now bring both knees up to your hands. Repeat.
- Exercise 2
- Twist torso to your right and hold for 5 seconds. Smile to your neighbor. Now to your left and hold for 5 seconds. Repeat.
- Exercise 3
- One participant gets the beachball and sits. Put ball between your feet and hold. With your legs extended, pass beachball to your neighbor (only using your legs and feet) and hold your legs up until it is your turn to receive the ball again. Rest legs for a few seconds and repeat going on the opposite direction.
- Exercise 4
- Extend your arms in front of your chest. Hold.
- In this same position. The woman who has the ball, holds the ball in her hands and passes it to her neighbor. Hold arms extended in front of you, until you receive the ball again. Rest arms for a few seconds and repeat going on the opposite direction.
- Exercise 5

- Extend your arms and legs in front of you. Bring legs up and down and arms up and down at the same time, count to five and rest. Repeat.

Sit to Be Fit

Some of the things most women struggle with is caring for their bodies. In my experience, the older I get, the more difficult it is to stay healthy and to exercise. "I am too busy to exercise," I say. "Eating healthy is too expensive and complicated." But the truth is that I become too comfortable and simply choose not make time to care for my body. Can anyone relate?

Corinthians 6:12 says "I will not be mastered by anything." Many of us, have unhealthy habits that affect our body, and we allow the things of the world to master us. We often look for satisfaction and indulge in foods and habits that hurt our bodies. It is important that we acknowledge these unhealthy habits and ask ourselves this question, "Am I bringing glory to God with what I am doing?" It could be something that affects our mind; the shows we watch, the music we listen to; or something that affects other areas of our bodies like the foods we are eating. Perhaps we are doing it all. We are sitting for long periods of time in front of the T.V., eating the wrong foods, and watching inappropriate shows.

God gave His people words of wisdom to be passed down from generation to generation. These words, which are recorded in the Bible are there for us to live by to have a full life in Christ. In Colossians 3:2 we are called to guard our minds. In Proverbs 4:23-25 David tells Solomon to guard his heart, his mouth and even his eyes and feet. In 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20, Paul urges the church to honor God with our bodies, because God Himself abides in us. Paul reminds the Corinthians that their bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. The Temple was a place of worship, it was to be treated with respect. Inside the temple, there were items that were there to bring God glory. Paul is calling all Christians to watch out for temptation and to abstain from sinful practices involving their bodies. These words are a call to keep our bodies healthy in every way.

Self-control is difficult, and it involves controlling every part of our body. Jesus said, "without me you can do nothing," It is only through Him that we will be able to treat our bodies with respect, preparing foods that will nourish us and not hurt us. Memorizing this small portion of scripture; "Honor God with your bodies" will help when we are faced with important decisions when it comes to how we are treating our bodies.

Our challenge today is to do our best to treat every part of our body with respect, knowing that in everything that we do, we should be honoring Him who crafted us and gave us life.

Discussion Questions:

- 1 When was the last time that you took time to care for your body?
- 2 What are some things you should do to improve your health?

- 3 What is the workout you most enjoy?
- 4 What is one unhealthy habit you can give up?
- 5 How can you honor God with your body this week?

Prayer:

God our creator, Your word says that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. We thank You for knowing us and for wanting us to live a full life that brings You honor. Help us to remember that You love us, and that our body belongs to You. Help us to be good stewards of what You have given us. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Other Resources:

The following are links to workouts to Christian music suitable for exercising.

Praise Workouts:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H7OnZCtISkl&list=PL9t2BfZ7yRhCZSEQESmYsGv-ZdhJrYR8y>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nnDH2jf3hZE>

Cool Down:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JR-jEGJ6xWM&list=PL9t2BfZ7yRhCZSEQESmYsGv-ZdhJrYR8y&index=5>



Education Programs

September 2025 – Are You Smarter Than a 5th Grader?

September 1, 2025 By Major Barbara Logan



Are You Smarter Than a 5th Grader?

Scripture: Psalm 139:1-6, 17, 18.

Decoration Ideas

Check the following websites for decorating ideas:

<https://pin.it/1mtleFK>

<https://www.juliabettencourt.com/womens-ministry/theme-helps/back-to-school-event-theme.pdf>

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/668362400968241467/>

Ice Breaker

Have each woman write on an index card something they would like to learn. The leader collects the cards, shuffles them, and places them on a table. Each person tries to match a woman to a card.

Are You Smarter than a 5th Grader?

Use the following website to come up with questions to play the game, "Are you smarter than a 5th grader?" Invite the youth from the corps to play as the opposing team to make it an intergenerational night.

<https://www.scarymommy.com/are-you-smarter-than-a-fifth-grader-questions>

<https://www.slideshare.net/guest0b8b14/are-you-smarter-than-a-fifth-grader-bible-game>

Guest Speaker

Invite someone to teach the women a new skill or craft or to learn new information. Following are some suggestions:

Diversity speaker (Could be from Hmong American Center, Hispanic Association)

Health and Well-Being (Most hospitals have a speaker's bureau.)

Community Leadership (Alderman, City Council Member, Police or Fire Chief)

Technology and Emerging Trends (Corporations, Cell phone companies)

Higher Education (Community Colleges, Tech Schools)

Martial Arts-Self Defense class

Refreshment Ideas

School inspired ideas can be found at:

<https://pin.it/1Pymp5c>

<https://pin.it/6D0Kzwt>

Service Ideas

Pack back to school backpacks to giveaway to underprivileged children (could be filled with school supplies or school lunch items)

Volunteer at a grade school to read a book to a classroom.

How Smart Are You?

I have the great privilege of being a grandma to three children, 8, 6 and 3. One of our favorite things to do when we are together is to play games. I pulled out a new game from my closet for my 8-year granddaughter and I to play. It's called, "Snap Shouts." The idea of the game is to look at pictures and come up with descriptive words that begin with a letter chosen. I had been given a picture that I had no idea what it was depicting. My granddaughter Eva said, "Grandma, you don't know what the picture is? It's from the War of 1812." Wow! Sometimes it's even difficult to be smarter than a second grader!

The TV show "Are You Smarter than a 5th Grader?" first aired in February of 2007 with Jeff Foxworthy as the host. Two people since that time have won a million dollars. Both winners were leaders in higher education.

Learning something new every day is important for our growth. The Goodlife Centre blog talks about how learning something new enriches the quality of our life. They give 10 reasons as to why it's so important. <https://www.thegoodlifecentre.co.uk/10-reasons-to-learn-something-new-everyday/>

A few years ago, I had the opportunity to take a Naturalist course. It was 40 hours of class time, 40 hours of volunteer time and 20 hours of field trips. My volunteer hours were spent at a nature center, where school groups would come and learn new things about creatures and creation. I had the opportunity to teach some classes to K-2 children. It was beneficial for me to take this course and be around others that challenged me to dig deeper and discover new things.

Psalm 139 is a prayer of David. It does not speak about the knowledge we have, but rather God's knowledge and understanding of who we are. God is omniscient, all-knowing. We get a bird's eye view through David's eyes about the intimate and personal nature of God's involvement in our lives.

It is valuable to have knowledge. It is a priceless attribute to claim, but it pales in comparison to the perfect knowledge of God. Scripture tells us that if we look ahead or behind, God is there, guiding and protecting. He knows everything about us both inside and out. As believers

in Christ, He is a reassuring presence in our lives. Scripture continues, reminding us that there isn't any place we can go or be that the Spirit of God is not present.

It gives me comfort to know that God is with me. When I go through difficult or challenging situations in my life and don't have the knowledge to deal with what it, the all-knowing God is present and active in every situation no matter the circumstance. There is nothing in this world that God is not aware of. God places great value on our lives and wants an intimate relationship with us by speaking to us personally.

Many of us have experienced difficult, heart wrenching situations in recent years. But we know that God has carried us through them and understands our deepest thoughts and fears.

Here are some reminders to take with you.

- 1 God knows you and loves you.
- 2 God pursues you wherever you go.
- 3 God made you with His love.
- 4 God has a plan for your life.

Questions to Contemplate:

- 1 Is there something in your life that is too big for you to have to handle?
- 2 Reading Psalm 139:1-6, 17-18. Does this scripture give you comfort?
- 3 Is there something that you feel you can give to God because it is too difficult for you to handle on your own.

Fellowship Programs



THE SALVATION ARMY WOMEN'S MINISTRIES RESOURCES

PRICELESS

2024-2025 PROGRAM YEAR

**God, your thoughts about me are priceless.
No one can possibly add them all up**

Psalm 139:17 (NIRV)





Fellowship Programs

October 2024 – Priceless Friendships

October 1, 2024 By Lieutenant Melissa Rowe



Introduction

Friendship is one of the priceless things in life. God did not expect us to go through life alone. He created us for community. Sharing our lives with other believers is worth more than all the gold, diamonds, and money in the world.

Program Ideas

The Price is Right

This website: <https://www.thedatingdivas.com/the-price-is-right/> has the supplies you need to play the classic game show, The Price is Right. It gives ways to play if you would like to meet at a local store like Walmart or play at the corps using the store's website. It has invitations to give the women the week before. The winner could be given a gift card.

Most Expensive Paintings in the World

Have the women try to put the top ten most expensive art pieces in order. The website Portrait Flip <https://www.portraitflip.com/blog/most-expensive-paintings/> has images of each of the paintings, how and when they were sold, and what the cost would be today with inflation. Print out the pictures or display them in a PowerPoint. Invite the woman to rate them from the least to most expensive.

Re-create Artwork

Challenge the women to re-create famous artwork. The Getty Museum has some great examples, instructions, and tips. To support the idea of friendship, pick famous paintings that have two or more people in them so the women work and laugh together.

<https://www.getty.edu/news/getty-artworks-recreated-with-household-items-by-creative-geniuses-the-world-over/>

Share a Priceless Memory

Ask the women to bring a keepsake or photo and share the story of why it is such a prized possession.

Priceless Friendships

When I start a new book, I always read the dedication and acknowledgements. I find out about the people who helped an author's dream come true. The last book I read was dedicated to the author's friend who had unexpectedly died. The dedication was so moving about what an amazing friend this person had been. Even though I did not know either of these women personally, I wept for what had been lost. The author's friend had made her life easier, more joyful, and overall better. I immediately wanted to call my best friend and tell her all the things I love about her. I wanted to make sure she knew how important she was to me. And then I started thinking about what she would say about me.

Ralph Waldo Emerson once wrote, "The only way to have a friend is to be one." He is echoing the KJV of Proverbs 18:24 "A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." The gift of true friendship is a two-way street. What makes that gift priceless is it is based on love. I think today we have lost our of understanding

of what it means to have a friend and be a friend. We have friends on social media that we will never connect with in real life. We have frenemies who we do not like hanging out with, but we do because they are part of the group. We have work friends who know nothing of our personal lives nor we of theirs. None of these friend groups are going to mention us in a book dedication. This type of friendship is not based on love but on situation.

Priceless friendships are based on love. We see in Scripture over and over that love is an action, not a feeling. When we talk about feeling loved it is because of the actions someone has taken. Paul brings home this point repeatedly in his letters, the most famous being the love chapter. In 1 Corinthians 13 he breaks down love by showing the actions love does not take: does not envy, does not boast, is not proud, is not dishonoring to others, is not self-seeking, is not easily angered, keeps no record of wrongs, does not delight in evil. He also gives the actions love does take: is patient, is kind, rejoices in truth, it protects, it trusts, it hopes, it perseveres, and it never fails.

Paul addresses the actions of love again in Romans 12:9-12. The entirety of chapter 12 is about living in a community. Did you know that spiritual friendships are considered a spiritual discipline? Being an active friend and allowing others to actively participate in your life is one of the ways God reveals Himself to us and to others. These spiritual friendships draw us closer to God and help to transform us increasingly into His image. What could be more valuable than that? This passage tells us to "Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality." We need spiritual friends because sometimes it is hard to cling to what is good, be zealous, joyful, patient, and faithful. And our friends need us for the same reasons. God created us to need Him, and other people. We were not meant to do this thing called life alone.

Who are the people in your life you would call a friend? A best friend? A spiritual friend? Who would call you the same? Who are you being vulnerable with and allowing them in to see the places where God is still working so they can stand alongside you? Are you living in community as God desires? Take some time today to take stock of your relationships, are they mutual, life-giving, an encouragement? Be intentional with your close friends, letting them in and asking them to be active in your life.

Resources

<https://curateministries.org/curateblog/2020/8/18/spiritual-friendship>

<https://www.navigators.org/resource/spiritual-friendship/>



Fellowship Programs

November 2024 – Priceless Time Together

November 1, 2024 By Lt. Colonel Edith Pigford



Introduction

When we share with one another, whether family or friends, we receive from them as we give of ourselves. Some of the sharing is about good, wonderful times and experiences. Some is of

painful and challenging times. Sometimes we bring guilt, sometimes sorrow, sometimes joy, sometimes we bring hope. Ecclesiastes 3 talks about many situations in our lives.

Program Ideas

Preparation

Prepare a buffet of Autumn snack foods. Include some seasonal items—apples, cider, fruit breads. There are many ideas online. Encourage conversation as the women mingle at the table about food/meal and memories that certain foods evoke.

Activity

Thanksgiving is a time of family gatherings. It often reminds us of times in the past. It may be recipes, or decorations, or locations, or people that remind us of priceless times perhaps never to be experienced again except in our memories. Use a canning jar or macaroni box into which you could put slips of paper on which are written memory questions. Have the women chose one from the box and share their answers.

- 1 What are some foods that remind you of past family gathering?
- 2 What is your first memory of Thanksgiving?
- 3 Are there traditions associated with Thanksgiving that you still carry out with your family?
- 4 Did you every celebrate Thanksgiving in an unusual location?
- 5 Share a funny or embarrassing Thanksgiving story.

Craft

Paint a picture of a memory from this year, or years gone by, on a Christmas tree ornament to be hung on this year's Christmas tree. Check craft or Dollar stores for clear plastic Christmas balls and use either permanent markers, or paints to design the decoration. Add the year you are remembering.

Sudoku Thankful Puzzle

Sudoku has become an enjoyable puzzle of all ages. The letters of 'Thankful' can be found in all columns and lines, as well as within the marked boxes. Each letter can only be used once in each word. Check the following website for ideas: <https://www.247sudoku.com/thanksgiving/>.

Priceless Time Together

Read Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 (Share in reading the verses. The lines written in italics are simplified renderings of the verses which may help to encourage feedback regarding those times in our

lives.)

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens:

a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot,

A time to begin something new, a time to let something go,

a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build,

A time to stop and a time to begin

⁴ a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,

A time to regret/sorrow and a time to renew

⁵ a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,

A time to let go and a time to hold on

⁶ a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,

A time to decide and a time to act

⁷ a time to tear and a time to mend,
a time to be silent and a time to speak,

A time to show love, a time to show wisdom

⁸ a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace.

A time to choose right and know wrong

(Italics are thoughts/restatements of the Bible verses)

Alphabet Memories

Someone has said “memories are priceless, but they certainly have great value.” Using the letters of the alphabet, write one word that reminds you of a memory for each letter.

Example: C – cake (reminder of my mother’s Christmas cake) or M – mountain (reminds me of a family cabin on a mountain). Share the alphabet answers.

Your Memory Chest

In the movie “We need a little Christmas,” a child reminded his mother that when you have a memory chest you can keep memories safe, and you never lose them. He had made her a box

filled with items that reminded him of the times they shared together. Perhaps some of the alphabet memories we just shared should be kept in a memory chest, so they won't get lost.

We read in 1Thessalonians 5:16 -18, *"Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit."*

We are to give thanks IN all circumstances, not FOR all circumstances. Although some circumstances can prove to be very helpful to us in the days ahead. Perhaps it is while we rejoice, despite our circumstances, and pray in every circumstance, whether challenging or inspiring, that we can give thanks. In giving thanks we say, "I trust in You Lord and thank You for Your power and grace in me."

Paul wrote these words from Corinth, when Timothy returned from Thessalonica, to report that the new converts stood fast in the Lord despite persecution. Think of one thing that you can we share to encourage one another today. *(Spend some time in sharing.)*

Conclusion

Conclude your time together by praying for one for another. Offer prayers of thanksgiving, prayers of praise and worship.

Songs

364, "Give thanks with a grateful heart." *

#395, "Thank you, Lord, for all your goodness." *

#45, "Now thank we all our God, with heart and soul and voices." *

*The Salvation Army Song Book



Fellowship Programs

December 2024 – Happy Birthday, Precious!

December 1, 2024 By Mary MacKay



Introduction

We are coming into the season of Christmas. A time of celebration, of gift giving, parties, family, and fun! Do any of you have a birthday in December? Or do you know of anyone that does? For those people, it can be great or not so great depending on the way in which it is

celebrated. However, the most important birthday that we celebrate is on December 25, which is the birth of Jesus.

Program Ideas

Decorations and Refreshments

Decorate the room for a birthday party. You could use Christmas or traditional birthday party decorations. Decorate four tables for each quarter of the year and have the women sit at the table corresponding to their birth months. For January – March, decorate with winter, Valentine’s Day, or St Patrick’s day; April–June, use spring type items; July –September, use a summer or back to school; and October – December, decorate with fall to Christmas items. Serve one large birthday cake but decorate each of the 4 sections with a different season or serve 4 differently decorated small cakes representing each of the seasons. Ice cream cups and punch could finish up the refreshments.

Games

Check the following website for Christmas party games and ideas:

[50 Christmas Party Games and Ideas \(signupgenius.com\)](https://www.signupgenius.com)

[64 Free Printable Christmas Games \(mypartygames.com\)](https://www.mypartygames.com)

Craft Idea

Supply all the needed items to make a bracelet or pair of earrings for your own birthday gift or to give as a gift. These items can be found in most crafts stores (Michaels, Hobby Lobby) or at Walmart and on Amazon.

You will need:

- Fishhook earring wires or DIY Bracelet Chain
- Jump Rings
- Assorted Charms
- Flat Nose Pliers

For the earrings:

- Open the jump ring with the pliers, add the earring wire and charm. Close jump ring.

For the bracelet:

- Open jump ring using the pliers, add charm, attach open jump ring (with charm on it) to the bracelet, close jump ring.

Happy Birthday, Precious!

Here's to new beginnings. I have always thought it would not be much fun to have a December or Christmas birthday. You might get more gifts, or you might feel like you were cheated. I personally know of someone who was always told their gifts were 'birth-mas' gifts. This person was often upset by this. However, our attitude can make all the difference in the world. We can show gratitude by being thankful for who we are.

Do you and your family have Christmas traditions? When my children were little, they knew that before any gifts from the tree were passed out and opened, we always started with singing Happy Birthday to Jesus. Some years we had an advent wreath and would read and light the candles each day.

When I was a child growing up, we were allowed to open one small gift from under the tree on Christmas Eve. Usually, it was a gift from our grandparents. We also carried that tradition on with our children when they were younger.

Jesus was the first Christmas present ever given. A most important gift for each of us. As we give gifts this season, let's remember to celebrate God's precious and priceless gift of peace to us. Peace and life that come by faith in Jesus, our Savior.

Our personal relationship with Jesus begins with one verse. First Corinthians 5:17 (NLT) "This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone, a new life has begun!" Because of Jesus and who He is, we are born again of the Spirit. We don't have to be imitators of the world around us. We can reject things from our past and focusing on the future. moving forward with our new selves, new actions, and new attitudes to become that new creation. We need to celebrate who we are and our relationship with Christ. Live your life the way God intended for you to. Become who He wants you to be, a new creation in Him.

We should celebrate the birth of Jesus every December. Because of Him, we are born again by the Spirit. Find out the truth of who you are in Christ. As we celebrate Jesus's birth and His love for us, as well as our love for Him, we reflect and remember the priceless gift that God has given in Jesus and the free precious gift of the Holy Spirit, our comforter. Jesus' birth, Jesus' death, Jesus' resurrection a Priceless gift!

Do you struggle to find out who you think you are and who God says you are? Below are, "I am..." Scripture verses. These verses remind us of who we are in Christ. (*Print and cut verses to pass around in a basket. Have each person choose one to read. Discuss the scriptures.*) Take your "I am..." verse home and put it in a prominent place to remind you of who God says you are.

Scripture Verses to Share

"I am..."

I am complete. Colossians 2:10 – *So you also are complete through your union with Christ, who is the head over every ruler and authority.*

I am chosen. 1 Thessalonians 1:4 – *We know, dear brothers and sister, that God loves you and has chosen you to be his own people.*

I am forgiven. 1 John 2:12 – *I am writing to you who are God's children because your sins have been forgiven through Jesus.*

I am a new creation. 2 Corinthians 5:17 – *This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!*

I am one with Christ. 1 Corinthians 6:17 – *But the person who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.*

I am safe in Christ. Colossians 3:3 – *For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God.*

I am victorious. Romans 8:1 – *So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.*

I am beautiful. Song of Solomon 4:7 – *You are altogether beautiful, my darling, beautiful in every way.*

I am special to God. 1 Peter 2:9 – *But you are not like that, for you are chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for He called you out of the darkness into His wonderful light.*

I am created for good works. Ephesians 2:10 – *For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things He planned for us long ago.*

Song

"Joy to the World" (SA Songbook # 113):

Close in prayer.



Fellowship Programs

January 2025 – Aging Beautifully

January 1, 2025 By Captain Brianne K. Spooner



Aging Beautifully

Introduction

As we age, we may notice some wisdom lines around our eyes or new silvery/white colors in our hair. Take a moment to look in a mirror. Look at that beautiful person looking back at you. How long has it been since you truly looked at yourself and not just around your face to correct something you may consider a flaw. Write down some things that you love about yourself. Now take some time to go around the room and write down what you think is beautiful about the other women in your group.

Program Ideas

Beautiful You

Supplies Needed

- Place mirrors around the room for the women to look at themselves.
- Provide paper and pens for the women to write what they love about themselves.
- Print out a sheet with each of the women's names written on the top. Ask the other women in the group to write what beauty they see in their sisters. They will take this home as a reminder of just how beautiful they are.
- Print small reminder cards of God's promise to those who hope in the Lord.

Activity

Lead a smiling exercise: Feel free to repeat steps as you lead. Sometimes people need a few more deep breaths to quiet themselves before participating in this kind of activity.

