

Hannah Service Guide

Honoring loss and disappointment
due to infertility, pregnancy loss,
infant loss, and medical diagnoses
that prevent pregnancy.



The Hannah Service
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The Salvation Army USA Central Territory

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What is a Hannah Service?

A Hannah Service is a time to meet together with others who have experienced the affects of infertility, pregnancy loss, infant loss, and medical diagnoses that prevent pregnancy.

It is designed as a safe space to lament, memorialize, and share with those who have had similar experiences.

October is Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month. However, a Hannah Service can occur at any time of the year or when a need arises.

Other suggested times may include:

Mother's Day

October 15 - Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day

Infertility Awareness week in April

During Women's Retreats

What is a Hannah Service?

There are many women in the Bible who have experienced disappointment and loss. Examples include:

Eve, Sarah, Hagar, Jochebed, Hannah,
Esther, Rizpah, Bathsheba, Naomi, Ruth,
Anna, Leah, Elizabeth, and Mary.

Their stories are recorded on the pages of the Bible.
This reminds us that our stories are also worthy
of being heard and seen.

So many are affected by this particular experience of loss yet most do not have a safe space to express their grief, leaving them feeling lost, alone, and even forgotten. Therefore, we offer the *Hannah Service* as a place where women can grieve, mourn, lament, remember, and feel seen, no matter where they are in their grief journey or how much time has passed.

On the following pages you will find the elements to create a *Hannah Service* including a suggested program outline, ideas, prayers, a suggested playlist, photos, supplies list, and other helpful resources. However, we encourage you to be creative and make the service your own to fit your setting.

Begin with prayer. Ask God to give you wisdom.
Ask the Holy Spirit to give you discernment, and sensitivity.
Ask Jesus to be with you as you minister to women
in this unique way.

Creating a Hannah Service

Select a Date

A *Hannah Service* can be conducted at any time of year. Choose a date that will work best for your corps and your community - a date that does not conflict with other Salvation Army programs or community events as you will want to invite women, not only from your corps but also from around the community to attend.

It is also important to choose a time when little to no other programming is happening in your building. You will want to avoid disruption or any unnecessary noise. You may want to provide childcare as well.

Invitations

You will want to invite your corps members to attend. However, this service can be an outreach opportunity in your community. Contact other local churches, women's organizations, MOPS groups, schools, community bulletin boards, your own social services, thrift stores, online special interest groups, etc. to post your invitations.

Create a flyer (a sample is offered on our website) and social media graphics with options to sign up. We have used Signup.com or Signup Genius for online options. You can also provide a QR code or a phone number for RSVP's.

Create social media events on Facebook and/or Instagram or post on your corps website events page.



Creating a Hannah Service

Create a Welcoming Space

Choose a space that is welcoming and safe while providing a sense of privacy. You will want a room that you can set up chairs for sharing. For example, a fellowship hall, a classroom, or an overflow room would work well.

Lighting is key. We suggest you avoid using overhead lighting. Instead, use lamps, bistro lights, Christmas lights, or other accent lights. See the photo on the following page as an example.

Depending on the size of your group, set up your chairs in either one circle or several smaller circles of 6 for sharing later in the service. Provide each participant with their *own package of tissues*. Also provide the responsive reading or use a powerpoint projection. You will lead the service from the front of the room (see photos below).



Creating a Hannah Service

Invite Women In

As women enter the room, have worship music being played (see the following pages for a suggested playlist). Have someone at the door to welcome them in and invite them to the table for an activity.

At a table, provide cards, paper hearts etc., and pens, and encourage participants to write something that is significant to them such as their baby's name(s) or "Baby + last name", due date(s), the year of the loss, or the year they began trying. They can write a scripture verse or a prayer of hope or a prayer of grief or anything else that is meaningful to them. Have a "memorial basket" for them to put their writings if they choose.

Once they have finished, encourage them to find a seat in one of the circles.



Pre-lit artificial birch trees for accent lighting.

