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## **Commissioning Service Ideas**

*Book of Occasional Services, PC(USA)*  
Office of Theology and Worship

### **SENTENCES OF SCRIPTURE**

As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

**There is no longer Jew or Greek;  
there is no longer slave or free;  
there is no longer male and female,  
for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.**

Lead a life worthy of the calling  
to which you have been called,  
making every effort to maintain the unity of Spirit  
in the bond of peace.

**There is one body and one Spirit,  
just as we were called to the one hope of our calling,  
one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all,  
who is above all and through all and in all.**

### **PSALM 133           “Behold the Goodness of our Lord”**

*Text:* 1986 Fred R. Anderson: from *Singing Psalms of Joy and Praise*. Used by permission.  
*Music:* Harmonization from *The Scottish Psalter*, 1929. Used by permission of Oxford University Press.

### **CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP**

We are called by God to be the church of Jesus Christ,  
A sign of the world today  
Of what God intends for all humankind.

**The great ends of the church are  
the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind;  
the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God;  
the maintenance of divine worship;  
the preservation of the truth;  
the promotion of social righteousness;  
and the exhibition of the kingdom of heaven to the world.**

The call of Christ is to willing, dedicated discipleship.

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Our discipleship is a manifestation of the new life we enter through baptism. Discipleship is both a gift and a commitment, an offering and a responsibility.

## **TO BE COMMISSIONED TODAY:**

(List names and introduce as you call them forward.)

The grace bestowed on you in Baptism  
is sufficient for your calling  
because it is God's grace.  
By God's grace we are saved  
and enabled to grow in the faith  
and to commit our lives in ways that serve Christ.

God has called you to particular service.  
Show your purpose by answering these questions.

Who is your Lord and Savior?  
**Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior.**

Will you be Christ's faithful disciple,  
Obeying his word and showing his love/  
**I will, with God's help.**

Do you welcome the responsibility of this service  
Because you are determined to follow the Lord Jesus,  
To love neighbors,  
And to work for the reconciling of the world?  
**I do.**

Will you serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love,  
Relying on God's mercy and rejoicing in the power  
Of the Holy Spirit?  
**I will, with God's help.**

Do we, members of (church name), confirm the call of God to our sisters and  
brothers to labor with us in the service of Jesus Christ?  
**We do.**

Will you support and encourage them in this ministry?  
**We will.**

## **COMMISSIONING PRAYER**

## **CHARGE AND BLESSING**

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## **2005 Presbyterians Organized in Nurture and Teaching (POINT) and Resource Center Commissioning Service**

Leader: We, who are many, are one body in Christ.

**All: And individually we are members one of another.**

Leader: We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

Leader: Lead a life worthy of your calling, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

**All: There is one body and one Spirit, just as we were called to the one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.**

**Hymn**

**Let All Things Now Living**

page 554

*From The Presbyterian Hymnal, WJK, 1990. Used by permission.*

Leader: We are called by God to be the church of Jesus Christ, a sign in the world today of what God intends for all humankind.

**All: The Great Ends of the Church are the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind; the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God; the maintenance of divine worship; the preservation of the truth; the promotion of social righteousness; and the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world.**

Leader: The call of Christ is to a willing, dedicated discipleship. Our discipleship is a manifestation of the new life we enter through baptism. Discipleship is both, a gift and commitment, an offering and a responsibility.

**All: We come as children of God, answering the call of the church to be leaders in educational ministry.**

**Hymn**

**Here I Am, Lord (verses for teachers)**

page 525

*From The Presbyterian Hymnal, WJK, 1990. Used by permission.*

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### **Chorus:**

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?  
I have heard You calling me this day.  
I will teach, Lord, if You lead me;  
I will hold your children in my heart.

### **Verse 1:**

I, the Lord of Life and Birth, value every age's worth.  
Nurture all I send your way; my hand will help.  
Families are gifts I give. Show them holy ways to live.  
Open minds and eyes to me. Who'll teach my ways?

### **Verse 2**

I, the Lord of Young and Old, want my stories to be told.  
Teach them in your church and homes; I will be there.  
Fill their hearts with songs to sing; let them bring their offerings.  
Listen to their doubts and prayers. Who'll teach my ways?

### **Verse 3**

I, the Lord of Font and Cup, covenant to lift you up.  
Splash the water, break the bread; pour out your lives.  
Faithfully my love you'll show so their hearts will always know,  
They are mine eternally. Who'll teach my ways?

### **Repeat Chorus**

### **A Litany of Commissioning**

*Participants should stand if able and congregation divided into "right" and "left" sides for the reading of the litany. Individuals should look at one another as they read.*

Leader: Look around you friends, look around you.  
Who is the person standing next to you?