- Firmly plant your feet on the ground and place your palms on your knees. Relax your shoulders. Colossians 2:7. "Let your roots grow down 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."
- Take a deep breath in and hold it for 5 seconds. Let the breath out and say, "Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me."
- Carefully form your mouth into a smile. God has created these muscles to do this action of smiling. Think about a time that a smile made your day. If you are comfortable sharing that memory, take some time to do so. Think about how your smile can make someone's day. How can your smile show someone Jesus?
- Allow your mouth to relax as you pray silently to ask that Lord to bless your smile as others see and experience it.

- Take a deep breath again and smile. Take note of each muscle tightening and pulling as your mouth forms the beautiful smile that God has given you.
- Look around the room and smile at each other.

Aging Beautifully

Play the song "Even in My Old Age." YouTube (<https://youtu.be/leaDNylMvuo>)

Scripture: Isaiah 40: 27 – 31 (Complete Jewish Bible)

"Why do you complain, Ya'akov (Jacob); why do you say, Isra'el (Israel), "My way is hidden from Adonai (God), my rights are ignored by my God?" Haven't you known, haven't you heard that the everlasting God, Adonai the Creator of the ends of the earth, does not grow tired or weary? His understanding cannot be fathomed. He invigorates the exhausted, He gives strength to the powerless. Young men may grow tired and weary, even the fittest may stumble and fall; but those who hope in Adonai will renew their strength, they will soar aloft s with eagles' wings; when they are running, they won't grow weary, when they are walking, they won't get tired."

As we age, we find that we tire a little more quickly. We don't have the same strength as when we were young. Stairs seem a little steeper, roads a little longer. We can grow weary. Although we grow weary physically, the Lord will give us strength to do His will. No matter our age He still has work for us to do.

Isaiah was a prophet to Israel. In Isaiah 40 he is sharing with the people why they should feel comforted even in the midst of the hardships they are suffering. He tells the people about the great, marvelous, and awesome power of God. The portion we look at today ends with the promise that God does not grow tired or weary. Isaiah tells the people that if their hope is in God, they will be rewarded with renewed strength. Those who hope in the Lord will soar like the eagles, meaning that they will be able to reach incredible heights, they will run without growing weary. God will sustain them and help them endure, and they will walk without growing tired. The Lord will keep them energized to do his will.

Prayer

Lord, I thank you for making me a beautiful part of your creation no matter my age. I thank you for the evidence that I see in my face and my life that you have always been good to me, even in difficult times. My prayer is that you use my life to shine your beauty to those around me. Help me to be your hands, feet, heart, tear ducts, and smile when I encounter others. Amen.



Fellowship Programs

February 2025 – You Are Priceless!

February 1, 2025 By Major Marisabel Swires



You Are Priceless!

Introduction

Have you ever felt discouraged and worthless? Sometimes our emotions can get us down. If we look in God's Word, we can find encouragement for ourselves and others. God also calls us to encourage those around us.

Program Ideas

Room Set Up

Place around the room different sizes heart or flower shaped cut outs with words of encouragement. Following are quotes and words to put on your hearts and flowers.

<https://www.happierhuman.com/words-of-encouragement/>

<https://dailyverses.net/encouragement>

Craft – Paper Flowers

Check the Internet or Pinterst for ideas and directions. Country Living – 21DIYPaperFlowers.

Snack Ideas

If you are using a Valentine theme, make small bags of trail mix and attach encouraging quotes to them. Or serve heart shaped cookies.

Ice Breaker Ideas

This game will lighten up the mood and help the women put aside any difficult situations even for a short time.

<https://womensministrytoolbox.com/valentine-candy-pass/>

Activity (after devotion)

Encourage the women to write a letter to their future self with compliments and encouragement. Have them choose a scripture verse that resonates with them from those listed below.

John 16:33, "In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

Isaiah 41:10 (NIV), "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

Philippians 4:6, 7 (NIV), "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which

transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Psalm 34:4-5, 8, “I sought the LORD, and He answered me and delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to Him are radiant, and their faces shall never be ashamed. Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!”

Romans 8:28, “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose.”

Joshua 1:9, “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”

Matthew 6:31-34 (NIV), “So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

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.”

Romans 15:13 (NIV), “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

2 Chronicles 7:14, “If my people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

Philippians 2:3-4 “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”

Isaiah 41:13, “For I, the LORD your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, ‘Fear not, I am the one who helps you.’”

1 Peter 5:6, 7, “Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time He may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you.”

Psalm 94:18, 19, “When I thought, “My foot slips,” Your steadfast love, O LORD, helped me up. When the cares of my heart are many, Your consolations cheer my soul.”

Revelation 21:4, “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have

passed away." And He who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new."

You Are Priceless!

We read in Isaiah 43:4, "Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you,
I will give people in exchange for you, nations in exchange for your life."

Do you ever wake up in the morning and think to yourself, "Why am I going to work or school? I can't do the work properly or complete the tasks required." Or you may say to yourself, "Why bother being part of (Insert activity or relationship, etc.)? No one listens or cares." Sometimes you must encourage yourselves. A good way to do this is to turn to the Bible. There are many scriptures that will encourage you in your time of doubt or disappointments.

I know encouraging yourself can be a difficult task for some of us. We must look inside ourselves and find what motivates us or what our strengths are, what is good about us. What can we do to change in a positive manner not just in us but around us? My husband likes to refer to it as "Your Muchness" which is a quote from the Mad Hatter:

https://www.google.com/search?q=alice+and+wonderland+muchness&rlz=1C1DIMC_enUS862US862&oq=alice+and+wonderlar8&safe=active&ssui=on#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:18b763e0,vid:haiF5DOWwRo,st:0

This is from Alice in Wonderland. But it speaks to who we are and how a change of situation can make you lose who you were inside, the 'aboutness' of you. I know this feeling all too well. There was a time in my life where I was ready to fight against all things negative. Where I wanted to be positive and achieve my goals and do all the things that were required of me. But there were often repeated setbacks. I felt like all the goals and things I was trying to accomplish seemed so impossible. I started to doubt myself. I was living every day discouraged. I had lost my "muchness." I had a few friends and my husband who would try to encourage me. But I wasn't truly encouraged until I put my focus and source of encouragement in God's word and then repeating it over and over. "For I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11.

Isaiah 43:4 says, "Since you are precious and honored in My sight, and because I love you, I will give people in exchange for you, nations in exchange for your life." Discouragement is a favorite tool of the enemy of your soul. Satan would love for you to doubt your worth. Your heavenly Father makes your value clear through the prophet Isaiah. He will be with you. He will not allow you to perish. See yourself through your Father's words. You are more valuable than the nations.

Close in prayer.



Fellowship Programs

March 2025 – Teatime with My Sisters

March 1, 2025 By Major Crista-Lyn Dalrymple



Teatime with My Sisters

Introduction

A tea party is always a fun time. It's a time where the women can feel elegant and experience a few moments of relaxation and fellowship around the table.

Program Ideas

Table Settings

Many craft stores sell beautiful floral items which can be used on the tables. Thrift stores are also excellent resources for purchasing a variety of teacups and teapots. Tablecloths, pretty plates, napkins, centerpieces all lend an air of daintiness and elegance. Tiered sandwich holders make pretty table centers, especially when loaded up with a variety of finger foods. This can even be a craft: dollar store plates, candle holders and a glue gun are all that is needed to make pretty serving dishes. Fill them up with crustless sandwiches, chocolate dipped strawberries, and scones. A variety of teas with milk, cream, honey and cubed sugar make it more fun and allow for experimentation. Keep some coffee on hand too for those who love coffee more than tea.

Types of Tea Reference

Check the following website for different varieties of tea.

<https://www.stashtea.com/blogs/education/tea-types#:~:text=While%20there%20are%20literally%20thousands,%2C%20pu%2Derh%20a>

Benefits of Tea

This website outlines the health and wellness benefits of tea.

<https://www.pennmedicine.org/updates/blogs/health-and-wellness/2019/december/health-benefits-of-tea>

Tea Quiz

Test the women's knowledge regarding tea.

<https://teaforte.com/blogs/tea-notes/tea-quiz-test-your-tea-knowledge>

Seven Tips to Brew Better Tasting Tea

All about tea and how to brew a good cup of tea.

www.redblossomtea.com

Teatime with My Sisters

The world is a busy place. It always seems like there is something to do, somewhere to be, or someone that needs our attention. There's nothing wrong with this, but we do need to make sure that we carve out time to spend with our sisters in Christ and of course with our Savior.

Life is not always easy. In fact, there are times when easy is the farthest thing from it. Things can be going wrong at home, in the workplace, maybe we had an argue with our best friend. Sometimes it doesn't even take much for us to get discouraged or to feel alone.

The beautiful thing about being a follower of Jesus is that we are never really alone. Jesus promises to always be with us, and we can hold on to that with all our hearts. Take time to know Him. Grab your favorite cup of tea or coffee and take a moment in the day and speak to Him. One on one time with Jesus is awesome and can give us the strength we need to face whatever we are going through.

As part of the family of God, we also have the privilege of being there for one another. Hebrews 10:24, 25 is a great reminder that it is good to meet together. If we can do it over a cup of coffee or tea, it's even better! "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" (Heb. 10:24).

We are living in a world where following Jesus isn't popular and is often ridiculed. Finding sisters in Christ who can hold us accountable, who we can pour out our joys and sorrows to, who can encourage us to keep going when the going gets tough, is what is so beautiful about being a part of a family.

Let's take a moment to reflect on a few Scriptures that point to why it is good to meet. "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another" (Prov. 27:17 NIV). Being accountable to one another can help make us more like Jesus: "Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective" (James 5:16 NIV).

Accountability and sharing with one another means that we get to pray for each other. There is no greater privilege. "Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing" (1 Thess. 5:11, NIV). We live in a world where people like to tear down and destroy. We only have to look at Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat to realize this. As sisters in Christ, meeting together is where we can encourage one another and as the Scripture says build each other up. "Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn" (Rom. 12:15 NIV). Let's be happy for our sisters when something good happens and pray for them when life is difficult. Let's hold her up our when she may not be able to hold herself up.

God didn't design us to be alone. We are called to love one another and spending a few moments over a cup of tea or coffee is a way in which we can say to our sisters in Christ, "I care about you enough to want to check in with you and see how you are doing." We can all get busy doing our own thing, but God calls us to be in community. So, the next time you

have some time, call one of your sisters in Christ, grab a cup of tea or coffee at home, at the corps or at your favorite shop and encourage one another.

Prayer

Jesus, we come to You today, thanking you for the opportunity to be together for this time. Thank You that we are sisters in Christ who can laugh together, cry together and pray for one another. Jesus, we love that we can spend time alone with You and that you are always there for us. But we thank You too that you have given us each other to walk this journey of life with. We love You, Jesus.



Fellowship Programs

April 2025 – Your Voice is My Favorite Sound

April 1, 2025 By Major Susan Ferreira



Your Voice is My Favorite Sound

Scripture References: Psalm 100; Ephesians 5:19, 20

Decorations

Place sheets of music on the tables. Add centerpieces of small vases of flowers and music notes. Check Amazon and Oriental Trading Company for inexpensive music decorations. Play Christian vocal music in the background downloaded from YouTube.

Program Ideas

Program Activities

“Getting to know you” activity: Use questions to encourage the women to interact with each other. This could be a list of questions with each woman spending two minutes to exchange answers, before moving to another individual. Or draw a chart with different questions in each box. The women need to find someone who fits that category and get her signature. For example: Find someone who was born in another country. Find someone who has more than four children.

Music Fun

Put together a word search on songs, or types of music.

https://www.education.com/worksheet-generator/reading/word-search/?gclid=CjwKCAjwyqWkBhBMEiwAp2yUFr0yA-SRvkzLDgNE70lIRhJVWLaogCPm0Mfj8VdyjB2BY31mKH_RoCNfkQAvD_BwE

Word search of Disney Song titles can be found at:

https://wordmint.com/public_puzzles/107784. A resource, found on Amazon rather inexpensively, is a book called “Musical Activities: Adult Activity Book all about Music.”

Another website for music games can be found at www.sporcle.com:

<https://www.sporcle.com/games/category/music>

Singing Activities

Borrow a karaoke machine and have fun! There are several apps that can be used. Yokee Karaoke is one. Search for them in the app store. Or you can purchase “Spontaneous- The Song Game- Sing It or Shout It” or “Carpool Karaoke Game” – available on Amazon.

Music games: Pinterest has a page of simple to use music games that can be adapted.

<https://www.thedatingdivas.com/making-music/>

Music Appreciation

Check if there are any local choral or school groups doing a concert and plan to attend as a group. Or inquire if they would be willing to come to the corps and share a program.

Vocal Instructor

Invite a vocal instructor to give some guidance on singing and teach a song to the group.

Your Voice is My Favorite Sound

“Shout with joy to the Lord, all the earth! Worship the Lord with gladness. Come before Him, singing with joy!” (Ps. 100:1,2, NLT).

The Psalms are often called the songbook of the Bible. There are many different types of “songs” found in the book of Psalms. Psalm 100 calls upon the whole earth to celebrate. We are called to “Shout with joy,” “Worship with gladness” and to “come ... singing with joy. I envision the whole world shouting and singing with joy. What noise! What joy! I don’t know if we would all be singing the same song or not, but it doesn’t really matter knowing that the Lord hears our individual songs, even when sung all at once.

I know not everyone is a singer or is willing to sing in front of others. The KJV starts Psalm 100 with the words “Make a joyful noise unto the Lord...” Some of us are often in the “joyful noise” category rather than the “singing” category. The sounds that come forth might not make it on America’s Got Talent, but when they are heartfelt in worship to God, that is all that matters. Our song would be worthy of a golden buzzer in the Lord’s eyes.

Did you know that singing can have positive effects on your health. Singing can boost brain power by increasing concentration and improving memory. It can banish anxiety by releasing negativity and providing an emotionally positive experience. Singing can reduce blood pressure by increasing the heart rate. Singing helps to energize yourself by releasing endorphins in the system, providing the same lift as chocolate would—without the extra calories. Singing can boost the immune system, provide exercise for healthy lungs, and improve posture. It can also keep your voice young by exercising the vocal cords and help keep them youthful. Now who doesn’t want to stay youthful! All of these are reasons to sing at the top of our lungs, even those of us in the joyful noise club.

(For more explanation on health benefits: <https://www.dailyinfographic.com/singing-for-health>)

With all these healthy benefits to singing, we as believers have an even greater reason to lift our voices. Psalm 100 gives several reasons:

- “The Lord is God! He made us, and we are His,” vs 3.

What a reason to sing! The God of creation loves us, and we belong to Him. He is our heavenly Father, and we are His children made in His image.

- “We are his people, the sheep of his pasture,” vs 3.

Not only do we belong to Him, but He also cares for us very deeply. He provides, guides, and gives shelter to those acknowledging that He is God.

- “For the Lord is good. His unfailing love continues forever, and His faithfulness continues to each generation,” vs 5

This alone is enough reason enough to start singing and never stop! God’s love never ends and never fails!

What are some other reasons you can think of for singing with joy before the Lord? (*Have the group list reasons.*)

Ephesians 5:19, 20 NLT encourages us to “Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

With this in mind, let us keep singing alone and together. We should be in one accord with our spirits united singing unto the Lord. May you remember that the Lord knows your heart, the source of our singing, and that your voice is His favorite sound.



Fellowship Programs

May 2025 – Precious Treasure

May 1, 2025 By Captain Marlene Díaz



Precious Treasure

Introduction

God has surrounded us with a precious treasure—our world. Do we truly enjoy it and thank

Him for it?

“Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made” (John 1:3, NIV).

“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows” (James 1:17, NIV).

Program Ideas

Picnic

Plan a picnic outside in the park where the women can enjoy creation. If possible, set up tables and chairs.

If it's not possible, decorate the room just like you would for a picnic, with red and white checkered tablecloths. Put toy treasure chests in each table to represent the theme “a precious treasure.”

Refreshments

Provide typical picnic food – hot dogs, baked beans, chips, potato salad.

Icebreaker Activity

Place cards with Bible verses about treasures in the toy treasure chests. Use these verse as the basis for a discussion in regards to treasure: Matthew 6:21; 2 Corinthians 4:7; Luke 12:23; Isaiah 33:6; Job 23:12.

Theme Song

Share these videos or songs after the devotional for a time of reflection.

Theme song in English:

https://youtu.be/ITus_KbaUoE (If I Have You, Vertical Worship)

Theme song in Spanish:

<https://youtu.be/7Ne9cbREOnk> (Si Te Tengo A Ti Lo Tengo Todo, Marcos Brunet)

Beauty

Ask the women to draw something beautiful that they see around them. Invite them to explain their drawing. Or have photographs of things of beauty and let the women pick one

that's meaningful to them. Ask them to explain the reason behind their choice.

Precious Treasure

When I think about the words "precious treasure," I think of something with a lot of worth. But the monetary cost does not necessarily equal its worth. For example: a drawing of a child's scribbles in a thrift shop might not cost a lot of money, but that same picture has a lot of value when given to his mom. For those of us that are mothers, or grandmothers, it is easy to understand why it's so difficult to get rid of those little art pieces from our children when we find them in our keepsake boxes.

There is truth in the saying, "the best things in life are free." This is not talking about the things that we can buy at a store or any material things, but rather the things that enhance value and create memorable moments in our lives. James 1:1, NIV says, "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows."

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, a gift is defined as "something voluntarily transferred by one person to another without compensation." God wants to shower us with blessings and memorable moments that don't cost us a thing. Unfortunately, we tend to stop looking because of the use of technology, cellphones, social media, and our extremely busy lives. It's important to be intentional in looking for the blessings that surround us. We should look to fill our lives with the type of moments that truly satisfy our souls and not with material treasures that only feed our egos. When we become aware of these things, we should thank God for each one.

Here are some examples of things that happen around us in nature:

- We can see God's provision when we look at the pigeons' eating crumbs in a public park.
- When we see the rainbow, we can remember God's promise of not destroying the earth by a flood.
- When we are going through rough times, we can look at the mountains to remind ourselves where our help comes from. "Our help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth" (Ps. 124:8).
- We can find shelter from the sun under the shadow of a big tree.
- We can also see God's gifts in our daily lives.
- When your child picks up a flower from the garden and gives it to you and tells you, "I love you."
- When your mom calls and asks you to stop by because she cooked your favorite meal.
- When we come home, and dinner is ready (This is wonderful especially for those of us that are blessed to have a spouse that knows how to cook).

- When a friend remembers your birthday and throws you a surprise birthday party.

Life is full of moments like these, but we can easily take them for granted and stop thanking God for the blessings that surround us. Sometime this is because we are too busy or too worried. We need to remember that Christ is in the midst of everything created. John 1:2,3 tells us, "He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made" (NIV). Jesus was involved in the creation process with God from the very beginning, and through Him everything was created.

God not only allows us to experience blessings with what we have and who we have around us; He also has given us the biggest blessing by sending His Son to the world to save us. Jesus, who through Him all things were made, came to this world, and walked around so that you and I could be adopted as God's children and receive salvation. We should thank God for every one of His blessings and gifts.

If you feel lonely or sad, in what are you placing your hope? In what are you taking refuge? What are your treasures in those difficult moments? We all have precious things and people in our lives, but if everything were to be taken away, Jesus would be enough. Jesus is the one that makes our lives complete. Jesus is everything we need in our lives to feel happy. We can fill any type of emptiness by accepting His sacrifice and by bowing to God's will for our lives. God's precious treasure of salvation is the biggest thing we should be grateful for.

About author



Captain Marlene Díaz

USA Eastern Territory



Fellowship Programs

June 2025 – See You at the Movies

June 1, 2025 By Envoy Kris Lackey



See You at the Movies

Introduction

Following God means being a part of His family valued by Him. We are valued because He calls us His children and gifts us with different talents.

Program Idea

Host a Movie Night

Choose a Christian based movie to watch with your group. Ideally, it would have the idea that each of us are created by God with specific and unique talents. It could emphasize the idea of belonging to a family or to God's family. Movie ideas include, *Family Camp, Grace Unplugged, Where Hope Grows, Indivisible.*

Snacks: Popcorn Bar

A popcorn bar is the perfect snack idea for a movie night. Include both sweet and salty topping ideas so that everyone finds something they love. Start with a large bowl of popcorn. Then place toppings in smaller bowls and invite everyone to create their own perfect snack. Topping ideas include mini chocolate chips, walnuts, flavored seasoning salts, M&M's, gummy worms, gummy bears, crushed Oreos, peanuts and licorice bites. Allow the women to be creative and remind them that their individual snack creations are just as unique as they are.

Activity: As God's Child, You are Priceless

Gather various sizes of decorative scrapbook paper or colored cardstock and use scrapbooking scissors to cut around the edge of each page to create a pretty border. Give each woman a piece of the paper and a pen. At the top of the paper, have them write their name and the wording "is a child of God." Pass the papers around and ask the women to write an encouraging note about the other woman. This could be something they appreciate about her, or a way that she is unique. Provide frames for each woman to put the paper in once it's complete to remind them how special they are.

Movie Night

Read John 1:12 (NLV), "But to all who believed Him and accepted Him, He gave the right to become children of God."

This scripture verse reminds us that we are God's children. If we grew up in a home where we were shown love, support, and encouragement, having a loving parent is something we may take for granted. However, not everyone has had that experience. So seeing God as a good and loving father could be difficult for them. This verse reminds us that if we choose to follow God and accept Him as our Savior, then we have the right to be called His child. And as His children we are born into His family, a family that can never be taken from us.

As a child of God, we are dearly loved and can expect certain privileges that are outlined in His

Word. Listen to these reassuring words from scripture:

"So be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid and do not panic before them. For the Lord your God will personally go ahead of you. He will neither fail you nor abandon you." (Deut. 31:6). This verse assures us that His presence is always with us. We are never alone. What a promise and reassurance this brings.

"God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble" (Psalm 46:1). This reminds us that He is always there to help us when we need it, He is a source of strength for us when we feel weak, and He is a place of refuge we can run to for shelter and protection.

"But now, O Jacob, listen to the Lord who created you. O Israel, the one who formed you says, 'Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you. I have called you by name; you are mine'" (Isaiah 43:1). This verse tells us that as His child, He knows us intimately, He knows us by name, and we belong to Him. We belong to Him because we have been born into His family.

"Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:7). This reminds us that He brings us peace and will guard our hearts and minds.

These are just a few of God's promises. He also puts us in community with other believers who love Him. He gives us each other so we can support, pray, and encourage one another. Invite the women to share prayer concerns and then pray for each other.



Fellowship Programs

July 2025 – My Body – Priceless

July 1, 2025 By Major Nora McNeil



My Body - Priceless

Introduction

“Do you not know that your body is a temple 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 body” (1 Corin. 6:19, 20).