Creating a Hannah Service

Sharing Circles

At the appropriate time in the service, there will be a time of sharing in the circles where they are sitting. Here, encourage participants to share their experiences and stories of loss or struggle. They may want to share what they wrote at the beginning of the service. However, no one is forced to share. During this time play music from your playlist in the background.

*Remind everyone that as one person is sharing, everyone else is *listening*. This is not a time to provide advice or ask questions. This is a time to show support through the *ministry of presence*.

Be sensitive to allow enough time for them to share as much or as little as they want. If one person is taking a very long time you may want to collectively remind the entire group that there needs to be enough time for everyone to share.

Once everyone has had an opportunity to share, thank them for being brave in their sharing.



Hannah Service

Suggested Outline

Welcome and Introduction
Explanation of the Hannah Service and what to expect
Reading of Psalm 139:13-16
United song “As the Deer” (Adore version)
Responsive Reading
Sharing Circles
Healing Prayers
United Song “It Is Well” (Bethel Music Radio version)
Lantern or pinwheel memorials instructions
Memorials
Closing Prayer

Welcome and Explanation Script

Welcome to the Hannah Service. My name is *(state your name and that you are the leader of the service)*. We are so glad you are here.

This is a gathering space for those who have experienced infertility, pregnancy loss, infant loss, and medical diagnoses that prevent future pregnancies. These experiences are “uniquely common” in that many people are affected by these losses each day. Yet we aren’t given safe spaces to grieve and lament. Tonight, we are here to recognize your story. Here you are safe, you are seen, and you are loved. You are invited to share, grieve, mourn, pray, sing, and find hope again.



Hannah Service

Responsive Reading

Infertility, Miscarriage, and Infant Loss Responsive Reading

By Courtney Rose

Leader: God you are like a mother hen who draws her chicks close to her side. You protect them with your wing. You provide safety, protection, and warmth.

Response: It is in the safety of your wing that we open ourselves to you. We bear our wounds that need continued healing. We show our hard-earned scars.

Leader: God you are the rock that bore us. You are steadfast and strong. Your will is for life, yet your ways are mysterious.

Response: I don't understand your plan for my life. I don't know why things have turned out this way. Give me faith to trust in you and your timing.

Continued on the next page...

Hannah Service

Responsive Reading

Leader: God you are a guiding presence through the wilderness. As you traveled alongside the Israelites in the desert, You provided direction, comfort, and companionship.

Response: You know my intentions and desires. You walk alongside me in my joys and sorrows. You take my pain upon yourself.

Leader: God you saw Hagar in the wilderness when she fled during her pregnancy. You remembered Hannah when she poured herself out before you. You heard Leah's cries for a child. You grieved for Bathsheba in the loss of her baby.

ALL: God of Hagar, see me.
God of Hannah, remember me.
God of Leah, hear me.
God of Bathsheba, grieve with me.

Amen.

Hannah Service

Healing Prayers

Good, good Father, You invite all who are burdened to come to You. Allow your healing hand to heal me. Bring me health in body and spirit that I may serve You with all my strength. Touch gently this life which You have created, now and forever.

Most loving Heart of Jesus, touch my soul with Your compassion for others. Touch my heart with Your courage and infinite love for all. Touch my mind with Your wisdom, that my mouth may always proclaim Your praise. Teach me to reach out to You in my need, and help me to lead others to You.

Holy Spirit, search me and lead me in your ways. Heal my spirit and may your life-giving powers flow into the depths of my soul, cleansing, purifying, restoring me to wholeness and strength to serve you.

Amen.

Hannah Service

Healing Prayers

Father God, You are the only source of health and healing and the Spirit of peace and calm.

Grant to me such a consciousness of Your indwelling and surrounding presence.

Restore to me health and strength and peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Lord, I come before you today in need of your healing hand. In you all things are possible. Hold my heart within yours, and renew my mind, body, and soul. I am lost, but I am singing. You gave us life, and you also give us the gift of infinite joy. Give me the strength to move forward on the path you've laid out for me. Guide me towards better health, and give me the wisdom to identify those you've placed around me to help me get better.