***Right: The person next to me is a beloved child of God,  
a living example of the Word-Made-Flesh  
of God's continuing presence in the world,  
of God's continuing "coming" into our midst.***

**Left: The person next to me is unique, a combination of needs and possibilities,**

**smiles and frowns,  
laughter and tears,  
fears and hopes,  
all struggling to find expression.**

Leader: Friends, look around you . . . each of you are heirs of God's promise,  
God's adopted and beloved children.

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***Right: Go out from this place renewed by the Spirit.***

**Left: We will go where God sends us for we have been fed and equipped for service.**

***Right: We are alive to life's possibilities. We will celebrate life in ourselves and others.***

**Left: Go then—and may you catch now and then the dance of the Spirit . . .  
in the bouncing play of a puppy  
in the lilting song of a bird.**

**All: We go . . . to live courageously and give abundantly.  
Christ's life and love empowers us.**

Selected words, phrases adapted from *Birthing and Blessings*, by Rosemary Catalano Mitchell and Gail Anderson Ricciuti  
© 1991 The Crossroad Publishing Company and from *Fresh Winds of the Spirit, Book 2* by Lavon Bayler © 1992 The Pilgrim Press. Used by permission.

### **Charge and Benediction**

Leader: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord Jesus Christ, knowing you are beloved children of God, and that God has claimed you as special.

**All: We come and we go, we live and breathe as children of God. Thanks be to God! Alleluia! Amen.**

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## SERVICE OF COMMISSIONING

Adapted and reprinted from "Fulfilling Our Promise to Make Faithful Disciples!"  
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**Introduction:** This commissioning service was printed in the fall issue of *ideas! for Church Leaders* magazine. The article prefaced the commissioning by saying it is important to recognize those highly committed and gifted disciples who are making a significant contribution to the whole church community as part of the Christian education leadership team. You are also highly committed, gifted disciples who have said, "yes," to being an educator within our reformed, Presbyterian community. Let us join together as we commission one another to this important ministry.

ONE: God calls ordinary people from ordinary places to do extraordinary work with God's people. God called Abraham and Sarah to pack their belongings and follow God to a new land.

**ALL: So Abraham and Sarah packed up and followed God.**

ONE: God called Moses to take the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt. Moses said, "No, God, not me! The people won't believe me. I am slow of speech and slow of tongue." God said, "Moses, I want you to go. Aaron, your brother can speak for you."

**ALL: So Moses took his wife and his children and went back to Egypt.**

ONE: God called David to be a king, even though he was a young boy and the youngest of all of Jesse's sons.

**ALL: So Samuel anointed David, and he rose to be a great king.**

ONE: God called Jonah to preach to the Ninevites and Jonah decided to flee to Tarshish instead. Jonah spent a few days in the belly of a great fish. Jonah prayed to God from the belly of the big fish and when God answered his prayer, God also called him a second time to go to the Ninevites.

**ALL: So Jonah set out and went to Ninevah.**

ONE: God called Mary to have a baby and name the child "Jesus," because he would save the people from their sins.

**ALL: And Mary said to the Lord "Let it be done to me according to Your word."**

ONE: God called Peter and James and John away from their families, their homes, and their work as fishermen.

**ALL: And they dropped their nets and followed Jesus.**

ONE: God called Martha away from the kitchen and Lydia away from her purple cloth, and Priscilla to open her home as a new church.

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**ALL: So they dropped what they were doing and followed God's call in their lives.**

ONE: God has called you to educators. Being an educator requires energy, patience, commitment, hard work, and a heart for God's work and God's people. Do not enter into this responsibility easily or without thought, but joyfully and responsibly, recognizing that God always provides exactly what we need to answer God's call in our lives.

ONE: I ask you to answer the following questions: Do you trust in Jesus Christ our Savior, acknowledge him Lord of all and Head of the Church and through him believe in one God, Son, and Holy Spirit?

**ALL: We do.**

ONE: Do you accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be, by the Holy Spirit, the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ in the Church universal, and God's Word to you?

**ALL: We do.**

ONE: Will you fulfill your calling in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture, and be continually guided by our confessions?

**ALL: We will.**

ONE: Will you be a faithful educator, leading others to know and love Jesus as Lord, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to the glory of God?

**ALL: We will.**

ONE: As a community of faith, will you encourage one another, pray for one another, support one another, and honor one another, as you seek to lead others to a deepening knowledge of God?

**ALL: We will.**

ONE: (invite people to lay hands on one another)

Let us pray.

God of grace, pour out your Holy Spirit on these your servants, that they may be faithful educators in the church.

Give them ears to hear the Holy Spirit's leading;

Anoint their lips to speak your truth with power.

In everything, give them the mind of Christ,

Who taught in deed as well as in word.

Give them joy in their work,

And a sure sense of your abiding presence for their work of ministry;

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.