Decorations

Place assorted sized mirrors around the room to reflect light. Place pictures taken of various sized models from magazines and put them on the tables.

Program Ideas

- Provide facial scrub or masks that the women can try to make their skin glow.
- Have a cosmetologist demonstrate simple makeovers for the women.
- Go to the mall and have a beauty product representative make-over one of the women.
- Dove soap has several videos on YouTube that show the way we view our body image. Choose a couple to share with the women and then discuss their reactions.
- Play clips from YouTube regarding body image and the dialog that many women play in their heads.
- If you have a thrift store, select outfits from the store for the women to try on. For a laugh, chose some outlandish clothes.
- Invite a clothing stylist to come and discuss what to wear for each body type or use an app that allows the women to try on clothing virtually. Zylar.com or Virtual Dressing Room are two of the many apps that work that way.
- Make life sized paper dolls, illustrating that we are all unique. Have the women lie down on butcher paper and draw around their image. Add facial features and clothes.
- Decorate a hand mirror.
- The following songs on YouTube are about the concept of positive body image.

“Perfectly Loved” by Rachel Lampa featuring Toby Mac

“If Only She Knew” by Micah Tyler

- Watch the Hallmark movie, “Romance in Style,” which is about positive body image. It is available on Amazon Prime.

My Body – Priceless

The title, “My Body—Priceless” reminds me of the Mastercard commercials where they describe a scenario and then say “Priceless.” First Corinthians 6:19, 20, describes the concept of being priceless in a completely different way. “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, (talk about priceless) 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 body.” In other words, your body belongs to God, and no matter what size you are God loves you just the way you are.

We are not all the same size and shape and that’s ok. How and when did society decide that one size is the model for everyone? God created us and saw us in the innermost part of our mothers, even before we were born, and saw fit to love us anyway. Read Psalms 139:13-18.

Coco Chanel said, “Beauty begins the moment you decide to be yourself.” While the basic premise may be true, I would change it slightly to say, “Beauty begins the moment you decide to see yourself as God sees you—as His precious princess.” The price Jesus paid for us is too steep for us to ignore or treat ourselves badly because we think that we aren’t beautiful.

There have been so many changes to thoughts surrounding “Body Image.” Even Mattel the maker of the Barbie doll started making more shapely dolls...

<http://www.history.com/news/barbie-through-the-ages>. So, even the toy makers realized that the classic “model” isn’t relatable to many women or young girls. In addition, commercials for women whether for clothing or under garments, are being done with a variety of female shapes rather than the Barbie doll shape.

True Beauty comes from inside you, when you focus on the Holy Spirit and how He is directing you. Realizing that your body has within it the Holy Spirit – Jesus’ own spirit – is the beginning of true beauty.

Prayer

Precious Heavenly Father, help us as Christian women to be conscious of who bought us, Your Son, Jesus. Help us to accept the image that You have of us as Your precious princesses. May You always be near us, encouraging us, and ridding us of our negative self-talk. Help us to believe that we are beautiful. In Your precious and holy name, Amen.



Fellowship Programs

August 2025 – Priceless Summer

August 1, 2025 By Major Stefanie Nkounkou



Priceless Summer

Introduction

Gen. 8:22 "As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease."

Program Ideas

Field Trip

If you live near the ocean or a lake, take the women on a field trip where they can just sit for a while and contemplate the beauty of creation. Ask them to note things that they may not have noticed previously. When you return to the building, ask them to share what they observed.

Virtual Trip

If leaving your building is difficult, go on a virtual trip by showing videos of oceans and beaches. National

Geographic has several video's available on YouTube.

Sand Art in a Bottle

Create sand art using a water bottle, salt and side-walk chalk. For instructions visit YouTube "sand art."

Sand Candle

Check on YouTube for directions on making sand candles.

Frames

Purchase inexpensive frames from the 99cent store and decorate with seashells.

Make Sandcastles

Use kinetic sand, which will hold its shape. Have molds and beach toys to help the women create a masterpiece.

Refreshments

Serve watermelon and fruit kabobs. Or have an ice cream bar with an assortment of ice creams and toppings.

Priceless Summer

When you hear the words "priceless summer," what comes to your mind? Is it riding the waves on an inflated canvas raft during high tide? Or is it building a sandcastle at low tide on the

beach? Is it the adventure of riding on a speedboat? Possibly it's that first summer job? Is it accepting the Lord as your savior at summer camp? What are some of your highlights about summers past?

God wants you to have a priceless summer all year. He already paid the price for you by sending His Son, Jesus, to save you from your sins and so that you can live a blameless life. He believes in you. Unfortunately, life is not always smooth sailing. There are many rough times, and we find ourselves facing many problems.

Job's wife seemed to have a comfortable life until God accepted a challenge from Satan to test her husband, Job. Chapter 1 recounts the loss (Job 2:8-10) "...as Job sat among the ashes. "His wife said to him, "Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!" He replied, "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?" In all this, Job did not sin in what he said." Think about some things you have said to others in haste. Are we sometimes like Job's wife, quick to judge others. How much better would his wife's reaction have been if she had reached out with compassion.

We can learn many lessons from Job. While he curses the day he is born, he does not curse God. Job is more concerned about his children cursing God than his wife. He made sacrifices for them. Her words about cursing God may have been for Job to admit that God was the source of the suffering and to give up the struggle. Maybe her intentions for Job were to accept defeat and view God as the Judge. Can't you see her sitting right next to Job after her outburst among the ashes and weeping?

Grief invokes many things and many words—not all of them, good. Shock, anger, depression, silence, loss—all are needed in the grieving process before we can even begin to rejoice and have a spirit of celebration. The tides are turning. Moving and yet never the same. The ocean can be such a soothing experience of letting go and letting God. The Lord's ways are not our ways. He looks at the heart. Some people compare Job's wife's life to the life of Eve and how she spoke out of turn and fell into the deception of the devil in Genesis 3. Job's wife's words may have been a test to Job. We don't know.

Have you ever tried to fly a kite at the beach? It is either a good experience or bad one. In the Bible, Adam does follow Eve's suggestion by partaking of the forbidden fruit whereas Job does not take the suggestion of his wife. It should encourage us that Job does not call her foolish, just her suggestion. Believing she mirrored her husband's righteousness; God restored her in Job 42. Do you find yourself struggling this summer with circumstances that you don't understand. Give them to the Lord who loves you. He is full of compassion and wants you to bring all your hurts to Him.

Prayer

Give each woman a floating candle to put into a children's pool or have individual bowls on each table. Let's light a floating candle to ask God to give light to our eyes.

Dear Lord. As we add our candle to the bowl, we ask you to let us give light to those we meet each day reflecting your glory. From the very beginning, you created an atmosphere where life can flourish. We know light is crucial for our growth, and so we pray today that you give light to our eyes that we might see You in this priceless season of summer. We are not alone because You promised us Your Comforter, to be with us. You care for us by giving each one of us different days. As we give thanks for the season of summer, may we reflect on summers past, and how they shaped us. Jesus may Your will for our lives be evident as we spend time outdoors in the sun and in the water. May we capture a sense of wonder as we think about the season of summer and the significance it holds. In Jesus' name. Amen.



Fellowship Programs

September 2025 – Priceless Memories

September 1, 2025 By Captain Marsha Barter



Priceless Memories

Introduction

With the invention of the iPhone, it became easy to take photos. We often capture the most mundane moments of our lives. Some of us even take photos of our food before we eat it.

There was a time that photos were on film and were taken only on special occasions. In the 60s people wouldn't have thought to snap a photo of their snacks. Camera film was saved for priceless memories, life changing moments. People would take photos of special moments so that they could remember them and share that moment with later generations.

Program Ideas

Setting up

Set the room up to be cozy and inviting place for conversation. Provide warm drinks like coffee, tea or hot chocolate along with light refreshments.

Activity One

Ask the women to bring in photos from their childhood, birthdays, and weddings. Those times that were meaningful in their lives. Invite them to share why they chose these photos.

Photo Sharing Prompts

- Why did you choose this photo?
- Why is this moment priceless to you?
- Who is that in the photo with you? What do they mean to you?
- If you could go back and take a photo of a precious moment that you didn't capture on film, what would it be?

Activity Two

- Invite the women to bring a photo or two to make photo coasters.
- Instructions can be found at: (<https://modpodgerocksblog.com/personalized-mod-podge-coasters/>)
- Start a scrapbook/memory board of the women's group activities.

Activity Three

- Have everyone pull out their phones, pick a random number and have them scroll back to that photo and share where it was taken and the significance.
- Read Psalm 77:11-14. As you read these words, what thoughts jump out to you.

Priceless Memories

When you read the Old Testament, you can see God's people frequently set up altars of remembrance so they could tell other generations what God has done to stir their faith. So often when times got rough, God's people were quick to forget how powerful God was. We are more like them than we care to admit. When trials come, it is easy to become so focused on the problems that we too forget God's power.

In Psalm 77:11-14, the Psalmist is urging the people to remember what God has done in the past. When we remember what God has done, it strengthens us to trust Him with today and tomorrow. We take pictures of weddings and babies to remember these special moments that changed lives, however, we don't always have a photo of what God has done for us. Usually, the things God has done are harder to capture. They may even be some of the worst moments of our lives that were redeemed for good, or our worst choices from which we were rescued. We need to remember those precious moments when God guided us to make the right choice; when we experienced healing; when we were given strength in a battle, and when we were freed from the shackles of sin.

When the storms are raging, we need to remember what God has done for us in the past. It is so easy to forget His goodness and care when all around us feels chaotic. We need to share those priceless memories with our children and our grandchildren so that they too will know to turn to the Lord in times of trouble. We need to share with the lost and broken world of the great hope we have in the Lord so they too can know and believe.

Discussion Questions

- What is one moment in your walk with Christ you don't want to forget?
- What can you do to keep the things God has already done for you at the forefront of your mind?
- How can you share these priceless memories with someone this week?

Reflection Song ideas

"Precious Memories"- Alan Jackson available on YouTube

"Blessed Assurance" – The Salvation Army Song Book, #455

"The Story I'll Tell"- Maverick City Music available on YouTube

Service Programs



THE SALVATION ARMY WOMEN'S MINISTRIES RESOURCES

PRICELESS

2024-2025 PROGRAM YEAR

**God, your thoughts about me are priceless.
No one can possibly add them all up**

Psalm 139:17 (NIRV)





Service Programs

October 2024 – I Am Priceless

October 1, 2024 By Captain Laura Gesner



Scripture: Luke 4:18, 19 NIV “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because He has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

Introduction

Domestic Violence is unfortunately something that many women, men, and children endure every day. Abuse of any kind is something that no one deserves and is not what God wants for His beloved children. We are all priceless in His eyes and as followers of Christ, we should all see every other person as a priceless image bearer of God.

Service Project Ideas:

1 An Army Fighting for Good

We are called to serve and pray for the persecuted, the lost, the widows and the orphans. (See *James 1:27*) The Salvation Army, as a part of the Body of Christ, is called to help those in need. (See *1 Corinthians 12:12-27*)

The Salvation Army uniform is worn in prayer meetings, holiness meetings, and other gatherings. The uniform is not a symbol of a "more holy" person, but an outward demonstration of who we serve together. When you go on a military base, the active soldiers and officers wear their uniform. In war, they're in uniform. This is so they can see whose side people are on and that you're not alone.

As an Army of believers, we are called to pray for those who are lost and in bondage. We are called to pray for those who need to know that there is a God who sees, hears, and loves them.

This service project is to encourage us and reminded us of our place in the Body of Christ. If you are a soldier, or an officer, the next time you wear your uniform, remember who you represent and that you are not alone. Ask the Lord to continue to show you what He has called you to do and how you can serve Him. When you are in a gathering with others, be reminded that we are all on the same side, called to fight against the schemes of the enemy. If you don't wear a uniform, you can still be a witness for Christ by your actions, the way you talk and your treatment of others. Remember people are watching.

Scripture reference: Ephesians 6:10-20

1 Prayer Cards

We are all called to bring the gospel and make disciples. We are called to love others and to demonstrate Jesus' love to the world.

Make prayer cards with specific needs listed on them: those caught in domestic violence, human trafficking, homelessness, world hunger. Pray together as a group and invite the women to take the cards home to remind them to pray for these concerns daily.

1 Visit

Many people who have experienced domestic violence come to our Social Services and shelters for help. The ministry of presence is powerful, and we have opportunities to be present with the people who come in to seek practical assistance from The Salvation Army.

As a service project, take the women to a shelter, social services office, food pantry, or even thrift store and conduct the program there. Invite the women who are in the program to be a part of the women's ministries meeting. Have some of the women's ministries members watch the clients' children during the meeting, so that the women can fully engage.

He is the God Who Sees!

Read Genesis 16.

Have you ever felt like Hagar? Trapped, desperate for a break. Not the one calling the shots. Feeling alone and like there is no light of hope in your future? Feeling like you are caught in a life where you are being controlled, that your life, your voice, your thoughts don't have any value? Feeling forgotten, betrayed, mistreated, and even abused? I have.

When we meet Hagar in scripture, she was only referred to as the "servant girl" by her masters. She was not looked at as an equal or a valued image bearer of God.

But God let her know that He saw her! *Genesis 12:7 says*, "The angel of the Lord found her by a spring in the wilderness." ... vs 8: "He said, "Hagar" ... He spoke her name! He called her by name! Not "servant girl," but her name. The Lord saw her as a person and His beloved child. And not only that, but He also sought her out in the wilderness. He came to her. She, a woman who was from another culture and most likely did not know anything about God, came to her. She wasn't seeking Him, but He saw her, He knew her, and He was with her.

Hagar did not have to jump through any hoops or do any specific prayer to get God's attention. She didn't have to strive to be good enough for Him. He simply saw her. The lowliest of people in others' eyes. Not valued, or seen by others ... He sought her out.

You may be able to empathize with Hagar's feeling of worthless, forgotten, hopeless, trapped. This place is dark, heavy, and full of sadness. But imagine being in this moment where God comes to her and calls her by name. Imagine God coming to you right where you are and calls you by name. You look up and see the caring eyes of the Lord looking at you with pure divine love, filling every void, and healing the holes in your heart and mind. At this moment, He reveals that those feelings of worthlessness, forgottenness, hopelessness are not true at all.

In this moment Hagar was seen. And so are you. You are seen and looked at with love by the God who created the Universe. Hagar calls Him "El Roi," meaning "you are the God who sees." She knows she has seen the One who truly sees her. Her whole outlook on life and herself has been transformed because she has encountered the One who sees and loves her.

My friends, Jesus sees you. He knows you. Psalm 139 says "O Lord, You have searched me and known me!" (NIV) He is with you in your suffering. "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble" Psalm 46:1 (NIV). When we encounter Jesus, the One who sees us and loves us, our outlook on life and ourselves is transformed.

I have been like Hagar, caught in an abusive situation and feeling unseen and trapped. When I looked to the Lord for help, He answered my prayers. He showed me that He was present with me, and He saw me. He spoke to me through the Holy Spirit and through several people He placed in my life. Being in community was so incredibly important for me to find strength and reprieve. The Lord ultimately freed me from that abusive situation and has blessed me with a whole new life. He showed me that He is far greater than anything that comes my way, and He can take a life that was once broken and make something incredibly beautiful.

We all have a dependency, a desperation for God in every step of our lives. Sometimes God doesn't answer our prayers how we would expect Him to, or in the timeline we think is best, but He is perfect. He is holy. His ways are not our ways, and His thoughts are not our thoughts.

He is present. He sees. He hears. He is faithful. When devastation comes, we must allow our hearts to recall God's faithfulness and love. He is unchanging. In the darkness, don't let your heart ponder that you are forgotten and unloved.

God sees you. He hears you. He is present with you.

Psalm 23:4 says: "Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me, your rod and your staff, they comfort me" (NIV).

If you are currently going through a dark valley or are in an abusive situation, seek the Lord today. Let His Holy Spirit flow through you and remind you that you are valued, and you are seen. Ask someone to pray with you. See your church family around you. You don't need to carry that burden on your own. You are not alone. Give it to Jesus. He cares for you. He is the God who sees. He can take this brokenness and make it more beautiful than you can ever imagine.

At the conclusion of the devotional play the song "The God Who Sees." Available on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/sz81dlfwf4Y>

Further Scripture References:

Romans 12:9-21, Matthew 25:40, Ephesians 6:18, Proverbs 3:5-6, Deuteronomy 31:8, John 10:10, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Romans 5:8

Resources:

The following website has interviews with women of hope. Chose one or two to share with the women: [The Women of Hope Project](#)

For more resources and signs of red flags of domestic violence, visit the National Domestic Violence Hotline: <https://www.thehotline.org/>

Shine A Light is a Christian organization in place to help stop and prevent domestic violence: <https://www.shinealightondv.org/>

About author



Captain Laura Gesner

USA Southern Territory



Service Programs

November 2024 – Love Builds Priceless Homes

November 1, 2024 By Captain Elisa Lyles



Related Scripture: Isaiah 58:6, 7 NIV

Introduction

The other day I was driving home with our 4-year-old daughter who asked me, “what do builders use to build houses?” I simply answered hammers, nails, and wood; the simple

answered satisfied her curiosity. However, it made me wonder what actually builds a home? The answer is love. For me home means family. I love home design shows and I try to make my house look like them with my decorating eye. But my décor is determined by my 4-year-olds ever expanding toy collection. While our home may not win any awards, I am thankful for the home we live in, and it makes me think of those in our country without a home. Statistics state that in January of 2020 there were about 580,466 people experiencing homelessness in the United States. As followers of Jesus, this information should disturb us. There are many ways in which we can serve, love, and support our community.

Service Project Ideas:

- **Prayer Walk:** One of the best ways to help is to pray. Organize a prayer walk for your area. Have a time and a meeting place to walk around different areas to pray for the homeless population, families, schools, and local leaders.
- **Blessing Bags:** Fill XL Ziplock bags (found at Dollar Tree) or small baskets with hygiene items, socks, pop-top food items, water bottles, flashlight, and batteries. Also including a list of services in the area: food pantries, clothing closets, rehousing information. You can also include notes of encouragement: handwritten cards with information regarding worship service times. These bags can be kept in cars to give out. Or contact your local police department so that they can distribute them to the homeless.
- **Shelter Feeding:** Provide a meal at a local shelter. Set-up a time that the group could provide the meal, either once or on an ongoing basis. The group can either serve the meals or simply provide it, whichever is most helpful for the shelter.
- **For Youth:** Check to see if there is a children's home in your area. Check with them to find out their biggest needs. Example of items to include in a basket: small/new toys (stuffed animals), towels/wash cloth, bedding, clothes, shoes, hygiene items, diapers, baby items. If they provide service for teen girls, fill small purses with menstrual items.
- **Shelters: Women's/Men's:** Locate the local shelters and inquire regarding their top needs. Examples of items: socks, underwear, hygiene items, totes to store and protect personal items.
- **Family Transitional Housing:** This type of sheltering may need other items such as canned foods, clothing, shoes, suitcases, totes.
- **Animal Shelters:** Locate a local animal shelter or rescue and provide items such as small blankets or towels, dog/ cat food. Often, they need volunteers to walk dogs or to bottle feed baby animals.

Right at Home

What do you think of when you hear the word home? Home is defined as "the place where one lives." Houses come in many different styles: Craftsmen, Victorian, Ranch, Farmhouse,

Condo. But the word home is different. Home is what you make a house into. For me, home was my mom and my sister. It was my uncle crashing on our couch or having my aunt and cousins live with us for a while. Home was family.

In Matthew, Jesus speaks of separating the sheep and the goats. He says those who have fed the hungry and thirsty, clothed the naked, and visited the imprisoned would be invited into the kingdom of Heaven for those are His sheep. While the goats, those who chose to ignore the needs of others, would be sent away from Him. This passage found in Matthew 25 speaks volumes to the followers of Jesus. If we say that we are followers of Him, then we are His sheep who look to the needs of others. 1 John 4:7-12 says it best, "Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us, and His love is made complete."

Growing up we did not always live in the best of houses, but if we had family member or friends in need, my mom always opened our home to them. My mom did not attend a church, but I believe she lived out the scripture of looking after others in the name of Jesus by making them feel at home. That is what we are called to do as followers of Jesus. Not to have the nicest of things, but to share what we have with others in the name of Jesus. When we share the love of Christ through meeting basic needs, the love of Christ is made complete.

Isaiah 58:6-7 "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter— when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?"

Resources: For information regarding homelessness in America

<https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/homelessness-statistics/state-of-homelessness/>

<https://onlinedegrees.unr.edu/blog/homelessness-in-america/>



Service Programs

December 2024 – The Priceless Gift of Recovery

December 1, 2024 By Captain Amber Meo



Subject: Substance Abuse

Related Scripture: Romans 7:18-25

Introduction

In 2022, 20.4 million people in the United States were diagnosed with a substance abuse disorder. With these numbers the chances are that most people have been impacted in some way by addiction. As loved ones looking at the life of an addicted friend or family member, we can feel helpless, angry, confused, and hurt. If we are the person struggling with addiction, feelings of worthlessness, confusion, shame, and guilt, can shroud our minds and hearts. However, as Paul shared in Romans 7, when we come to Jesus He can help us find a way out.

Service Project Ideas

- 1 Contact the administrator of a local ARC or ARP and make arrangement to bring baked goods to the center. It's a small gesture that goes a long way for someone who is away from their family while working on their recovery from addictions.
- 2 Invite the women to write notes of encouragement to beneficiaries in the center. Add scripture, encouraging phrases, and some recovery-centered prayers. Following are some prayer suggestions:
 - I admit that I am powerless over my addiction. I admit that my life is unmanageable when I try to control it. Help me this day to understand the true meaning of powerlessness. Remove from me all denial of my addiction.
 - God, I offer myself to You to build with me and to do with me as You will. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Your will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Your power, Your love and Your way of life, May I do Your will always!
 - My Creator, I am now willing that You should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that You now remove from me every single defect of character, which stands in the way of my usefulness to You and my fellow human beings. Grant me strength, as I go out from here to do your bidding.
 - Higher Power, as I understand you, I pray to keep my connection with You open and clear from the confusion of daily life. Through my prayers and meditation, I ask especially for freedom from self-will, rationalization, and wishful thinking. I pray for the guidance of correct thought and positive action. Your will, Higher Power, not mine, be done.

Serenity Prayer:

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference. living one day at a time; Enjoying one moment at a time; accepting hardships as the pathway to peace; taking, as He did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it; trusting that He will make things right if I surrender to His Will; so that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with Him forever and ever in the next. Amen.