In your name I pray,
Amen.

Hannah Service Visual Memorials

One in four women experience pregnancy loss or infertility. Depending on your setting, it can be a powerful message of hope to visually display the common experience of this kind of loss. There are many ways to visually memorialize these losses. On the following pages you will find two suggestions:

Pinwheel Memorial
Lantern Memorial

Hannah Service Visual Memorials

1. PINWHEEL MEMORIAL

Purchase pinwheel kits (on Amazon or Etsy) in blue, pink, and green. Have the participants select a pinwheel. Provide permanent markers for each person to write on their pinwheel. They can write a name, a date, the year of their loss, etc. similar to what they did at the beginning of the service. Anything to commemorate their loss.

Once everyone is finished writing, take everyone outside and have them put their pinwheels into the ground in a grassy area (as shown below). Conclude with a prayer over the pinwheels. Participants can take their pinwheel home or leave it on display for a determined period of time.



Hannah Service Visual Memorials

2. LANTERNS MEMORIAL

Purchase small, solar powered lanterns (link on following pages) and 5/8 or 7/8 inch wide ribbon in colors of pastel blue, pink, green, and white. Place the lanterns around the room. These can also serve as lighting. Cut the ribbon into strips long enough to write on and for tying onto the lanterns.

Have the participants select as many ribbons as they want. Provide permanent markers for each person to write a name, a date, the year of their loss, etc. similar to what they did at the beginning of the service. Anything to commemorate their loss.

Once everyone is finished writing have them choose a lantern and tie their ribbon(s) onto the lantern. Take everyone outside and have them hang their lantern from a tree (as shown below). Conclude with a prayer over the lanterns. The participants can take their lantern to hang in a garden or on a tree at their home.



Hannah Service Visual Memorials

Suggested Closing Prayer for Memorials

Heavenly Father,
You are El Roi - the God who sees.
You see me. You know me.

You are Immanuel - God with us.
You promise that you will never leave me.

You are Jehovah-Shammah - the Lord is there.
I can not escape your presence.
You surround me on all sides with your love.

You are Jehovah-Rapha - the God who heals.
You heal my broken heart and bind up my wounds.

You are Jehovah Shalom - the Lord is peace.
You provide peace in times of pain and suffering.

While I may still not understand,
I give this loss to you and ask for the light of
your healing to flood every part of my being.
Let this memorial be a restoring reminder that
you are still good and that you cover me
with your never ending love.

In Jesus' name,
Amen.

Hannah Service Suggested Playlist

I Will Carry You (Audrey's Song) - Selah

Thy Will - Hillary Scott

Blessings - Laura Story

Not For a Moment (After All) - Meredith Andrews

Broken Hallelujah - Mandisa

Held - Natalie Grant

It Is Well - Bethel Music Radio Version

Be Still My Soul (In You I Rest) - Kari Jobe

I Will Carry You - Ellie Holcomb

Broken Hallelujah (Not My Will) - Gas Street Music & Tim Hughes

As the Deer - Adore

Other Helpful Resources

We have many other helpful resources on our website that you may want to print out for your participants to take home.

We especially encourage you to use **“Letters to a Grieving Mom”** - A series to help women navigate significant milestones (due dates, holidays, “marker days”) after miscarriage and pregnancy loss by Adirel Booker. Print this and give to each participant.

Other resources include journal prompts, articles, books, healing prayers, and devotionals.

Click on any of the links below or visit our website uscwomensministries.com/wm-resources/

[Letters to a Grieving Mom](#)

[Scarlet Stories](#)

[Of Womb and Tomb](#)

[Healing Prayers](#)

Hannah Service Suggested Supplies List

Individual tissue packs

Lamps and other lighting

Ribbon in various colors

Pens and markers

Cards or heart cut-outs for writing

[Pinwheels](#)

[Lanterns](#)

Tables

Chairs

Playlist

Printed materials and resources from our website

[Journals to take home](#) (optional)

For more information and other
helpful resources visit our website:
uscwomensministries.com/wm-resources/