- 1 *Organize a donation drive for the ARC, inviting the entire corps to participate. Invite the women to reach out to people they work with, the neighborhood HOA, or any civic organizations in the community. The ARCs are funded entirely by the merchandise they can sell in their store. Best sellers include furniture, household items, bric-brac, women's clothes, and electronics. Ahead of time co-ordinate with the ARC for a time to pick up the donations.*
- 2 *Contact the ARC and make arrangement to purchase an assortment of sobriety coins. These coins commemorate each year of sobriety of an individual. Invite a member of the ARC staff, or a graduate of the program to share about the program and/or give their testimony. As a part of this program, pray over each coin and the man or women who will receive it. Present the coins to the ARC at the conclusion of the program.*
- 3 *Know the contact information for the intake coordinator at the ARC. Print small cards containing this information that the women can share with anyone they encounter who may need help. Also, include contact information for the closest detox center that offers free services.*

Review the 12 steps of Celebrate Recovery and Biblical Comparisons

- 1 We admitted we were powerless over our addictions and compulsive behaviors, that our lives had become unmanageable. (Biblical) "I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out" (Rom. 7:18).
- 2 We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. (Biblical) "For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose" (Phil. 2:13).
- 3 We made a decision to turn our lives and our wills over to the care of God. (Biblical) "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship" (Rom. 12:1).
- 4 We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. (Biblical) "Let us examine our ways and test them and let us return to the Lord" (Lam. 3:40).
- 5 We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

"Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed" (James 5:16a).

- 1 We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character. (Biblical) "Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up" (James 4:10).
- 2 We humbly asked Him to remove all our shortcomings. (Biblical) "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

- 3 We made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

(Biblical) "Do to others as you would have them do to you" (Luke 6:31).

- 1 We made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. (Biblical) "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift" (Matt. 5:23-24).
- 2 We continue to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.

"So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!" (1 Cor. 10:12).

- 1 We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, praying only for knowledge of His will for us, and power to carry that out. (Biblical) "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" (Col. 3:16a).
- 2 Having had a spiritual experience as the result of these steps, we try to carry this message to others and practice these principles in all our affairs. (Biblical) "Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore them gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted" (Gal. 6:1).

Help! I Want to Do What Is Right, But Do Wrong Anyway

Paul's letter to the Romans speaks so clearly about our human condition and sin. How many times have you known the right thing to do, but done the wrong thing anyway? You're not alone. Paul says, "I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong" (Rom.7:21, NLT). Whether you struggle with substance abuse or other problems, we've all been here as this is our sinful human nature.

Romans 7: 24 clearly shows the response of someone who feels remorse or shame over succumbing to sin that pulls at them. "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?" How many of us have felt this way before? You've messed up again and are overcome with guilt. Oftentimes, our loved one struggling with addiction feels these same emotions, exponentially more.

We praise the Lord because this passage doesn't end in defeat, shame, or guilt. Paul shares in verse 25 the hope we have as believers: "Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 7:24, 25). We have a great high priest who delivers us from our mess. When

we cry out to the Lord hears us. When we cry out to Him, He will deliver us. Thank you, Lord, for your goodness to us!

Close in prayer.



Service Programs

January 2025 – A Brave Event

January 1, 2025 By Sheena Evans





A Brave Event

Scripture: “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world” James 1:27).

Introduction

Serving the women in our community should not have an age limit. If we care for the widow, we must also care for the orphan. Many kids growing up in the United States are growing up without trusted and caring adults in their lives. An alarming number of trafficked kids have been a part of the foster care or child welfare system at some point in their lives. Some studies have shown that foster care can be a direct pipeline to human trafficking. Often this is because when a child turns 18 and “ages out” of the system with no place to call home, they are vulnerable to exploitation, traffickers, and pimps. Any vulnerable adult, teenage or child can find themselves in a trafficking situation. Eighty percent of those in a trafficking situation are women and girls. The traffickers prey on vulnerabilities and offer a counterfeit version of what their victims are lacking. Vulnerabilities for most foster girls that attract a predator are unstable home environments, mental health challenges, low income, low self-esteem, and lack of community and support.

What Can We Do?

As a women’s ministries group, our main emphasis is on women. However, we also have a responsibility to serve all people, young, old, male, or female. Even as adults, we sometimes carry the same fears, reservations, and hurts as when we were young. Chrystal Evans-Hurst in her book, *She’s Still There: Rescuing the Girl in You* wrote, “Sometimes we simply need someone to hold our hand, cheer us on, and believe we are still capable of being whom we intended to be.” As Christians, we are told to grow more like Him. We are to, “speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ ... (Eph. 4:15). When looking at the huge problem of human trafficking, we often feel helpless and feel that there is nothing we can do, and so, we don’t. What the Lord requires of us is to love as He loves. We are to reach out with an encouraging word, a kind gesture, especially to the young people in our life.

Service Project Ideas

Conduct a Brave Event (<https://braveglobal.org/>) for girls that are in the foster care system. Many girls in foster care have been able to develop meaningful relationships and be empowered to change the world around them. Brave events bring community, camaraderie, fun, community, and connection long after the event is over. Following is how you can begin planning for a Brave event.

Planning an Event

This link [Dropbox link](#) contains guidance resources for planning this event. The link will bring up folders with instructional videos, sample donation letters, fundraising tips, outreach, event follow-up items, aftercare suggestions.

The outline below has the title of each suggested step. When you arrive at the Brave global event resource link, find the folder that is named "Phase 3," and you will find a document called "Planning Your Event." This can also be pre-downloaded as the supplement you need to get started.

Step 01: Prayer

Step 02: Create an action team.

Step 03: Create an advisory board. (See separate Advisory Board attachment).

Step 04: Hold planning meetings and decide about key event elements.

Step 05: Coordinate and implement fundraising efforts.

Step 06: Recruit and train volunteers.

Step 07: Develop plans to follow up with attendees after the event

Who Are the Orphans and Widows in Our Life

We read in James 1:27, "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress ..." James tells us that we are to care for orphans and widows. We often assume that the 14-year-old girl that is being placed in another foster care home may just need more structure, a better attitude, or a grateful heart. Unfortunately, many of us end our thoughts about kids in foster care with that sentiment: "They just need to be better behaved. Be more grateful. Get their act together." However, James tells us that often the orphans and widows are in distress. This type of distress means pain or suffering that affects the body or the mind, a misfortune, a painful situation, or a state of danger or desperate need.

Can you imagine going to the doctor in pain from a broken arm and being distressed not only because of the physical pain but because of how it happened? You would hope that the

doctor would see your distress and act immediately, helping relieve the pain you feel while you begin the healing process. In the same way, we are to look after orphans, widows, and those whose are hurting. What can you do? You can pray asking God to help us walk humbly alongside all who are hurting. We don't always know what they face. We are to treat them with compassion coming and come alongside them in their suffering as they heal. It is up to us. If we don't, who will?

Close in prayer.

Resources:

- Brave Global: <https://braveglobal.org/>
- National Human Trafficking Hotline <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/en>
- SA Justice: <https://sajustice.us/>

Books

- "In Our Backyard" by Nita Belles
- "The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma" by Dr. Bessel Van Der Kolk
- "For Girls Like Us: Fighting for a World Where Girls are Not for Sale"



Service Programs

February 2025 – Positively Beautiful

February 1, 2025 By Major Jennifer Richmond



Positively Beautiful

Related Scripture: “I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well” (Ps. 139:14 NIV).

Introduction

There's so much pressure today to maintain our physical body. Everywhere we look there are billboards for exercise and weight loss products, beauty items and cosmetic procedures.

There are products that claim just take this to become 'a more beautiful and awesome you.' But what does the Bible say about true beauty? First Peter 3:3,4 tells us "Don't be concerned about the outward beauty of fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes. You should clothe yourselves instead with the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God.

Service Project Ideas

Chair Exercise Class for Seniors

Contact a local nursing home or independent living residence to arrange for the group to visit to conduct a chair exercise class. Take lively music to play during the class. After securing approval from the administration, hand out goodie bags of applesauce or fresh fruit to the participants. Following is a link to a free collection of seated workouts:

<https://darebee.com/collections/seated-workouts-collection.html>

Shut-in Visitation

Check with a local nursing home or those who are shut-in to see if they need individuals to provide hair washes or manicures, or to provide transportation to the salon for these services.

Spa Day at a Women's Shelter

Plan and arrange for a spa day at a women's shelter. Provide manicure, make-up station, foot baths, or facial masks. Serve healthy refreshments of fruit, yogurt with granola, or a veggie tray with dip.

Healthy Cooking Class

Conduct a cooking class or invite a professional chef to provide a cooking class to teach the women how to plan and cook healthy meals. For the underserved populations, consider demonstrating recipes that use canned vegetables/beans and common pantry staples. Include the use of new cooking methods like using an InstaPot or an Air Fryer, or baked sheet pan dinners. Women from a nearby shelter or social service clients could be included in this class. Following is a link to healthy canned food recipes: <https://www.eatthis.com/canned-food-recipes/>

This link is another website about healthy eating and living <https://nutritionfacts.org/>

To a Healthier You

If you are like me, at the beginning of each new year, I resolve to do something to lose weight, to get healthier by beginning a new diet or exercise program. And then by February, the old

habits creep back in, and I find my hand in the cookie jar far more often than it should.

In today's world, it is easy to get caught up in the comparison game as we size ourselves up against what the world deems beautiful, and often come up lacking.

Let's take another look at Psalm 139:14 "I praise you because *I am fearfully and wonderfully made*; your works are wonderful, I know that full well." This verse points out that it doesn't matter who you are or where you are from or what you look like, you my friend, are fearfully and wonderfully made. Have you ever looked in the mirror and told yourself that you are average, inadequate, or not enough? If so, then you're not seeing yourself the way God sees you. You are not seeing yourself as a result of God's divine creation. Let's read again how David describes us to God. (Read Ps. 139:14). The psalmist is *praising God* because he is overwhelmed by the majesty of a God who could create him in such an intricate and unique way. David is in complete awe of our amazing God. However, to say, "**I am fearfully and wonderfully made**" while praising God seems like a rather odd thing to do, right? However, read it again. God made you to be *special*. No, I'm not trying to flatter you, it really means that! There is no one else like you. You are the only *you* that God has ever created. God made you to be special, distinguished, and unique. So what David is saying is, "Lord, *I praise you* because of how amazing you made me!"

Every single person is a masterpiece of God. Think about it, there's seven billion people on the planet, but there is no one else with your fingerprint, or with your retina scan. You are unique. You are an original design. Diamonds are expensive because they are rare, but you're even more rare. You're the *only one* that exists or will ever exist that is exactly like you. *That makes you priceless*. You are a masterpiece. You are a *priceless* work of art. It is because God is wonderful, that we are wonderful.

Prayer:

Father, thank you for creating me. Sometimes, it feels like nobody loves me, but I know that you knew me and loved me before I was even born. Thank you for always being with me, even on my darkest days. Help me to love the parts of myself that I've struggled to accept. Help me to treat myself and others as your spectacular work of art. Amen.



Service Programs

March 2025 – She's Price(d) Less

March 1, 2025 By Captain Lorraina Crawford



She's Price(d)Less

Related Scripture: Galatians 3:28 NIV

Introduction

When is the last time you really paid attention to the product labels for items you purchase and use. Labels are important to product packaging, especially if it's a food label and you have dietary restrictions or allergies. These labels may include when the product was made and where, but they do not tell the story of how that product was made. Maybe you really love a certain coffee or chocolate, but if you found out how it was made you may think differently. Meet women chocolate farmers facing adversity <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yP5NR3BbdKE>

Many products are made with the money being the goal, instead of people. Unethical labor practices exist in many places around the globe and a majority of the time it is the female worker that suffers most. The International Labour Organization (ILO), an agency of the United Nations that works to advance social justice and promote decent work, states "Around the world, when women are employed, they tend to work in low-quality jobs in vulnerable conditions, and there is little improvement forecast in the near future." The ILO has a plethora of information on the gender gap and employment barriers for women:

<https://www.ilo.org/infostories/en-GB/Stories/Employment/barriers-women#intro>

It is the most vulnerable, usually women, who get locked into labor conditions that are undesirable with no way out. Globally, women are more likely to have work conditions that are unsafe and do not pay a livable wage. Around the world, women are not treated equitably. This looks different from country to country, but the root problem is the same. Though women make up the majority of people producing food, they rarely receive their share of the benefits of their hard labor. Women in these farming communities often don't have control of the money they earn, are not able to own land or crops, don't have access to education, training, or supplies, are discriminated against when applying for credit, and in some places made to take a pregnancy test before being allowed to work.

[\(https://www.fairtradeamerica.org/why-fairtrade/explore-the-issues/gender-equality/\)](https://www.fairtradeamerica.org/why-fairtrade/explore-the-issues/gender-equality/)

As Salvationists, these issues should concern us since God has made it clear in His Word that we should not oppress the poor and needy. Deuteronomy 24:14-15 states "Do not take advantage of a hired worker who is poor and needy, whether that worker is a fellow Israelite or a foreigner residing in one of your towns. Pay them their wages each day before sunset because they are poor and are counting on it. Otherwise, they may cry to the Lord against you, and you will be guilty of sin."

One way we can advocate for women, who the world would seek to exploit, is through our own everyday purchases. Supporting fair trade is a way of fighting for workers' rights and promoting gender equality. It is a way that you can take part in making sure the Biblical principle of not taking advantage of a worker is lived out. No longer are fair trade products just the expensive ones in a single aisle of the grocery store. Many companies are realizing that people care how their products are made and how it impacts others. This isn't a new idea though for Salvationists. Early Salvationists had a say in women's unsafe labor practices in the matchbox factories of Victorian England. Learn about how The Salvation Army played a part in

ensuring women were safe and paid a fair wage: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TGmv9q6j2tg>

The Salvation Army has been able to give women fair wages for over 25 years through Others Trade for Hope. Others is a Salvation Army initiative using fair trade principles to fight poverty. The Salvation Army has been creating jobs that transform the lives of artisans globally by paying fair wages. These jobs help to end poverty in places like Kenya and Bangladesh. A particular priority for Others is to ensure that women are given access to paid employment and the opportunity to earn their own income. Items are sold online and make great gifts for birthdays and holidays. Learn how The Salvation Army is combatting this issue. Check the website: <https://www.tradeforhope.com/about-others>

Get Involved:

- Serve Fair Trade Coffee at corps fellowship times; use this time to educate people on buying fair trade products.
- Take a Fair Trade Community Trip to find places that sell fair trade merchandise.
- Organize a Community Fair Trade Sale at the Corps.
- Pay attention to the products you purchase and try to make any changes that you can. Starting small is okay!
- Stop purchasing from companies that you know do not use fair labor practices. The cheaper the product, the more likely it is that labor practices do not match up. Take some time to research why they are so cheap.

Devotion:

“So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:26-28 NIV).

Women seem to be valued less than men in many parts of the world. Unfair pay and labor practices for women seek to devalue them as God’s creation. However, in God’s Kingdom that is not the case, value comes from a different place. Paul writes to the Galatians to clarify where their true worth lies. No longer are they solely identified by the race, class, or gender that they were born into, but are now identified by their immersion into the faith.

When we repent and believe in Jesus, He clothes us so that those differences are not what is seen. There is no need to say I am a Jewish/Gentile/Slave/Free/ Male/Female believer, but simply I am a believer in Jesus as my Savior. What should be clearly seen is Jesus living in the believer.

We categorize ourselves in many ways. You may be a friend, aunt, sister, wife, mother, worker, retiree, differently abled, veteran, well-educated, no education, wealthy, middle class, or lower income. Those are labels you use because in our society we like to group and divide. In God's kingdom things operate differently. In God's kingdom you only need one label to cover you. No label of ours is more important than our identity as a child of God. This is the only label where you find your true worth.

How comfortable would you be to rip off all the labels that you have come to identify as "you" and simply relabel yourself as "child of God?" Is this idea scary or freeing? It may be scary at first but is actually freeing. When you repented and believe in Jesus Christ, you're set free. You are a child of God. No longer do you have to meet anyone else's expectations of who/what you should or shouldn't be as long as you are living in obedience to God as put forth in His word. This understanding makes you more profitable than silver and will yield a better return in your life than gold. Your value will be more precious than rubies. (Proverbs 3:13-15)

Worship Songs:

"Who You Say I Am"- Hillsong Worship

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKw6uqtGFfo>

"No Longer Slaves" Jonathan David and Melissa Helser/Bethel Music

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8TkUMJtK5k>

Resources:

International Labour Organization Employment Barriers for Women:

<https://www.ilo.org/infostories/en-GB/Stories/Employment/barriers-women#intro>

They also have a video that summarizes the gender gap:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k8b3C2Tgwes&t=131s>

Learn how The Salvation Army is combatting this issue:

<https://www.tradeforhope.com/about-others>

Matchbox Factories

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TGmv9q6j2tg>

Explore the issue more:

<https://www.fairtradeamerica.org/why-fairtrade/explore-the-issues/gender-equality/>

Find the brands that carry Fair Trade Certified Products:

<https://www.fairtradecertified.org/our-community/shop-fair-trade/>

About author



Captain Lorraina Crawford

USA Southern Territory



Service Programs

April 2025 – Priceless Love

April 1, 2025 By Captain Jordan Hinson



Priceless Love

Scripture: Psalm 139:13 NIV

Introduction

The sanctity of life is something that needs to be approached gently and in prayer. God has created us and has a plan for each life and those lives are sacred. This topic can bring up feelings of shame and loss for women who have experienced pregnancy loss or terminated a pregnancy. This program has been prepared in prayer for the women. Please use your discretion as you lead them through this program. Remind the women that whatever they have done in the past can be forgiven by a God of love. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). "How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered! I can't even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand! And when I wake up, you are still with me!" (Ps. 139: 17,18).

God tells us in Psalm 139:13 NIV that, "For You created my inmost being. You knit me together in my mother's womb." Our God is a God of love, and He knit each of us together in an intentional way. He didn't make a mistake when He made you. He knew you while you were still in your mother's womb. Today we are going to be learning and praying together about a difficult topic. but is important to tackle using the Word of God as our guide. We will be thinking about the sanctity of human life and how priceless and precious each human life is to God our Creator. To begin let's to start with prayer.

Prayer Stations

Set up prayer stations. Lead the group through these scriptures and prayer stations.

Life is a gift from God. "The Father has life in himself, and He has granted that same life-giving power to His Son" (John 5:26). God is the source and sustainer of life.

Life begins at conception. "You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb." (Ps. 139:13). "I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb. Before you were born, I set you apart..." (Jer. 1:5).

Human life bears the image of God. Life is a gift in that God made mankind in His own image and likeness. "So, God created human beings in His own image. In the image of God, He created them; male and female He created them" (Gen. 1:27).

The innocent should be protected. "This is what the Lord says: Be fair-minded and just. Do what is right! Help those who have been robbed; rescue them from their oppressors. Quit your evil deeds! Do not mistreat foreigners, orphans, and widows. Stop murdering the innocent!" (Jer. 22:3).

God has plans for each individual. "I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb. Before you were born, I set you apart and appointed you as my prophet to the nations" (Jer. 1:5).

Everyone has the right to live. As life is a gift from God, no one is entitled to take life away. "I came naked from my mother's womb, and I will be naked when I leave. The Lord gave me

what I had, and the Lord has taken it away" (Job 1:21).

What God thinks is most important. What God says in His Word takes precedence over that anyone else says or thinks. Social pressure, human opinions, civil laws are not what delineate truth.

Craft

Invite the women to write the words of Psalm 139:14 on a flat rock with acrylic paint. They could embellish their rock with flowers or other designs. "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made..." (Psalm 139:14).

Create a tree with many branches. Have the women add "fingerprint" buds to the tree using an ink pad. Talk about the fact that each person's fingerprints are unique, none are alike. We are all unique and God created us just the way we are.

Knitted Together by the Maker

We read in Psalm 139:13, "For you created my inmost being, you knit me together in my mother's womb." How beautiful it is to think and meditate on this verse. To think of our maker carefully knitting each of us together so intentionally and purposefully is beautiful to comprehend. Can you picture the Psalmist being overwhelmed by the beauty, the majesty of God's work within the womb. He designed and knit us together. This isn't an idea that we can just speak and quickly move on from, but something that is so beautiful and so important to take in and let it marinate deep down into our souls.

The God of the Universe knit you together. Have you ever knitted anything, or do you know a knitter? There is purpose in knitting. The art of knitting is very intentional. The knitter goes about their creation with a purpose in mind. They have a vision for a result that they are trying to achieve. There are rows and rows of perfectly formed yarn. This yard is spun around two needles in such a way that the yarn begins to form into something. What was once just a blob of yarn turns into a sweater, a scarf, or maybe even a dress. There is so much accuracy and intention involved. The knitter knows exactly what they are doing and executes their art in an exact manner that produces the desired outcome. The knitter is not surprised when they are done. They always knew what the intention was.

When we think about God knitting us together, He knew exactly what He was doing. You are not an accident. He knew how He was forming you. There was an intention and accuracy, there was a purpose. It is not by accident that you are who you are. It is not by accident that any of us are here. We have been made by a Creator that carefully crafted each part of us.

The world gives us many messages that go against this. The world tells us of accidental babies and says that there are people out there who God did not plan for. We know that this is a lie. When we read in the Bible about our Creator, and when we see in Psalm 139 that He knit us together, we must remember this truth. We must remember that we are fearfully and

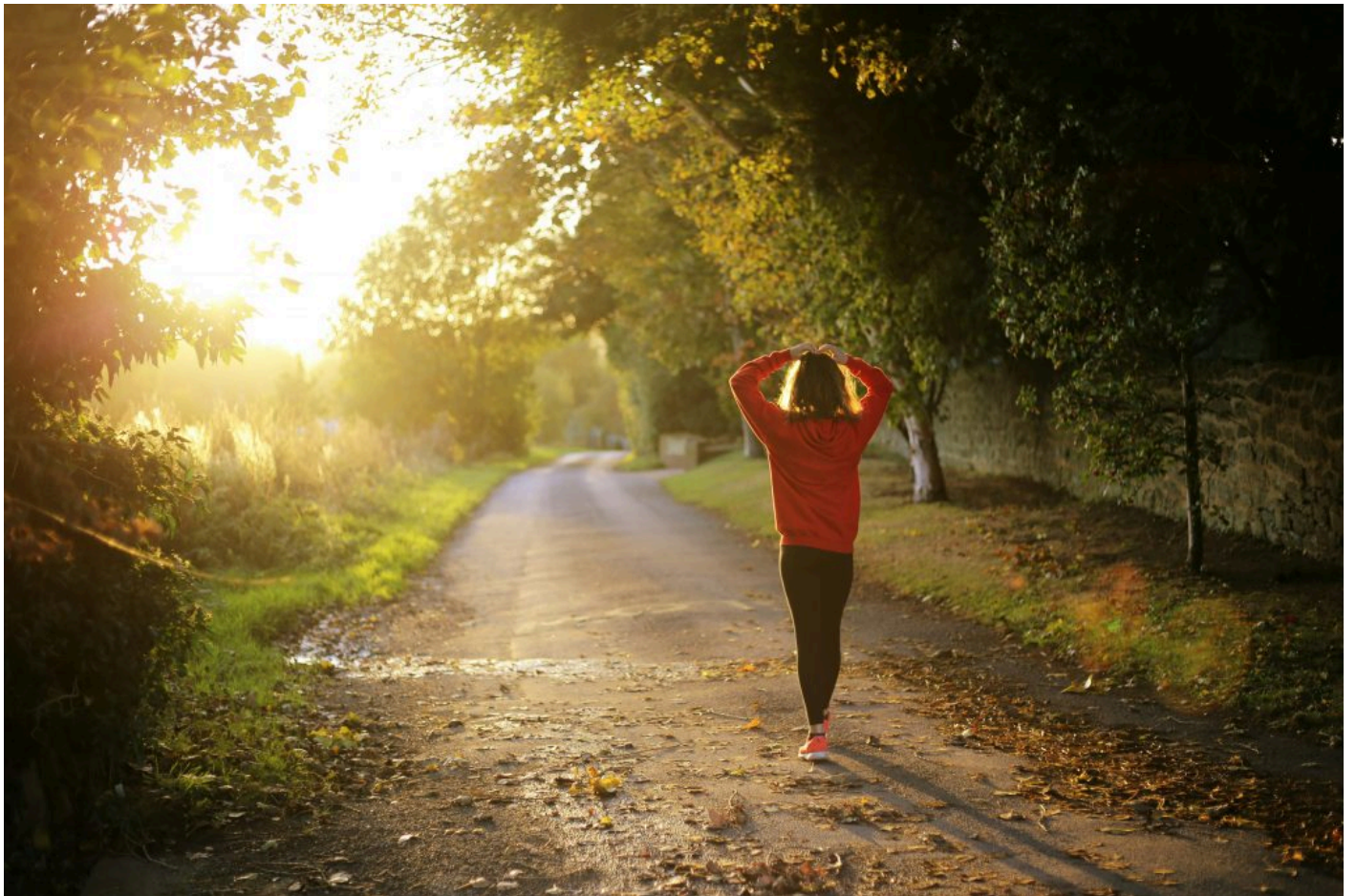
wonderfully made. God had a plan when He made you. A beautiful and perfect plan. We must go forward in this truth and tell others. Remind someone you know when you leave here today, that they are God's perfect plan.



Service Programs

May 2025 – Barely Surviving or Thriving

May 1, 2025 By Ashley Escobar



Barely Surviving or Thriving

Scripture: Matthew 11:28-30 NIV

Mental health awareness is crucial today as mental health issues affect a significant portion of the global population. With increasing stress and pressures of daily life, mental health issues such as anxiety and depression are becoming more prevalent, and it is important to recognize the signs and seek help when needed. Raising awareness about mental health can help reduce stigma and discrimination surrounding mental health issues, increase access to resources and support, and ultimately lead to better mental health outcomes for individuals and communities. However, raising awareness requires one to be aware of their own mental health, as it can help us better understand and support those who may be struggling.

Engaging in outdoor activities such as hiking, walking, or jogging can be a great way for women to get fresh air and exercise, which has been shown to improve mood and overall mental health. When blood and oxygen are flowing to the brain, we can increase our levels of serotonin and dopamine, which can positively impact brain health and mood. When we participate in these mood-boosting activities with others, this can lead to life changing impact. Likewise, exercising our creativity, such as painting, drawing, or crafting can be a fun and therapeutic way for women to express themselves, reduce stress, and increase feelings of well-being. Working on creative service projects together, with one goal in mind to work toward, can help foster a sense of community and connection within the group.

Service Project Ideas

1 Mental Health Workshop

Create a safe space for women to share their experiences and feelings about mental health issues. The group can discuss topics such as stress, anxiety, depression, and ways to cope with them. Encourage members to support each other by sharing their own experiences and insights. Invite a local mental health professional to conduct a 1-hour workshop who can help facilitate talking points and educate.

1 Create Mental Health Care Packages

You can organize a care package drive where women can contribute items such as journals, stress balls, essential oils, or self-care items, and assemble them into care packages for those in need of mental health support. The care packages can be distributed to local mental health clinics, shelters, or rehabilitation programs.

1 Mental Health First Aid Training

Organize a training session on mental health first aid for community members. Mental health first aid training teaches individuals how to recognize signs and symptoms of mental health challenges and how to provide initial support to individuals in distress. The training can be facilitated by a mental health professional and can be conducted in-person or online. This

service project can help increase mental health literacy in the community and empower individuals to provide support and resources to those who need it.

1 Hope Letters

As a group, nominate 5 individuals to receive a "Hope Letters bundle." A Hope Letters Bundle is a collection of handwritten letters of hope by the women in the group; reminding these 5 individuals of why they matter. These letters are meant to be real and honest words from the heart and intended to end up in the hands of someone who needs words of hope.

Come to Me

Matthew 11:28-30 is a well-known and comforting verse in the Bible, where Jesus invites those who are weary and burdened to come to Him for rest. Verse 28 says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." This invitation from Jesus is a powerful reminder of His love and compassion for us. It acknowledges that life can be challenging and tiring, and that we may carry heavy burdens and worries that weigh us down. However, in this verse, Jesus offers us a solution – to come to Him and find rest. He doesn't offer a temporary solution or a quick fix, but a genuine offer of rest for our souls. This rest can only be found in Him, and it comes with the assurance that we don't have to face our struggles alone. As we go through life, we may be tempted to rely on our own strength and abilities to carry our burdens. However, this verse reminds us that we were not meant to carry these burdens alone. Jesus invites us to come to Him, to trust in Him and find rest in His love and care. When we surrender our burdens to Him, we can find the peace and strength we need to keep going.

Verse 29 is a continuation of Jesus' invitation to those who are weary and burdened. In this verse, Jesus says, "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." Here, Jesus offers not just rest, but also an invitation to learn from Him. He invites us to take on His yoke, which represents a partnership with Him in navigating the challenges of life. By taking on His yoke, we learn from Him, walking in His footsteps and following His example. Jesus assures us that His yoke is gentle and His burden is light, in contrast to the heavy burdens we may carry on our own.

In verse 30, Jesus assures us that partnering with Him is not meant to be a difficult or strenuous task, but rather a source of comfort and relief. Through this verse, Jesus reminds us that walking with Him is not meant to be a burden, but rather a source of peace and joy. By taking on His yoke and following His example, we can find rest for our souls and experience the grace and love of God in our lives. Jesus' invitation to take on His yoke is not just a call to find rest, but a call to a life of freedom and joy in Him.

Whether you're literally walking or metaphorically walking with Jesus, remember that it is with the purpose that He can and will give you rest. That if you continue to show up and make a

choice to walk with Him every day, you can trust Him to lead you to green pastures. You can trust Him to replenish and renew your joy.

Helpful Mental Health Resources:

Websites

- <https://www.psychologytoday.com>
- <https://nami.org/Home>
- <https://www.freementalhealth.us>

About author



Ashley Escobar

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Service Programs

June 2025 – Flourish

June 1, 2025 By Major Linda Payton



Flourish

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 and 1 Peter 1:13

Introduction

There are many ways of improving our health. When we think about this, what usually comes to mind is a healthy diet and exercise routine. However, today we're going to focus, not on food and physical activity, but rather on the benefits of a healthy mind. A healthy and energized brain can improve attitude, emotions, and memory.

Did you know that playing board and card games can:

- Stimulate brain areas that are responsible for memory and complex thought processes.
- Help with decision making, strategic thinking and problem solving.
- Help young children develop hand-eye coordination and dexterity.
- Help senior adults retain and improve their memory, dexterity, as well as giving them a social outlet.

Games

This website discusses games that can be played with young and elderly alike:

Linda Payton – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_p-ZYmwTuYQ

Modern – Dixit, Qwirkle, Ticket to Ride, Chronology, Kingdomino, Tenzi, No Thanks, SET, Qwixx, Sushi Go. For a description of these “Modern” games check out this YouTube video done by Major

Suggested games:

Classic – Checkers, Chess, Backgammon, Cribbage, Mancala, Dominoes, Chinese Checkers.

Paper – Word Search, Crosswords, Sudoku

Traditional – Clue, Sorry, Boggle, Scrabble, Jenga, Uno, Yahtzee, Bingo, Rummikub.

Benefits for children:

<https://swordsandstationery.com/learning/tabletop-games-benefit-children-learning/>

<https://piquegames.com/blog/f/top-5-benefits-of-playing-tabletop-games-for-kids>

Benefits for senior adults:

<https://respectcaregivers.org/benefits-games-seniors/>

<https://aginggreatly.com/board-games-for-senior-citizens/>

Benefits for all:

<https://www.healthfitnessrevolution.com/top-10-health-benefits-board-games/>

<https://geekgeargalore.com/boardgames/benefits-of-board-games/>

Games and Libraries:

<https://princh.com/blog-board-games-in-libraries/#.Y8sBRK3MJEY>

<http://www.inversegenius.com/games-in-schools-and-libraries>

Service Project

How can you help your community through tabletop games?

1 – If your corps has a youth or senior program, schedule a time to simply playing games. If you have the chance, learn a new game, then teach it and play it.

2 – If your corps doesn't have a senior program, check to see if your community has any senior centers. If so, schedule an opportunity to spend time with them, teaching and playing games.

3 – Collect and/or purchase games to donate to your corps' youth/senior programs, community senior center, elementary school library or public library. Many libraries have begun including games for check out.

In the Power of the Holy Spirit

The apostle Paul clearly taught that we receive the Holy Spirit the moment we receive Jesus Christ as our Savior. First Corinthians 12:13 declares, "For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all give the one Spirit to drink." Romans 8:9 tells us that if a person does not possess the Holy Spirit, he or she does not belong to Christ. "You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit if the Spirit of God live in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ." All those who put their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately and permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirt works in and through believers to accomplish His will. His power leads us, convicts us, teaches us, and equips us to do His work and spread the gospel.

We read in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, that our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in us and was given to us by God. What a privilege of being given God's Holy Spirit to live within us. In the Old Testament, only a few were given this honor and responsibility. Judges, prophets,

and some kings were given the Holy Spirit. But it was always for a special purpose or time. God has a specific purpose for us as well.

Jesus promised the Spirit as a permanent guide, teacher, seal of salvation and comforter for believers. John 14:16-18 "And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive Him because it isn't looking for Him and doesn't recognize Him. But you know Him because He lives with you now and later will be in you. No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you." What a wonderful comfort this is to all who have accepted Jesus as their savior. The Holy Spirit is with us no matter what we face. He will never leave us. We are given the Holy Spirit so that we would witness to others about the love of God. We are to spread this word to all who we met.



Service Programs

July 2025 – Pathway to Prosperity

July 1, 2025 By Major Bivi Guadalupe



Pathway to Prosperity

Subject: Financial Freedom

Scripture *"And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus"* (Phil. 4:19 NIV).

Introduction:

The purpose of this program is to pave the way so we can express our love to others through the act of giving. It will help us to:

- Identify the needs around us.
- Trace a plan of action to help those in need.
- Understand our personal capacity for helping others.

Project Ideas

1 Meeting our neighbor's needs:

We need to identify needs that people in our community have and work towards meeting those needs. For example:

- Is there anyone who needs food? If so, make a list of needed food items. Ask different women to bring those items on a chosen date. Place the food in a basket and present it to an individual or family. If there is more than one family, this can be done for a different family every month.
- In July fill up backpacks with school supplies and give them to families with children. Use the same strategy as with the previous one but with school supplies instead of food.
- If you have a shelter at your corps, ask the women to bring purses that are in good condition and fill them up with some new personal items such as: makeup products, lotions, deodorants, tissue. Once a month, hold a women's meeting at the shelter and give the women the purses.
- Organize fundraising activities such as yard sales, bake sales, to raise funds for a specific need: to help a child to go to camp, to send needed supplies to the missionaries, or to buy toys for the corps nursery.

1 Financial Exercise: Making Our Personal Budget.

If as individuals the women don't have the capacity to help others, the group will be limited. That is why we need to help the women work on their personal finances. After the meeting, some women will probably want/need to have more personal-private help. If that's the case, you can set a time to work with each of them separately.

Preparation

Let the women know that this is on a volunteer basis, since some personal information may be exposed. For ideas on how to put together a budget visit the following websites:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7IHNMGoACdQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Eh8QLcB1UQ>

Three months before the meeting, advise the women to keep track of the money they receive and the money they spend each month. Be aware that each person will have different sources of income and different types of expenses. You may give the women a simple chart as an example so that they have an idea on how to fill it out.

Day of the meeting

Those who brought their completed form and those using the sample can begin by analyzing the information contained in the form:

- Identify things that need attention: are their expenses more than income; did they include interest payments on their credit cards; did they include donations to churches and others, is there an amount for entertainment.
- Brainstorm with the women about how to balance that budget: how can they reduce expenses or increase income.
- If we reduce expenses: where should we start? How much? What about credit cards?
- If we choose to increase income: by how much and from where?
- Reshape expenses: add savings (how much?), add donations (to whom/how much?).
- End with a balanced budget (Income = Expenses).

Expressing Our Love Through Giving

Paul sent a prayer of blessings upon the church of Philippi, because of the help they offered him on more than one occasion. People in the church were able to help him not only because they had the desire to do it, but they also had the means to serve him this way, and they did it in more than one occasion.

Having the means gives us freedom to express our love through the act of giving. It doesn't matter how much we want to help; we cannot give what we don't have. Galatians 5:13 presents us with the calling God has placed upon us and the purpose of that calling, "For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another."

Freedom is not meant to be an "after-death" or an "out-of-this-world" experience. Freedom is part of the gift package we receive when we believed in Christ, and it is meant to be enjoyed

while we are still on this earth. It is a highway, a wide-open road, to serve others. Slavery is the opposite of freedom; therefore, no opportunity of serving.

When we apply these two terms, freedom, and slavery, to finance, we can talk about financial freedom (no debts) and financial slavery (debts). We find ourselves on one of those two roads, serving one of those two masters (Matt. 6:24). If we allow ourselves to be under the dominion of debt, we are being held captive and don't have the freedom to serve our Lord as our Master; instead, debt becomes our master. The Bible encourages us to pursue financial freedom: "the borrower is the slave of the lender." Prov 22:7b, ESV. "Owe no one anything, except to love each other." Rom 13:8a, ESV.

Our identity and value should come from Christ and not from material riches we possess. Many people are obsessed with accumulating "material things" at the expense of sacrificing peace, joy, and financial freedom; but to us, peace, joy, and freedom are a part of our riches, not the means to it.

About author



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Service Programs

August 2025 – Defense-ability

August 1, 2025 By Captain Rachel R. McKain



Defense-ability

Scripture: Psalm 82: 4 NIV, Galatians 6: 9-10 NIV

Introduction

We as Christians should defend others by showing validation, acceptance, care, and most of all, love. Scripture is full of verses telling us to love one another and to encourage one another. This program gives us a chance to validate one another and take care of those in difficult circumstances.

Opening Game

“Cross This Line”

How to Play: Place one long line of painters' tape down the middle of the room. At the start of the game everyone is standing on the line, side-by-side, facing the same direction. The host will make a statement. Everyone on the line moves forward if they identify with the statement, move backwards if they don't, or stay on the line if they choose to pass. Example statements are: “I like broccoli” and they become progressively become more serious such as, “I sometimes feel unworthy of love.” Periodically the game host can say “Look around at those who are experiencing some of the same things you are. You can pick statements that you know may show people their similarities so they can understand that they're not alone. If someone stands out on a statement alone, the other women can validate her by saying “we see you and we're here for you.”

At the end of the game say: “You can see that you are not alone and that you are surrounded by others that love you, many who are experiencing the same situations as you. We are going to take some time and serve others today so they can also know they are supported and valued.”

Service Project Ideas

Cupcakes of Encouragement: You will need cupcake to-go containers, cupcake toppers you can write on, metallic markers, and printed invitations. The group will make and decorate cupcakes to take to individuals that they feel may need an uplifting message. They can write a message on the cupcake topper and along with the cupcake extend an invitation to join the group for future events.

All for One: Choose a woman or family in the group or community that is going through a difficult time. Ask everyone to bring a small item of encouragement along with a personalized card. Prepare a meal and deliver the basket and meal to that family.

Encouraging One Another: Give each woman a piece of card stock and ask her to put her name on the top of it. Ask the women to write encouraging words to each other on the card. Frame them so that the women can look at the words and remember that they are special and loved.

Love and a Cupcake

In one of my first appointments there was a little girl with a big attitude. When asked to do something, she usually smacked her lips and rolled her eyes. She was a beautiful girl, but she didn't know it, and when I would speak about Mia to some of the other leaders they would say "Which one is Mia? You mean the little mean girl?" It was discouraging that Mia was referred to by the church leaders at the "mean girl." Insecure? Maybe. But mean? Not hardly. Showing Mia love and patience became my mission.

I did routes to pick up the children for youth activities every Sunday and Wednesday, and I would greet Mia the same way every time, "Hey there Sunshine, I missed you." And she would respond the same way every time, with an eye roll and a lip smack. One day when I said my usual, she responded with a "Hey Ms. Rachel." I was elated. We were getting somewhere.

I prayed for this little girl, loved her, tried patience when she would sometimes lash out or withdraw from the adults that she didn't really trust, including me. I wondered if I was getting anywhere, and I prayed that the Lord would help me make a difference. And then it happened. One Sunday morning I pulled up in front of Mia's house and she came out with a little plate with a napkin covering a cupcake. She had an actual smile on her pretty little face. She opened the door and I said, "Hey there Sunshine, I missed you." She said "Here," as she pushed that birthday cupcake over to me. I asked what this was for, and she said, "I was at a birthday party yesterday and I saved it for you." I ate that stale cupcake doing a little happy dance as I sat in her driveway and I said "Ooooooh girl, this cupcake is delicious! It tastes just like love." She couldn't help herself anymore. She let out the most perfect little giggle. Of course, it was followed by an eye roll and "Ms. Rachel, you're so weird."

The word "defensibility" means the ability for one to be defended. Mia wasn't in a place in her life where she was able to defend herself, that was my job as her leader. There are those who are hurting or weak and it is our responsibility to defend the poor and needy (Psalm 84:4). To this day, it's one of the best Sundays I can remember because I knew that the Lord was faithful. We did see huge improvement in Mia as she grew, and learned, and became more confident.

Sometimes, those we serve may not appreciate it or even notice, but our responsibility is to continue to take care of the poor and needy, and we will reap the harvest (Galatians 6: 9-10). I'll tell you this, if you ever love to the point of a stale cupcake in a 12-passenger van, all the effort would have been so worth it.

Discussion Questions:

- 1 Do you have a time in your life that you have had a similar situation to Mia? What happened?
- 2 Have you ever had a time where you could identify with Mia, and someone continued to be patient with you?

3 What are some practical ways you could love the youth or others in our corps family?



Service Programs

September 2025 – A World Beyond Hunger

September 1, 2025 By Major Sandra Pawar



A World Beyond Hunger

Related Scripture: Luke 3:11

Hunger By the Numbers

- 828 million people around the world were affected by hunger in 2021.
- 3 billion people in the world had moderately or severely food insecure in 2021.
- 9% of women in the world had moderately or severely food insecure, compared to 27.6% of men.
- Almost 3.1 billion people could not afford a healthy diet in 2020.
- It is estimated that 45 million children under the age of five suffer from malnutrition, the deadliest form called wasting.
- 149 million children under the age of five had stunted growth and development due to a chronic lack of essential nutrients in their diets.
- There is enough food in the world for everyone to have 2,800 calories a day.

These are some very disturbing numbers to read. They are so big it is difficult to fully comprehend them or wrap our brains around them. What makes them more disturbing is that these incredibly large numbers represent people, real people all around our world who are lacking the food they need to survive. It seems incomprehensible in a world so advanced to have so many people struggling to find food. And yet millions and millions of men, women and children around the world are hungry.

What Can We Do?

- Know how the food you eat and have in your pantry gets there.

Spend some time researching where your food comes from and if it finds your way to you through ethical means. If you are doing this as a project in your women's ministry group, go through the corps food pantry and discover where things are made, how it was made, how it got to you. If it is not by ethical or environmentally friendly means, research alternatives and ensure that next time you go food shopping you buy the alternative.

- Reduce your food waste.

We have talked already about the fact that the world produces enough food to feed all the people who live in it. So realistically this should mean that no-one going to bed hungry, yet they are. People are going hungry while others are wasting food. In fact, one third of all the food produced (over 1.1 billion tons) is never consumed. Don't be discouraged because there is something you can do. Make your own compost or create a corps compost. We always have plenty of waste after those big corps and community dinners and so a compost could be a great way to use the leftovers and a great service project for your women.

- Take food directly to those who need it.

More than 1 in 7 households in the USA are food insecure, and 3.9 million homes have children in them who are food insecure. This means many children are going to school without breakfast and lunch. To serve those children, have the women's ministry sponsor and volunteer at a free breakfast program at your local school or offer to provide free lunch for children during the school holidays. This will make such a difference in these children's lives and in the way they are able to learn and function at school.

- Organize a local food drive for your corps food pantry.

There is never enough food stored in your corps food pantry and it can always do with more food. Ask the women to organize a food drive. Set the date, recruit volunteers, get the word out and make it happen. What a blessing it will be to those in your community who are in desperate need of this food. Try and encourage people to donate healthy food, fruits and vegetables and food that has nutritious value. People who use our food banks shouldn't have to get the food that others don't want.

Enough Food for Everyone

As Christians and as people who love the Lord, that people are going hungry should bother us. It should upset us; it should anger us, and it should cause us to want to act upon this injustice. Food insecurity is an issue of fairness. It is not fair that people around this world and in this country are going without food, when there is enough food for everyone to be fed. I believe this is something that God cares about. Luke 3:11 challenges us with these words "John answered, 'Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same'" (NIV). These words seem so simple, give food to those who have none, yet we all know it is not that easy. It's not just a matter of giving someone a plate of food (although at times that might be the answer). World hunger is complicated and complex with multiple causes and there is no way you as an individual can solve it, but there are small things you can do. The more small things you do, and the more you encourage others to do the same, the greater the difference we will make.

Julie Clawson in the concluding chapter of her book "Everyday Justice" challenges readers to seek justice in everything that they do because that is the example that Christ has set for us through His love for us. She also challenges the readers to not seek justice alone, but instead to gather a community of people who can seek justice together. Tackling the issue of food insecurity is a way that the women's ministry group can seek justice together and more importantly seek Jesus together. Jesus cares about issues of injustice and when His people are not being treated fairly or justly, He is grieved. When we tackle this issue of hunger, we are caring about the things that Jesus cares about. You might not be able to give every person in the world a plate of food, but you can start by serving one person and that is enough in His eyes.

Resources:

<https://www.who.int/news/item/06-07-2022-un-report-global-hunger-numbers-rose-to-as-many-as-828-million-in-2021>

<http://america.aljazeera.com/watch/shows/america-tonight/america-tonight-blog/2013/11/27/hunger-america-numbersfacts.html#:~:text=Hunger%20in%20America%3A%20By%20the%20numbers%201%20%20More%20items>

Worship Programs



THE SALVATION ARMY WOMEN'S MINISTRIES RESOURCES

PRICELESS

2024-2025 PROGRAM YEAR

**God, your thoughts about me are priceless.
No one can possibly add them all up**

Psalm 139:17 (NIRV)





Worship Programs

October 2024 – You Are Priceless ... You Have God-fidence!

October 1, 2024 By Lt. Melissa Esquivel



Note: Each worship program will coordinate with the monthly birthstone, their meaning, and their color to help with decorating ideas. Each birth stone meaning is linked to our identity in Christ.

October Birthstone Opal or Tourmaline, Color: pink (opals can be other colors) Meaning: Confidence.

Scripture: Hebrews 4:16. 1 Peter 2:6

Worship songs to play as women are arriving.

Same God by Elevation Worship <https://youtu.be/yse43TUrces>

Worthy by Elevation Worship <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ak5WTb-mgeA>

Cornerstone by Hillsong Worship <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=izrK-erhDdk>

Christ is Enough by Hillsong Worship <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=teUxQpnhezY>

Ice-Breaker Game

Either/Or Icebreaker Game

<https://womensministrytoolbox.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Either-Or-Icebreaker-Game.pdf>

Activities

Create God-fidence bingo cards using the app <https://myfreebingocards.com/>. Incorporate the words God has given to identity us.

New Creation

Child of God

God's Masterpiece

Redeemed

Chosen

Victorious

Disciple

Salt and Light

Royal Priesthood

Forgiven

Overcomer

Holy

Blameless

God's Own

Saved and Sanctified

Righteousness of God

Craft

Look on YouTube for crafts using faux opals. There are technics using resin, Polymer clay, even hot glue and sparkling nail polish, which is found at: https://youtu.be/Y_elwrXFCRA.

Opal

If you were born in the month of October, your birth stone is the beautiful opal. Even though I have an April birthday, I have always loved the beauty and colors in the opal stone. The most common opal is a white blue with several colors shining throughout it.

Opal gemstones are quite rare and precious. They are formed from a solution of silicon dioxide and water. As water runs down through the earth, it picks up silica from sandstone, and carries this silica-rich solution into cracks and voids, caused by natural faults or decomposing fossils. As the water evaporates, it leaves behind a silica deposit. This cycle repeats over very long periods of time, and eventually opal is formed.

What I love about this process of a regular fossil becoming an opal is that the fossils can't become an opal on their own. Something outside of them must come in and infuse them, fill them, and wash over them so they can become these beautiful gemstones. This reminds me of our relationship with God. Because of what Christ did for us on the cross, we can go boldly before the throne of God (Hebrews 4:16). Jesus offers us this precious gift of life. He is God's gift to us. Like a precious and rare opal stone. Not because of all the amazing things we have done—our good deeds—or how good of a person we are. Rather it takes something outside of us (Jesus) which enables us walk in confidence and go freely to God's throne in prayer. Jesus Christ has given us that beautiful gift, and we can be confident of His unchanging love. In Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in Him will never be put to shame" (1 Peter 2:6, NIV).

We can go boldly before the throne of God in confidence because of Jesus Christ. He has made us holy by His grace and forgiveness. Our confidence is not in things that may fail (this world, what others tell us, or even what we may tell ourselves), but in the love and grace that has been lavished on us by our loving Savior. Jesus is God's precious and chosen stone, and we who trust and believe in Him will never be put to shame. Just like the silica-rich water must wash into the fossils, when we allow Jesus Christ to change us from the inside, we are

renewed day by day. We become more like Jesus and can rest our confidence fully in who He says we are.

So, what does this look like in practice, in real. everyday life? I can easily identify what confidence is not. My struggle with confidence often comes down to how I feel. My inner dialog sounds like this: "I just don't feel confident today. Lord! I am a nervous wreck. I am worried I won't accomplish this task. I said the wrong thing to somebody. My hair is a mess. I feel insecure, unsure, and anxious." Putting our confidence in ourselves, doesn't work. Putting our confidence in Jesus will never fail.

Questions for discussion

- How do you feel when you are confident?
- Is confidence a feeling, or is it something more?
- How do your circumstances/experience affect your confidence?
- What is the opposite of confidence for you?
- What is your experience when you felt confidence?

Conclusion

What it comes down to is this: I'm least confident when I'm not living in, trusting in, and embracing who God says He is, and who He says I am. When we don't feel confident, we should lean on Christ even more, draw even closer to Him. When we are weak, we are strong because of Christ and the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 12:10; Rom. 8:26). We must remind ourselves and each other that confidence isn't in our circumstances, nor is it in our own strength. Our confidence comes from knowing Jesus. Walking in who He has made us, and who He says we are in God's Word. Just like the opal is formed by an outside source, Christ is our source of confidence.

When we lack confidence, we can remember this fact: God spared no expense when He sent His Son to die for us. We were invited to go before the throne of God the moment that curtain in the temple was torn. Jesus has given us access to our heavenly Father. Think about the white opal: it's the most common, yet each one has beautiful, unique colors making each opal special and different. Sometimes we may feel we are just common and nothing special. Yet God has made us each unique, and His love for us is not your everyday common love. It creates beauty within us that only God can give.

Challenge: Given this knowledge, we can go freely to God's throne. Do we go to our Lord as often as we could? We can go confidently to our Lord at any time, because of Jesus Christ. He is our precious gift, and He has lavished His gift of love on us, and that inspires confidence. Really. it inspires God-fidence!

Follow-Up Activities:

21 Day Bible Reading Plan: Who God Says You Are-

<https://i.pinimg.com/originals/17/92/a6/1792a6ae4585243a5f54667387e6afaf.png>

Names of God Bible Reading Challenge- <https://rachelwojo.com/the-names-of-god-bible-reading-challenge/>

(Godly confidence grows by knowing who God is so this reading plan will help the women to grow in their knowledge of the character of God).

Scripture References for God-fidence Bingo:

<https://rccgonline.org/17-names-god-calls-you/>

<https://lifestylebymo.com/identity-in-christ/>



Worship Programs

November 2024 – You are Priceless... You Bring God Joy!

November 1, 2024 By Major Jennifer Erickson-King



Note: Each worship program will coordinate with the monthly birthstone, their meaning, and their color to help with decorating ideas. Each birth stone meaning is linked to our identity in Christ.

November Birthstone: citrine , color: yellow to brownish orange (perfect fall colors)

Meaning: Joy

Decoration Ideas

Use fall colors of brown, orange, red, and yellow for the tablecloths, table runners, placemats, and napkins. Place name tags in front of each setting.

Napkin Folding

Teach the women how to fold napkin, about table settings and decorating ideas, so that they can incorporate them into their Thanksgiving celebrations.

*Angled Pocket Napkin Fold

(<https://www.marthastewart.com/1521995/angled-pocket-napkin-fold>)

*Fall Harvest Decorating Ideas

(<https://www.marthastewart.com/275172/fall-harvest-decorating>)

*Table Settings

(<https://www.marthastewart.com/274251/thanksgiving-table-settings>)

Refreshments

Plan a thanksgiving potluck. For a fun dessert download “Turkey Marshmallow Lollipops” at (<https://kidfriendlythingstodo.com/thanksgiving-turkey-marshmallow-lollipops/>) These could be made as part of the program with the women assembling them, or they could be pre-made.

Worship Songs

“Give Thanks” (TSA SB #364)

“Mighty To Save” (TSA SB #177)

“O Boundless Salvation” (TSA SB #509)

“Thank You” by Hillsong <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BSMuZFUL-0g>

“You Are Good” by Bethel Music <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVL32yQywsA>

Thanksgiving Scripture Verses

Invite the women look up and read verses that give thanks to the Lord. The following are some suggestions:

"Give thanks to the Lord, for His is good; His love endures forever" (1 Chron 16:34. NIV).

"Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done. Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts. Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice. Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always (Ps.105:1-4 NIV).

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called accordingly to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28, NIV).

"Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song. For the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods" (Ps. 95:1-3 NIV).

"I always thank my God for you because of His grace given you in Christ Jesus" (1 Cor. 1:4, NIV),

"For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the Word of God and prayer" (1 Tim. 4:4-5, NIV).

Thankfulness Activity

Ask the women to write down what they are thankful for and share it with each other.

Video Song with Hand Motions

Zephaniah 3:17 – Mighty to Save with Hand Motions (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2aK3F9QsHuU>) As a group, learn the motions to memorize this beautiful promise from Scripture.

Word Search

Create a word search using the words associated with Zephaniah 3:17.

<https://puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com/word-search>

www.education.com/worksheet-generator

Craft Idea/Websites for Families

While many of these ideas are geared towards children, invite the women to make a couple with the idea they could make them with their children or grandchildren at Thanksgiving. An

alternate idea would be to have samples of various crafts and give the website address that provide the instructions.

Hand Turkey Drawing

(<https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/holidays/thanksgiving-ideas/g29194874/how-to-make-hand-turkey/>)

Paper Bag Turkey Craft

<https://www.thebestideasforkids.com/paper-bag-turkey-craft/>

50 DIY Crafts for Families

<https://www.shutterfly.com/ideas/diy-thanksgiving-crafts/>

40 Thanksgiving Crafts for Families

<https://www.diys.com/thanksgiving-crafts/>

He Will Take Great Delight in You

“The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in His love He will no longer rebuke you but will rejoice over you with singing” (Zeph. 3:17, NIV). What a wonderful reminder that the Lord rejoices over His people with gladness and joy. He is with you always, mighty to save you. He rejoices in you with gladness. This is how God thinks about you and all His people.

My husband and I love cruising because you are always surrounded by God’s amazing and beautiful creation. No matter where we have been, we are always thankful and grateful for the Lord’s creation. We are amazed at the ocean that seems to never end; for the beautiful colors of the sunrise and the sunsets that are always different. We are also blessed by the wonderful people that we get to meet and know. Through these experiences, I am always reminded how much God loves me. I am His child. I am priceless because I was created in His image, and so are you. I know that most of us feel that we are very busy, but we should never be so busy that we don’t stop for a moment each day to be still, to look around at God’s beautiful creation and to give Him thanks for all His goodness. We are blessed people because He loves and rejoices over us. This should be our reason to thank Him.

Here are some ways that you can express our praise and thanksgiving to God.

- Give thanks and as you pray. Starting with the letters A through Z, list the way that you can give thanks.
- Read and meditate on God’s words; listening to what He wants to share with you.

- Praise Him by listening to Christian music throughout the day— in your house, office, car, or wherever you are.
- Praise Him through your prayers.
- Acknowledging that God is a good God who loves you.

He is always so faithful. Even on the days that you don't feel like you are worthy or that you are not good enough; that the mountains that you are climbing are too steep, and the valleys too deep. No matter what you are currently going through God can bring you joy. Remember you are priceless and loved. You are precious in His sight. You are the daughter of the mighty King.

When you give thanks to the Lord, you are worshipping, glorifying, praising, and honoring Him. When you give thanks, you are at peace knowing that He is in full control. He has never left you, and that you are always in the palm of His mighty hands.



Worship Programs

December 2024 – You are Priceless ... the Best Gift Ever!

December 1, 2024 By Captain Christina Arnold



Note: Each worship program will coordinate with the monthly birthstone, their meaning, and their color to help with decorating ideas. Each birth stone meaning is linked to our identity in Christ.

December Birthstone: turquoise, Color: Blue, Meaning: Friendship

Scripture: Matthew 1:18-25, 2:1-12; Luke 1:26-35, 38; 2:1-20, 10:27; John 3:16

Needed Items:

- Tabletop nativity scene with individual pieces.
- 5 gift packages with tags
- Ribbon or string (at least 4 feet for each person)
- Heart stickers or red markers to draw a heart
- Scripture on slips of paper
- Bible
- The Salvation Army Song Book (one per person)
- Print outs of a nativity banner with a hole punched in the top corner.

Links to a nativity banners:

- <https://uncommondesignsonline.com/free-printable-nativity-banner/>
- https://www.papertraildesign.com/christmas-nativity-banner-free-printable/?utm_medium=social&utm_source=pinterest&utm_campaign=tailwind_tribes&utm_content=
- Optional embellishments: decorative paper to layer, glitter glue, glue to attach, stickers

Room Décor

If the room is not decorated for the season, use what Christmas decoration are on hand. As you will be assembling a progressive nativity scene., leave space in a prominent area for the scene.

Set Up

In preparation for the nativity scene by putting the figurines into 4 separate gift boxes along with a corresponding banner piece (enough for each member to have a piece). Note that the first package is not to have a banner piece since the first banner piece is of Mary, Joseph, and Jesus. Place heart stickers in the 5th package. Using the tags, mark each package with a number. Use the list below as your guide.

- 1** Mary and Joseph – Luke 1:26-35; 38
- 2** Jesus – Luke 2:1-7

3 Shepherds – Luke 2:8-20

4 Wisemen – Matt 2:1 – 12

5 Heart – Luke 10:27

Print the scripture references on slips of paper. Place them into the corresponding packages.

Program Outline

(Pass out ribbons and Salvation Army Song Books).*

Welcome and Prayer

Open Package 1

Read Luke 1:26-35; 38 and place Mary and Joseph in the nativity scene.

O Come, All Ye Faithful, Song # 116*

Open Package 2

Read Luke 2:1-7 and place Jesus in the nativity scene. Then pass out the banner pieces and invite each person to add a piece to their banner by threading the ribbon through the holes.

Silent Night, Sing 124*

Open Package 3

Read the Luke 2:8-20 and place the shepherd in the scene.

Pass out the banner pieces and invite each person to add a piece to their banner.

Hark! The Herald Angels, Song#108*

Open Package 4

Read Matt 2:1-12 and place the Wisemen in the scene.

Invite the women to add the banner piece to their banner.

O Little Town of Bethlehem, Song #118*

*The Salvation Army Song Book

The Perfect Gift

During the Christmas season, we give gifts to show others we love them. I think long and hard about the gifts I want to give. I will agonize over the quality, meaningfulness, and sometimes

the practicality. I want my gifts to symbolize my love and the appreciation I have for the recipient. I want my gift to be perfect!

Once while exchanging gifts with a friend, I gave what I thought to be a terrific gift. The gift matched their personality flawlessly. It was fun and unique. When I opened my gift, I was surprised that my friend gave me a more expensive gift than what I gave to them. I felt awful and apologize profusely for the disparity in the gifts. But my friend said, "I gave you this gift because I love you and wanted you to have it."

God gave us the ultimate gift of love, by giving us His son, Jesus. We read in John 3:16, "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." Because of Jesus' life, His death, and resurrection, we can have forgiveness from sin and have a relationship with God. How can we compete with that? We can't! He gave us His son because He loves us and wanted us to have eternal life with Him.

In the fourth verse of the Christmas carol, "In the Bleak Midwinter" by Christina Rossetti, it says, "What can I give Him, Poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb; If I were a wise man, I would do my part; Yet what I can I give Him: Give my heart." What can we give that shows God that we love Him and appreciate Him? We can give Him our hearts.

Open Package 5

Read Luke 10:27 and invite the members to place a heart over Jesus on their banners.

Away in the Manger, Song #102*

**The Salvation Army Song Book*

Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father,

As we reflect on the birth of Your Son, Jesus, we are reminded of Your profound love for us. We know that nothing we can give can measure up to the love You have for us. Your perfect love is given to us as a perfect gift. May the giving of our hearts to You and others reflect our appreciation and dedication to you, our Lord. Amen

About author



Captain Christina Arnold

USA Western Territory



Worship Programs

January 2025 – You are Priceless... You are the Apple of God's Eye!

January 1, 2025 By Major Monica King



You are Priceless ... You are the Apple of God's Eye!

Note: Each worship program will coordinate with the monthly birthstone, their meaning, and their color to help with decorating ideas. Each birth stone meaning is linked to our identity in Christ.

January Birthstone: Garnet, Color: Reddish brown, rust color. Meaning: Protection

Scripture: Psalm 17:8

Decorations & Set Up

Set up chairs in a circle with a Salvation Army Song Book on each seat. As the women arrive, invite them to join the circle. Cover the tables with red tablecloths, green napkins. Place baskets containing apples on the table as centerpieces. Use apple scented plug-ins or candles to fragrance the room.

Refreshments

Ask the women to bring dishes that incorporate apples to share at a potluck.

All About Apples

- 1** Ahead of time, invite the women to bring copies of their favorite apple recipes and possibly provide samples.
- 2** Have an apple pie contest.
- 3** Ask the women to list as many varieties as possible of apples found in the US. (Check the website: <https://usapple.org/apple-varieties> for names and pictures of the various applies.)

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Announcements

Worship Through Song

Invite the women to share their favorite songs and why they are and then sing them. If you don't have a pianist, read the words, or sing acapella. Ask them to share why they picked the song and what it means to them. Encourage the women to make this a time of personal worship. Allow each woman to worship how she feels led in the moment. The time you spend singing will be determined by the level of participation and your schedule.

Reflection

At the beginning of the devotional give each women an apple outline downloaded from the website: <https://www.mommymadethat.com/free-printable-apple-template>. Ask them to write

"I am the Apple of His Eye" on their apple. They should imagine that they are standing in front of God, and He is telling them how much He loves them. Have them write on their apple the words or phrases of affirmation come to their mind. (I am a daughter of the King, I am compassionate, I am brave, I'm a good friend, I'm funny). If the women had trouble identifying affirmative phrases about themselves, invite the other women to share something positive about that woman. Instruct them to put their apple where they will see it daily as a reminder of God's love.

During this time of reflection play the song "Reckless Love of God" sung by Cory Asbury softly in the background. It's available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sc6SSHuZvQE>.

God's Love

Do you know realize just how much you are loved by God? I used to think I did, but the older I get the harder it is for me to wrap my mind around it. I sometimes think the best I can do is try to compare it to the greatest loves of my life and then realize that God's love is so much greater. Maybe growing up your parents doted over you. Or perhaps your love story would rival the most epic of romantic movies. Or God saw fit to bless you with the most beautiful and perfect babies to ever be born. Although my sister never had children, but she is in love with and devoted to her dog. God created us with the capacity to love and be loved, but as deeply and intensely as we can love, it does not begin to compare to the love God has for us.

Psalm 17:8, (NIV) reads, "Keep me as the apple of Your eye; hide Me in the shadow of Your wings," David asks God to keep him as the apple of His eye. In modern terms, when someone says we are the apple of their eye, they are identifying us as their pride and joy. In David's time, the apple of the eye would have referred to the pupil at the center of the eye. If I can help it, I don't let anything touch my eyes. Our eyes are vulnerable, and David is asking God to guard him from his enemies as one would protect their sight. He then asks God to hide him in the shadow of His wings. I have often heard people compare this verse to a mother hen who brings her chicks in close and protects them under her wings.

I recently came across a picture of the African Jacana that caused me to do a double take. It was of a bird that appeared to have a dozen or more legs dangling from its chest. Upon further research I found that the African Jacana is a wading bird with extra-large feet and toes that allow them to walk easily across aquatic plants on the water's surface. It has been given the nickname Jesus Bird because it appears to walk on water. The Jacana male cares for the nest and raises their young on their own. They are very protective of their brood. Not only will he hide his young under his wings, but he will pick them up, tuck them in nice and snug, and carry them away from danger with their little legs dangling loose.

(Show a short video of a Daddy Jacana saving his chicks from a crocodile at <https://thekidshouldseethis.com/post/jacana-dad-chicks-rescue-crocodile>.)

Jesus wants to do the same for us. When we are hurting, lonely, and afraid He wants to be the one we run to for protection. When Satan is on the attack, using others to tear us down, to doubt and steal your joy, Jesus wants to scoop you up and bring you to safety. As the apple of His eye, He doesn't want anything close to us that can hurt us and snatch us away from His protection because of His unimagined love for us. All we have to do is love Him in return.

Close with prayer.



Worship Programs

February 2025 – You are Priceless ... The Daughter of the King!

February 1, 2025 By Lieutenant Amber Herzog



You Are Priceless ... The Daughter of the King!

Note: Each worship program will coordinate with the monthly birthstone, their meaning, and their color to help with decorating ideas. Each birth stone meaning is linked to our identity in Christ.

February Birthstone: Amethyst, Color: Purple, Meaning: Royalty

Scripture: John 1:12, 2 Corinthians 6:18, 1 John 3:1

Decorations

Cover the tables with purple tablecloths. Place mirror squares or rounds on the tables. Scatter crown confetti and tiaras as the centerpieces. (*Check Amazon.com for these items.*)

Ice Breaker Idea

- 1 Play the game "Pretty, Pretty Princess" by Hasbro and have the women keep the jewelry on for the rest of the meeting.
- 2 Make paper crowns and ask the women to wear them during the program. The following website has directions for no-glue crowns: <https://www.gathered.how/arts-crafts/how-to-make-a-crown-out-of-paper/>).

Program Order

After the ice breaker, opening prayer and devotional, pick one activity from each category of Worship (Inward, Outward, Upward, found following the devotional).

Daughters of the King

What comes to mind when you think about worship? When I was young, I always associated worship with music. If you said we were going to worship, I immediately thought we were going to sing to Jesus. It wasn't until I was much older that I realized that worship was a much bigger part of my life as a follower of Christ than just music. Worship is our response to God. It is our actions that flow out of our reverence of who He is and our relationship to Him.

One of my favorite descriptions of worship is as dimensions of **inward**, **upward**, and **outward** worship. Where inward worship is essentially our personal response in our hearts and minds towards God, outward worship is our behavior towards others flowing out of who God is, and upward is our response to God directly.

I now say worship is our inner, outer, and **heavenward** responses to who God is and done in a way that reflects our relationship to Him.

Today as we worship look at the following scriptures and answer the questions:

What role of God's does Psalm 47:6, 7 mention? What do John 1:12, 2 Corinthians 6:18, and 1 John 3:1 say about our relationship with God?

What amazing news! God is King of all the earth, and we are His daughters. We are princesses. We are royalty! When we think of royalty a lot of things might come to mind. Even today royal

lives come with both privileges and responsibilities. You will often find royalty, especially the princes and princesses traveling around to represent their country and its interests; throwing fundraisers; and volunteering their time, as well as enjoying their riches and castles. You may picture them traveling the world in precious jewels.

You may think about purple and amethyst when you think of the word "royal." Purple is considered royal because in the past it was very rare due to how difficult it was to produce. This made it very expensive and only the elite or royalty could afford to wear it. Lydia in the Bible (*See Acts 16*) was a wealthy dealer in purple cloth. The value of purple cloth was found in its rarity. Our value is found in our identity in Christ. Our relationship with God. If He is King and we are His daughters, that makes us daughters of the Most High King.

Today let our worship flow through the knowledge that we are daughters of the King. We are valuable because we are His. We can inwardly recognize that we have both privileges and responsibilities as His daughters. Our worship heavenward or upwardly should recognize that God is the King of Kings. What a joy to burst with praise for our King as Psalm 47 declares. In our outer responses, we should be working towards expanding our Father's Kingdom and being representatives of Him.

Inward Worship Ideas (Reflection)

Option 1: Invite the women to bring a photo of themselves and cover it with purple Mod Podge to remind them of their worth in God. Surround the photo with amethysts

Option Two: Play worship music and invite the women answer the following:

- 1 What privileges have I taken or not taken as God's daughter?
- 2 Where can I serve my community as God's daughter?
- 3 Why does God call His children to love as He loves?
- 4 How can I allow God to use me to expand His Kingdom in this world?
- 5 What does it mean to be a part of the kingdom of God?

Option Three: Play worship music as the women read through the following passages and answer the question. Scripture: John 1:12 and 1 John 3:1. Answer the following question:

- 1 What do these passages mean to you?
- 2 What do they mean for your identity and your relationship with God?

Song Ideas for Reflection Activities on YouTube

- 1 Who You Say I Am by Hillsong (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lKw6uqtGFfo>)

- 2 Behold Our God by Sovereign Grace Music (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gqrli3Lkf58>)
- 3 King of Kings by Hillsong (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dQl4izxPeNU>)

Song List Ideas for Reflection Activities (Spanish) Editor's Note: Include on the Spanish Version only.

- 1 Quien Dices Que Soy de Hillsong (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kpe-FhRozJ0>)
- 2 Contempla a Dios de Sovereign Grace Music (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KA_svv5diQQ)
- 3 Rey de Reyes de Hillsong Worship and Hillsong En Español (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LcTB-hKadlk>)

Option Four: In purple paint write the words "Daughter of the Most High King" on hand mirrors purchased from the dollar store.

Upward Worship Ideas

Option One: Teach the women a new worship song. After they've learned it, ask them to close their eyes and sing it to the King of Kings: For example, "Jireh."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mC-zw0zCCtg>

Option Two: Pray through Psalm 47, reading it as a prayer and asking God to make it your praise and your thoughts.

Option Three: Write a letter to God telling Him your favorite name for Him and why you are thankful He is that for you. (See this website for a free printable).

<https://www.moneywisesteward.com/names-of-god/>)

Option Four: Ask the women to stand or sit in a circle. Invite them to testify of how great God is and how they have seen Him in His role of King of Kings.

Outward Worship Ideas

Option One: Make jewelry to sell at a craft sale with the proceeds going to World Services.

Option Two: Ask everyone to bring jewelry items and place them in bags. Either auction the bags or sell them with the proceeds going to World Services.

Option Three: Take a few moments to lift each woman up in prayer reminding them that they are daughters of the King Most High.

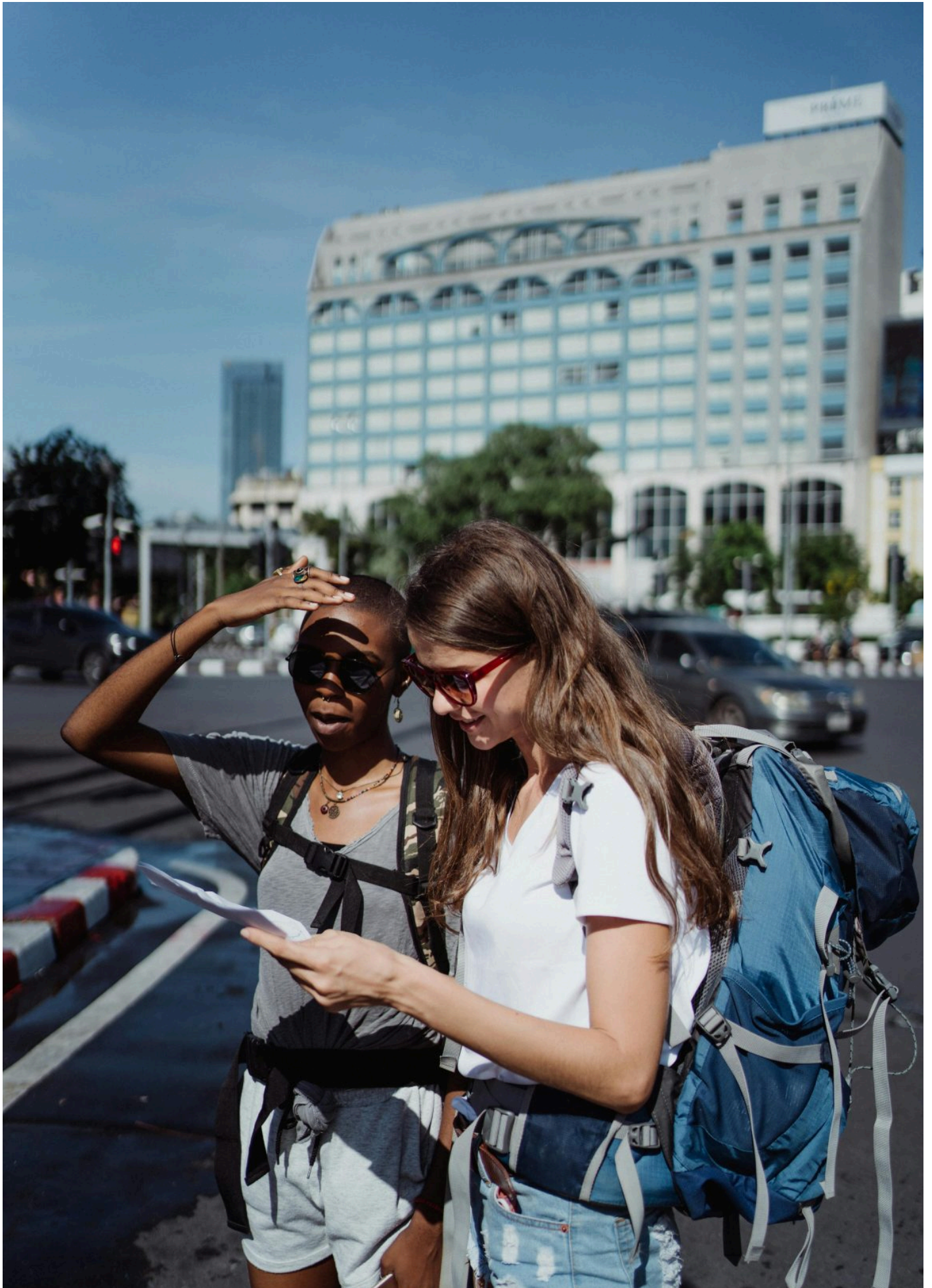
Option Four: Write cards to the women in a local nursing home or hospital, reminding them they are precious to God.

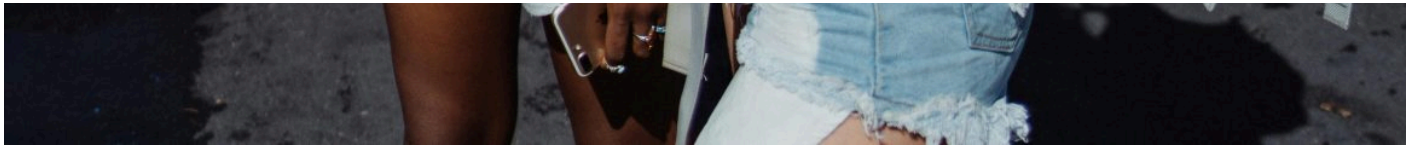


Worship Programs

March 2025 – Eternal Home

March 1, 2025 By Major Lola Davis





You are Priceless ... You Have an Eternal Home

Note: Each worship program will coordinate with the monthly birthstone, their meaning, and their color to help with decorating ideas. Each birth stone meaning is linked to our identity in Christ.

March Birthstone: Aquamarine, Color: Ranges in color from light to deep blue, Meaning: Hope

Scripture: 1 Peter 1:3-4

Decorations

Display travel posters around the room, or make them using ads from magazines, pictures of train trips, bus, vehicles, or planes. Images could be downloaded from the Internet. Use road maps in the center of the tables, topped with simple flower arrangements and small toy objects depicting different modes of transportation.

Refreshments

Hand out snack packs, containing cheese, nuts, crackers, fruit, ham/salami. Like Lunchables® but made for adults.

Activities

When the women arrive give them a snack pack along with along with a travel ticket. which will be used in the alphabet travel game.

Travel Games

Hug Bug

Hide small pictures of Volkswagen Bugs around the room. (*Check the Internet for images.*) Just like the game "slug bug," but hugs are given instead of slugs. The women "travel" around the room looking for "Hug Bugs." When they find one, they shout, "Hug Bug" and hug someone. They keep the bugs and at the end on the game the one with the most hug bugs wins a prize.

Alphabet Travel Game

From the posters and centerpiece objects the women try to find the items beginning with each letter in the alphabet. They write the word on the back of their ticket. The first woman to finish wins a prize. Make sure that the travel posters or items contain all the letters of the alphabet.

Famous Names

The first woman names a famous person, living or dead. The second person must name someone whose name begins with the last letter of the previously famous person. For example: If the first name is Doris Day, the next person must name an individual whose name starting with the letter "Y" as it's the last letter of the name Doris Day. The next person could use Yul Brenner. For a simpler version, have the first women name an individual whose name starts with A. The second person give a name starting with the letter B, continue through the alphabet. In both versions, if they fail to come up with the next famous name, that person is out of game.

A Trip

When I was in my twenties, my grandmother and I took a trip to Cheyenne, Wyoming, to see family. My grandmother was a great planner, and every detail of the trip was planned. She had a map with our route laid out, which was easy to follow. Every detail was taken care of—motel, highways, restaurants, sights to see. We had a great time. I even made a scrapbook when we got back home.

The second trip was to a retirement seminar. With only two years left until we would retire, my husband and I thought it would be prudent to attend. I got online and made my reservations. There was no trouble with the flight down. It was all very straightforward and simple. Kodiak to Anchorage to Seattle to LAX., long flight, but simple all in one day.

The flight home ... not so easy. I decided I would spend two weeks with my sister, who lives in Petaluma, California. I tried everything, but this is all I could book was LAX to Santa Cruz (I was aiming for Oakland!) to Portland. Where I was to spend the night. Then the next morning back to Oakland. How crazy!

We read in 1 Peter 1:3-4, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable, undefiled, and will not fade away, **reserved** in heaven for you." No muss., no fuss, simple, and reserved for you.

There are several meanings of the word "reserved."

- 1 Kept or set apart for some particular use or purpose.
- 2 Kept by special arrangement for some person: *a reserved seat.*

This year's women's ministry theme is "Priceless." You are priceless because God and His great mercy gave us a one-way ticket on "Salvation Airlines" to heaven. You are priceless and obtain an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled and won't fade away. What that means is that it won't go away, evil can't be found, so no one is going to hurt you there. It an eternal home that is yours always because you are priceless.

You are priceless because your place is RESERVED, and no one can take your place. It's yours. No one else. It can't be stolen, removed or resold. It is all yours because of the love God has for you. You are **Priceless!**



Worship Programs

April 2025 – Know Your Worth

April 1, 2025 By Major Lynn Stewart



Know Your Worth

Note: Each worship program will coordinate with the monthly birthstone, their meaning, and their color to help with decorating ideas. Each birth stone meaning is linked to our identity in Christ.

April Birthstone: Diamond, Color: range in color but colorless are the most popular, Meaning: Eternal Love

Set-up and Supplies

- Round tables, screen
- Conversation cards – Two Per Table (See below – use index cards)
- Bible book-marks
- Small journals or notebooks
- Markers, colored pencils, highlighters

Refreshments

Set up a refreshment station with finger sandwiches, pastries, fruit, coffee, and a selection of tea.

Program

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Praise and Worship

Invite the women to sing along to the song “Goodness of God,” which is available on YouTube:

[Goodness Of God \(Lyrics\) ~ Bethel Music – YouTube](#)

Conversation Card #1

- What is one thing you like about yourself?
- Draw an image in your journal of what that looks like and share.

Scripture Reading

“You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed. How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered! I can’t even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand! And when I wake up, you are still with me!” (Ps. 139:16-18, NLT).

Conversation Card #2

- What does God think about me?

- Draw an image in your journal of what that looks like and share.

Scripture Mapping Activity

"I have called you by name; you are mine" (Isa. 43:1, NLT). God shaped us as a potter does clay. God has not only created us but formed us and called us to serve Him in specific ways, tailored to each life. Take some time to think through each of the questions below and make note of anything else that comes to mind.

- 1 Read and write the verse.
- 2 Look at the context of the chapter.
- 3 Look at two or three other Bible translations. (Multiple translations are available from <https://www.biblegateway.com>.)
- 4 Choose and research keywords from the scripture passage.
- 5 Application and reflection
 - How can I apply this verse to my life/situation?
 - What did I learn about God from this verse?
 - End in prayer.

For further information visit the following website:

<https://versemapping.com/verse-mapping-101-steps-to-study-the-bible-like-never-before/>

or for further information on this subject. Templates can be purchase from: [Bible Verse Mapping Printable Template Bible Study Guide - Etsy](#).

Mirror, Mirror on the Wall

Mirrors can be our best friend and sometimes our worst enemy. We often look in the mirror to make sure we look good and are put together. At other times, we look at ourselves and begin to critique every slight imperfection. Our minds start to spiral out of control with negative thoughts about our identity and worth. In today's social media culture, we seek acceptance through "likes" and "shares," and in so doing we lose sight of our worth.

To be worthy by the world's standards can mean being wealthy, beautiful, or famous. In God's eyes, we are beautiful, daughters of the King, worthy. Christian author and speaker Jennie Allen said in her book *Get out of your Head, Stopping the Spiral of Toxic Thoughts*, "When you and I choose to believe a lie about ourselves, it's one of these three lies: I'm helpless. I'm worthless. I'm unlovable." These lies that we tell ourselves are the opposite of who we are in

God's eyes. God says you are good. In other words, "God don't make no junk." We see this throughout Genesis. Genesis 1:31a says: "God saw all that He had made, and it was very good."

God says you are loved. God's love is unconditional, unending, unmistakable; we are His beloved. We read in Romans 5:8, NIV, "But God demonstrates His love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." God says you are worthy. "You saw me before I was born and scheduled each day of my life before I began to breathe. Every day was recorded in your book! How precious it is, Lord, to realize that you are thinking about me constantly! I can't even count how many times a day your thoughts turn toward me! And when I waken in the morning, you are still thinking of me!" (Ps. 139:16-18).

Praise God for these reminders of truth from God's word. We need to walk in our worth and remember who and whose we are.

Works Cited – Allen, J. (2020). *Get Out of Your Head: Stopping the Spiral of Toxic Thoughts* (Illustrated). Waterbrook.

About author



Major Lynn Stewart

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Worship Programs

May 2025 – You are Priceless ... You Are a Treasured Gem

May 1, 2025 By Lieutenant Jayerica Alacar



You are Priceless ... You Are a Treasured Gem

Note: Each worship program will coordinate with the monthly birthstone, their meaning, and their color to help with decorating ideas. Each birth stone meaning is linked to our identity in Christ.

May Birthstone: Emerald, Colo, Dark Green, Meaning: Love

Introduction

Everyone needs to know that they are treasured by their Creator. In the first activity the women reach out to others reminding them of God's love. The second activity is a reminder of how God loves them.

Program Ideas

Activity One: Affirmation Notes

In this activity the women make affirmation notes to send to a woman who needs encouragement.

Supplies—Blank cards, colored papers, pens, markers, stickers, (any scrapbooking materials). The cards can be decorating in whatever way the women like. Include encouraging scripture verses.

Activity Two: Alcohol Ink Gems

In this activity the women will alcohol ink gems. These gems will be unique, just as they are unique. The gems can be displayed in a variety of way to reminder them of how they are God's precious treasure! Check the following YouTube link for easy instruction:

Brea Reese – Alcohol Ink Easy Gem Magnets – YouTube or for a different method:

<https://colormadehappy.com/diy-glass-cracked-gems-stones-jewelry/>

Supplies

- Clear, flat-backed glass gems
- Alcohol inks colors
- Isopropyl alcohol in a spray bottle
- Small paint brush
- Aluminum foil tape

Optional Supplies (Depending on the finished item)

- E6000 glue (available from Amazon, or craft stores)
- Magnets
- Thumbtacks

- Necklace cord
- Pendant hanger

Step 1: Choose 2-3 alcohol ink colors for each gem. On the flat side of each gem, start with 1-2 drips of the first color. Then 1-2 drips of the next colors. A fine-tip paintbrush can be used to apply ink on the gem.

Step 2: Once the colors are to their liking, allow the alcohol ink to dry for a few minutes. Then spray the isopropyl alcohol for a splattered effect.

Step 3: Most alcohol inks dry tacky. With that in mind, when the gem is completely dry, you can wipe away the tackiness using a cloth or Q-Tip dipped in alcohol.

Optional Steps

- To create decorative thumbtacks or magnets – simply glue a thumbtack or magnet directly onto the back using E6000 glue.
- To create a necklace – glue the gem to a pendant hanger and add it to a necklace cord.
- To use as decoration for other craft projects: glue the gem to the top of a wooden box or on a canvas article.

You Are a Treasure

When you think of the word treasure, what comes to mind? Is it a collection of figurines, or photographs? Maybe it's your child, grandchildren, or friends? It maybe that piece of jewelry with gemstones that has been passed down through the generations. We all have someone or something that is extremely valuable to us.

Throughout history and in all cultures, there has been a fascination with gemstones, which are considered precious. Each gemstone is unique in its color hues, shapes, and its chemical and atomic structures. Each gemstone goes through an incredible refining process, from the crystallization process to the mining, to the cutting, and finally, the creation of a finished jewelry piece. They have been used to beautify and adorn people throughout time, bring prestige to the wearer. Gemstones have also been used as a mode of currency. Each gemstone is unique, valuable, and highly treasured.

Though some think that gems are some of the most prized treasures, there is a far more priceless treasure—you! You and I are priceless treasures because we are God's chosen and treasured possession. Just as each gem is different, you and I are uniquely crafted and priceless. Isn't it amazing that the same God who created this world chose you and me? The God who moves mountains and makes miracles happen, considers us His prized possession.

God chose us as by sending His one and only Son on behalf of our sins. When we accept Jesus of our Savior, the Holy Spirit lives within us refining us making us more like Jesus.

In 1 Peter 1:18-19 (NIV) we are reminded: "For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect." We were specifically chosen and called by God into His kingdom. He chose each one of us to be His children. Our Maker so treasures us that He called us out of the darkness and sinful nature of life, into God's marvelous radiating light. God values us so much that He chose to redeem us from the tyranny of sin at a very high price—the blood of His Son Jesus Christ.

But if you don't know how valuable you are, if you ever forget, or still are not convinced that you are God's valued treasure, sit down, pause, and remember how our great God describes us in His Word. "For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth" (Deut. 7:6, NIV). In 1 Peter 2:9 we read "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." And in Psalm 135:4 "For the Lord has chosen Jacob to be His own, Israel to be His treasured possession."

God chose us out of His goodness and grace. Jesus gave His life, so that we become a special treasure of God and His holy possession. Therefore, we must allow God's glory to shine through us daily so that others will see our great God and desire Him more than any prized gem. Just as we might treasure some things or someone, never forget that we are God's valued treasure. Encouraging each another plays a critical impact on our overall well-being. As a body of believers, we are called to encourage. Take the time to write a note or share a verse with your sisters as a reminder of how our Almighty Father treasures them.



Worship Programs

June 2025 – You are Priceless ... A Pearl of Great Price

June 1, 2025 By Major Florence Murray



You are Priceless ... A Pearl of Great Price

Note: Each worship program will coordinate with the monthly birthstone, their meaning, and their color to help with decorating ideas. Each birth stone meaning is linked to our identity in Christ.

June Birthstone: Pearl, Color: Pearl, Meaning: Generosity

Call to Worship

Scripture: Matthew 13:45-46, Zechariah 9:16

Preparation

Write the following on a recipe card or cardstock.

How awesome it is to have a Heavenly Father who loves us!

We are like a pearl of great price.

Precious in the eyes of God.

Endorsed by the blood of Jesus.

Abled by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Revived for His Ministry.

Linked to God through daily prayer.

Glue a pearl on the corner of the card. Give it to each woman or have it in place where they are sitting. Place a bottle of water next to it that has a few pearls glued around the neck. Type the following Scripture on strips of paper and tape it around bottles of water. "The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it" (Matt. 13:45-46 NIV). Remind the women that when we allow Jesus to minister to others through us, we are like a string of pearls, reflecting His light.

Worship Center

Place a large round mirror at the center of the table. Add white silk roses touched with gold glitter. Create a wreath with a tall white candle in the center and four small candles surrounding the tall candle. Place mini-pearls or pearl necklace around the candles.

Refreshments

Serve pearl tapioca pudding, or small cakes covered with tinted whipped cream and pearl sprinkles. Or press mini marshmallows into the whipped cream along the edge of a cake, exposing the round tops. Provide coffee, tea, and bottled water.

Program Outline

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Song, "I Found a Pearl of Greatest Price" SASB #869 (*Tune: Happy Wanderer*)

Crafting with Pearls

Invite the women to share about a gift of pearls they received.

Refreshments

Devotional "You Are a Pearl, So Is She."

Prayer Requests, Closing Prayer

Crafts Using Pearls

In addition to the craft below, check the Internet or Pinterest for ideas for crafts using pearls.

Bookmark or Keyring

Supplies

- Sheer or satin ribbon ¼ to ½ inches wide.
- Assorted Sizes of Imitation White Pearls
- Small sparkling spacers
- Jewelry wire, Jewelry wire cutter
- Jewelry Pliers
- Jewelry Crimps and Crimper
- Thread and Needle

Directions

Cut ribbon 11-15" in length. This will depend on the size of the Bible or book that the bookmark will be placed in. Cut 3" of floral wire. String pearl and spacers on the wire. Use smooth jewelry pliers to create a small loop to anchor ribbon on to. Repeat on opposite side of ribbon. Put a small amount of clear nail polish on the edges of the ribbon to keep it from fraying. For a keychain, simply anchor ribbon onto the keychain loop. Slide a pearl, spacer and 2nd pearl onto the opposite end of the ribbon. Tie knots in the ribbon at the top and bottom of the ribbon to secure pearls/spacers in place.

You're A Pearl, So Is She

The kingdom of heaven is the place to be! The knowledge starts when we realize that we need Jesus. If we already know Jesus, then we have found the ***pearl of greatest price***. Jesus paid a huge price for our salvation to bring us back to our Heavenly Father.

We read in Zechariah 9:16, (NIV), "The Lord their God will save them on that day as the flock of His people. They will sparkle in the land like jewels in a crown." When we accept Jesus into our heart, we keep growing in our spiritual walk with the Lord through Bible study, prayer, worship, Christian friendships, and through the power of the Holy Spirit. That joy it should be evident in our life and as we sparkle like jewels in a crown.

Are we sharing with others that great joy, the good news of salvation that we've found in Jesus who is The Pearl of Greatest Price. By sharing our story, we bring the light of Jesus to others. That may be our neighbor, a best friend, the single woman who just started attending the corps, a co-worker. or perhaps a client in family services. We should be sharing our story, allowing Jesus to create a string of pearls as each shares with the next person. Don't fret, feeling like you can't make a difference. When we worry, we waste valuable time. Just do it and God will bless you for it.

My Pearl Story

My husband bought me a beautiful ring with two pearls on it. One day I noticed that one of the pearls was missing. I looked everywhere for it, even bribing my two children to help me. With a sad heart, I showed the ring to my husband, sharing that I lost a pearl. Exhausted at the end of the day, I prayed asking God to forgive me for being focused on a single pearl that was lost. I had worried, wasting valuable time looking for it. The next morning, I stepped onto the carpet beside the bed, something stuck between my toes. The lost pearl was found! My husband was happy to attach it back onto the ring for me, and I was thankful for the precious gift the second time around. I knew the value of that pearl. It was a real pearl, bought as a gift for me from my husband. It meant a lot to me because it was an expression of his love for me.

As precious as that pearl was to me, more precious is the knowledge that you and I are even more valuable to the Lord. I should not have been so worried about something that is not eternal. Of more importance, is sharing my story of how Jesus saved me and that He wants to do the same for others. He considers us pearls of great price. When we have Jesus at the center of our lives, He gives us a song to sing and to share with others.

Closing: Prayer requests and prayer time

Allow women to share prayer requests that are on their hearts. Asking for prayer support either for themselves, a friend, or for someone or a situation in the community. Close in prayer asking the Lord to give them the opportunity to share their story and in so doing bring others to the feet of Jesus.



Worship Programs

July 2025 – You Are Priceless ... You Have the Mind of Christ

July 1, 2025 By Captain Connie Hall



You Are Priceless ... You Have the Mind of Christ

Note: Each worship program will coordinate with the monthly birthstone, their meaning, and their color to help with decorating ideas. Each birth stone meaning is linked to our identity in Christ. July Birthstone: Ruby, Color: Deep Red, Meaning: Wisdom

Program Ideas

Crafts

Mindful Gratitude Feathers – Explore how to use mixed media to create a colorful expression of gratitude and mindfulness. Using items found in nature as well as paint create a unique feather that can include scripture, affirmations, quotes, or words of gratitude.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ynlq-6k2y20>

Grounding Art – This craft uses therapeutic art exercise principles of grounding and mindfulness to help manage anxiety and other overwhelming emotions. It can be done with minimal supplies and in any setting. Great project for those who may consider themselves less than artistic. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GMSC95hEj2w>

Rainbow Flowers – A paper sculpting craft that uses various colors and shapes of paper to create a beautiful array of colored bouquets. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R6RHpWwyPEE>

Stress Management Resources and Coaching

Hand out sheet of paper with the information and web addresses for the following websites. Play a 5-minute excerpt during the meeting so the women will be aware of what is available.

Burnout

Burnout can take control of your life and health. Learn how to relieve and better manage your stress through coaching and resources.

<https://aprillikins.com/free-stress-relief-resources>

Christian Meditation videos

This site gives access to a 20-minute guided meditation to Christian worship music and scripture, helping the listener to relax and rest in the Lord.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZb5fN_YEbQ

PneumaBreath

Connecting with God – This 25-minute guided meditation will encourage the listener to breath in the presences of God while releasing the things that keep us stuck in our cycles of stress and burdens of anxiousness.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0tpGQFzebMY>

Devotional Apps for iPhone or IOS from the App Store

Lectio365 – a free daily devotional that helps you pray the Bible every day.

Holy Bible – in addition to a variety of Bible translations, there is access to a daily devotional.

She Reads Truth – was created with community in mind and offers a way for women around the world to connect with reading and sharing God's Word. Includes daily devotions. Fees apply.

Sprinkle of Jesus Daily – This app offers daily bible verses as well as devotions that can be an additional tool for those wanting to deepen their walk through a daily devotional. The app is \$0.99.

Daily Affirmation Devotional – a daily affirmation devotional with a Bible verse, thoughts, prayers, affirmation, and meditation. No charge for this app.

Mind and Spirit

Have you ever caught a glimpse of yourself in the mirror, but the reflection makes you stop and look a little closer. Haven't the circles under your eyes gotten a little bit darker and larger? Isn't that a new spot on your cheek that doesn't look like a freckle? Then there is the misplaced hair that needs immediate tweezing. Before you know it, you're critiquing every part of your reflection and are consumed by the insecurities that follow. Yup, me too.

Our minds are a beautiful thing. They are created to do more than just control the function of our body. They house our creativity, our imaginations. They are where our dreams reside and where our hopes are constructed. The mind is built up of memories, beliefs, perceptions, and judgments. However, our minds can sometimes distort our reality, making us see and feel things that are not based in truth. It will occasionally even create a heart-head disconnect, where our minds and our hearts fall out of sync. The danger of this disconnect is that it creates a space for the beliefs of the world to seep in with feelings of mistrust, skepticism, insincerity which can take root and potentially give birth to behaviors that are inconsistent with that of a Christ follower.

The Bible tells us in Romans 12:2 (NIV), "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." When my heart and head are in sync, I am living in the truth of who Christ says I am. I embrace my true and authentic self. I am honest and loving with myself and others. But when they are disconnected, I fall into a pattern that has a ripple effect on my self-esteem and my relationships with others. I create false perceptions, toxic narratives, and destructive behaviors. As I allow Christ to transform my mind, I am no longer consumed by those things that drive me further from Him and steal my

peace. I am released to be renewed by His good, pleasing, and perfect will. And in doing so, not only am I transformed but my relationships are as well.

Philippians 2:5 (NIV) says "In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus." If my mind is transformed by Christ and I am in sync with Him, then both my mind and spirit will reflect Him in my daily interactions. I will see myself, as well as my brothers and sisters, as Christ sees us. And if I see them as Christ sees them, then I will treat them as He does, with love, kindness, mercy, and grace. If I am truly walking in the mindset of Christ, then my heart is also. I no longer operate from my own selfish ambition. I am not locked into my prideful behaviors or unconscious biases. I am open, accepting, and willing to share in other's experiences and truths.

If I look for the bad in people and situations, I will find it. But, if I look for good, it too is present. It is part of our struggle with sin. The innate sin in us allows us to easily recognize sin in the world and the attraction is strong because there is less work involved. As a Christ follower, I must strive to find the good in myself and in others. I choose to recognize that the flaws in myself that require grace and are also present in those around me. Likewise, the good that I desperately try to cultivate in myself needs to be nurtured in others as well. God created us each holy and pure, but our humanity is imperfect and requires His love to shape, mold and teach us transforming our minds and spirits.

Questions for Reflections

- What are ways your mind is influenced by the world around you?
- How do your thoughts affect your actions and reactions?
- Are there behaviors or thoughts that may reveal a heart head disconnect?
- What gets in the way of us giving and receiving grace and understanding?
- How can we become a Philippians 2:5 woman?

Prayer

Heavenly and gracious Father thank you for the gift of a wonderful mind. Today I pray that my thoughts be free from my insecurities and sin. May they become the purest reflection of Your love for me and for others. Lord, help me to see the truth that is often clouded by the sins of the world around me and in me so that my heart and head are in sync to Your will and Your love for me and others. Amen.



Worship Programs

August 2025 – You are Priceless... You are God's Beautiful Masterpiece!

August 1, 2025 By Major Jonnette Mulch



You are Priceless ... You are God's Beautiful Masterpiece!

Note: Each worship program will coordinate with the monthly birthstone, their meaning, and their

color to help with decorating ideas. Each birth stone meaning is linked to our identity in Christ.

August Birthstone: Peridot, Color: Light Green, Meaning: Beauty

Purpose

The purpose of this program is to remind each woman that she is God's beautiful masterpiece—one of a kind. We are all designer originals!

Decoration

Cover the tables with light green table coverings. Use different types of mirrors for centerpieces. Incorporate small handheld mirrors that will be used in the devotional and then given to the women at the end of the program.

Opening Element

As the women enter the room, invite them to make a fingerprint bookmark. Check Pinterest for simple instructions. Or bookmarks could be pre-made with a scripture verse. Some suggested verses: Psalm 139:14, Ephesians 2:10, Genesis 1:27. The women could add their thumbprint using an ink pad, to make it uniquely theirs.

Activity Options

Beauty Stations

Invite a guest to give a presentation on any of the station activities or demonstrate using one of the women as a model. An alternate idea would be for the women to help each other at the various stations.

- Nail Station: Manicure sets, nail polish.
- Hair Station: curling iron, crimper, brush/combs, hair spray.
- Make-up station: provide a various of sample make up items that the women can apply.
- Skin care station: provide various lotions, skin cleansing products along with face washing tips and instructions on how to apply the products.
- Photo station: Set up a station for the women to have their picture taken following the make overs. Also take a group picture of all the women.

Trivia Game and Fun Facts on Cosmetics, Beauty Tips

You can find many beauty trivia/tips and fun facts on the Internet to turn in to a game. The

following are a couple examples.

<https://www.funtrivia.com/en/Entertainment/Cosmetics-14814.html>

<https://blog.bathandunwind.com/2017/09/13/50-beauty-facts/>

Word Search Puzzle

Create a word search puzzle using the women's unique names.

<https://puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com/word-search>

Prizes/gifts Suggestions: lotions, manicure sets, brush/comb, facial sheets, make-up items, fingernail polish, mirrors.

A Beautiful Masterpiece

The breastplate of Aaron was adorned with 12 beautiful gemstones. The second gemstone listed in Exodus 28:15-21 is what is known today as the Peridot. It is the birthstone for all those born in the month of August. A quality peridot is a bright shade of light green with hints of yellow. They are often mistaken for emeralds. The Romans called them "evening emeralds" because of the way they reflected the light.

Uniqueness and beauty are words that are used to describe this gemstone. We could use these same words to describe us. God has already declared each one of us beautiful as we are His priceless creations. In Psalm 139:13, 14 we are reminded that God created our inmost being, every little detail that makes us who we are. Scripture also reminds us that we are wonderfully made. We were formed by the same God who created the universe. No two people are alike. At the beginning of the program today, you made a bookmark with your unique fingerprint on it. No one else has the same fingerprint as you do. You are a designer original.

In our modern culture, more emphasis is placed on outward beauty than inner beauty. Despite this emphasis placed on the physical appearance, God looks beyond the outward appearance, and looks into our hearts and intentions. Our beauty should not be measured by worldly standards. But this doesn't mean that we are not supposed to be beautiful on the outside or that our beauty must be inward only. Many Christian women walk around telling themselves they are not allowed to be beautiful and end up missing out on who God has designed them to be. Our desire for beauty is validated in the Creator not the world.

God has created each of us with unique gifts and qualities. But if you are like me, you may have difficulty recognizing or acknowledging your gifts. You get caught up in looking at the gifts of others and begin questioning your gifts or even if you are good enough to use them. It is important to challenge ourselves to recognize our strengths and abilities. After all, we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance

for us to do. (Eph. 2:10, NIV). He has created us in His image, yet with our own uniqueness and beauty. Everyone has something from God that He gave to us with His purpose. Through prayer and listening to His voice, we can discover what it is He has prepared for us to do. His plan for our lives will be revealed as we follow Him, giving us the encouragement to embrace our life's purposes.

Challenge yourself to look through God's mirror and see the unique beauty that you are. Hold one of the small handheld mirrors that is part of the centerpieces and look at your reflection. Say these words out loud, "I am priceless! I am God's masterpiece, created in His image. I am a one-of-a-kind beauty!"

Time of Reflection

Use this time as a time of prayer to lead the women to recognize that they are beautiful in God's eyes. Some of the women may feel they have made a mess of their lives and destroyed God's creation. Emphasize that there is forgiveness in turning to Jesus. Others may be challenged by the idea of discovering God's plan and purpose for their life.

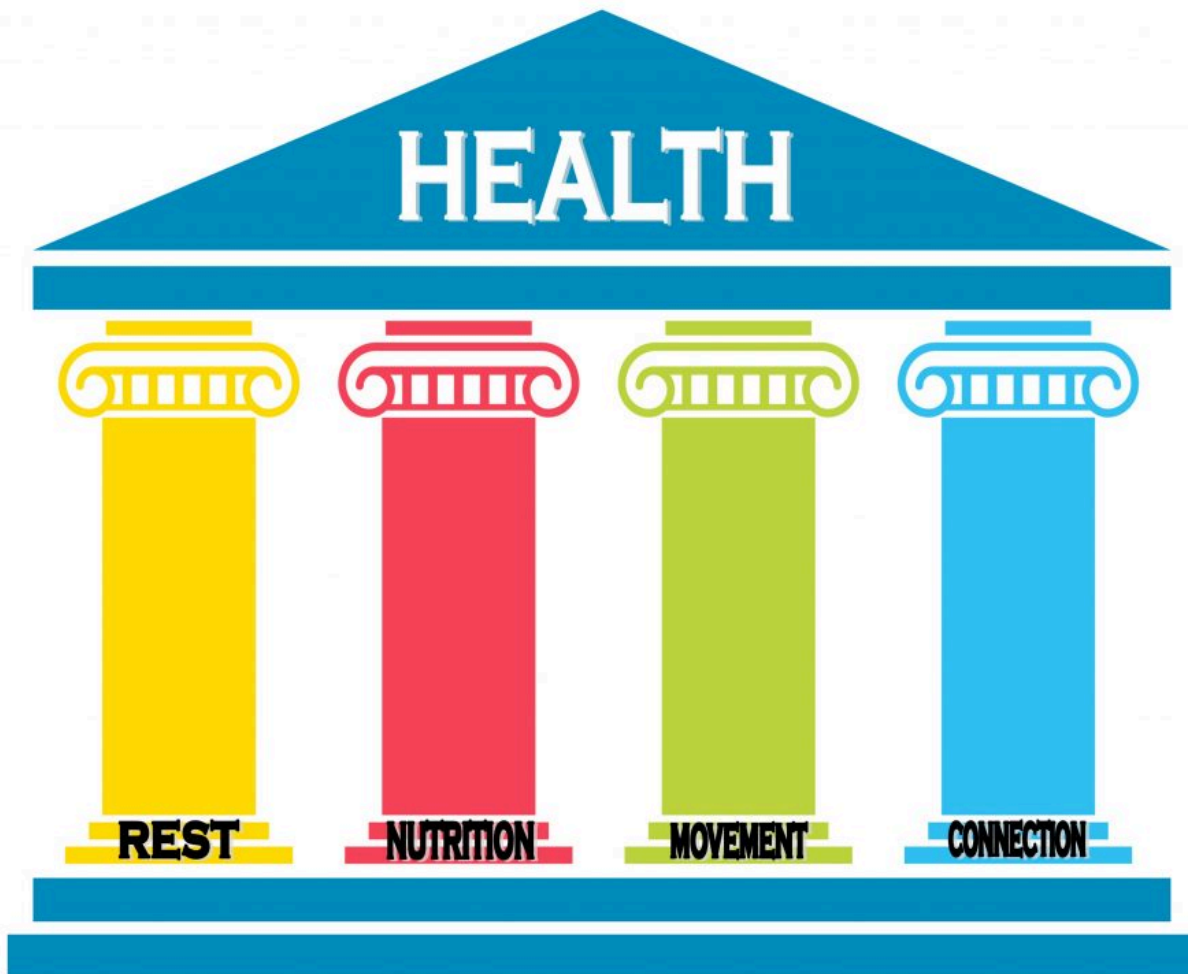
Suggested song: Song by Maranatha, "In His Time" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aJeNUINY7lw>



Worship Programs

September 2025 – You are Priceless ... You are God's Holy Temple

September 1, 2025 By Captain Allison Struck



You are Priceless ... You are God's Holy Temple

Note: Each worship program will coordinate with the monthly birthstone, their meaning, and their color to help with decorating ideas. Each birth stone meaning is linked to our identity in Christ.

September Birthstone: Sapphire, Color: Dark Blue, Meaning: Purity

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 6:19–20

Activity

One of the ways mental and physical health professionals talk about caring for ourselves is using the “4 Pillars of Health” model. This idea breaks how we care for ourselves into four main categories:

- A Healthy Diet
- Activity
- Sleep
- Connection to others (This one can also be called “mental health care or stress management).

The idea is that when we break down caring for ourselves into categories, it might be less overwhelming. It helps us to recognize where we might need the most help. For instance, some people have good sleep habits, but are not good at exercise. Or, some might be good at diet, but don't have strong, healthy relationships. When we start to look at these categories, they all speak to how God designed us and how we can work to be holy.

Ways to Make the 4 Pillars Personal

- Create a Four Pillars of Health Worksheet – Rest, Nutrition, Movement and Connection. *(For additional help see the websites listed below.)* Invite the women to jot down ideas in the worksheet under each category. Are these things that work, or would like to start one of them. Or why are some areas harder than others? Ask the women to give themselves an initial “rating” on how she thinks she's doing in each area.
- If you have a large group, divide into groups of 3 or 4. If you have a smaller group, brainstorm using a whiteboard. Talk about why these categories would work in helping with overall health. What barriers are in each category? If you have Internet access, look up some YouTube videos on each of the categories. Spend extra time on the “connection to others” category. Discuss how part of holy living is living in connection with God's people. How can we help each other in practical holiness? How prayer and fellowship are part of God's plan for connection and holy living. Look up some basic information on the Spiritual Disciplines and the role they would play in the 4 Pillars of Health.

- End the activity by asking each of the women to pick one pillar to work on over the remainder of the year. Ask them to list 4 things they could do to improve in one category. Encourage them to think small and work on building new habits. If you point out how habits work, it will be encouraging. For example, a 5-minute walk per day doesn't sound like a lot, but over 120 days, it is 20 hours of walking.
- Close your time by going back to the discussion about creation and the Scripture. Give the women a sapphire that she could keep by her bed as a reminder to be holy or pure, or how God cares about His creation, and we are all beautiful. (*Check Amazon.com or craft stores for faux sapphires.*)

Transitions

For a lot of people September is a month of transitions. Those with kids transition from summer break to back to school. Others may be finishing up vacations. Those who live in places with definite seasons may experience their first chill in the air and start thinking about finding the snow tires. Maybe September even ushers in the first thoughts about the holiday season, plans for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year.

One of the beautiful transitions in September in a lot of places is the leaves turning from green to a variety of deep, vibrant colors—red, orange, and dark brown. In other places, the weather may not shift as much, but maybe the breeze blowing off the ocean shifts and the consistency of the waves is a comfort. As we approach fall, it makes sense that the jewel chosen to represent September is the sapphire—a jewel that is a deep blue color of the ocean. This jewel represents purity. One of our most constant reminders of purity is creation. From nothing God created oceans that keep moving, trees that know when summer is over, and fall begins. Creation is one of the best, constant visual reminders that the God who created all of it is holy and wants us to be holy as well.

Holiness and purity are important terms in the Bible, but can be challenging for us, especially if we have a background that wasn't either of those things. But most simply stated, holiness means "separate" or "different." God is different and once we declare that we belong to Him by accepting Jesus as our Savior, He wants us to be different as well. We read in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, "Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So, you must honor God with your body."

Most of us want to honor God with our bodies. We want to be healthy and take care of what He gave us. But life gets in the way, and we don't take care of our bodies the way we should. We're so fortunate that God, in His grace, keeps loving us no matter what shape we are in. However, as women of God seeking to become more and more like Jesus, we can choose to take steps that help us take better care of our bodies, God's temples. In this way, we start to live out holiness. This idea is that we are different because of who we belong to.

September is such a good time to review how we are caring for our bodies and take steps to get better. Maybe we get back to a simpler routine, or maybe we're looking ahead to the New Year and think we can get a head start on some of our goal. By breaking things down, we can find practical ways to be holy in how we care for our bodies.

Helpful resources:

<https://www.nbihealth.com/the-four-pillars-of-health/>

<https://www.hopkinsallchildrens.org/getmedia/fa3fe0f0-8c72-4da8-96be-6e0491664fb5/4-Pillars.pdf;.aspx>

<https://www.aetna.com/health-guide/ways-achieve-total-body-health.html#:~:text=Experts%20widely%20consider%20exercise%2C%20good,for%20your%20>