

When Did We See You Youth Service

Gathering Song

“Come, Let Us Worship God” text and music copyright 1983 Ray Makeever, admin. Augsburg Fortress
“Gather Us In (Here in this Place)” Glory to God Hymnal #401

Call to Worship

A Call to Worship gathers the people of God and helps them into God’s presence. It sets the tone for worship and begins the process of letting go of the distractions of life, so we can turn our attention to worshipping God! Here are a few thematic opening liturgies to choose from:

One: God meets us where we are

Many: God meets us here

One: We come bent and burdened

Many: We come in search of the Living God

One: God meets us where we are

Many: God meets us here!

One: We are called to follow—

Many: to walk in the way of justice and righteousness

One: We are called to follow—

Many: to heed Your call, and follow Your path

One: We are called to follow—

Many: to be beacons of hope and witnesses to truth,

One: Come, you who are claimed as children of God,

Many: Let us follow in the way of Christ! Let us worship the Lord!

One: In a world of injustice and pain

All: Bring us a message of hope

One: In communities divided and at war

All: Bring us a message of hope

One: In lives marked by bad choices, and unwise priorities

All: Bring us a message of hope

One: For all people, everywhere

All: Let us bring Your message of hope!

Song Options

“Beautiful Things” Lisa Gungor, Michael Gungor © 2009 worshiptogether.com songs CCLI song #5665521
“Open the Eyes of My Heart” Paul Baloche © 1997 Integrity's Hosanna! Music CCLI song #2298355

“Chain Breaker” Zach Williams, Mia Fieldes, Jonathan Smith © 2015 Anthems of Hope; Be Essential Songs; Cashagamble Jet Music; Hipgnosis Songs Essential; So Essential Tunes; Upside Down Under; Wisteria Drive CCLI Song #7060031

Prayer of Confession & Assurance of Pardon

A corporate (whole congregation) prayer of confession gives us an opportunity in worship to admit that we fall short of God’s dreams for us and to open ourselves to God’s healing, forgiveness, and inspiration. When we confess, we are intentionally taking stock of our lives and inviting God to lead us and shape us. We follow a prayer of confession in worship with an Assurance of Pardon. The assurance reminds us that God’s love for us is unconditional and everlasting and encourages us to live out of love and grace in the world. Here are a few prayers and assurances to choose from.

Prayer of Confession (in unison):

Good and Gracious God, You spoke this world into being, and continue to speak Your love and grace into it. You seek the good of the planet and everyone on it. Wherever there is brokenness, Your heart also breaks. Break our hearts for what breaks Yours. Touch us so deeply, that we cannot ignore the need and pain around us. Dare us to stand and fight for what is good and right. Turn our complacency into courage, and our apathy into action. Don’t let us sink into our comfortable lives and leave Your work for “someone else” to do. Move us and shape us and give us hearts like Yours. Hear us now as we pray... (Time of silent prayer. Count to thirty and say “Amen.”)

Prayer of Confession (responsive):

Voice 1: Loving God, we confess that too often we ignore the needs of others, focusing instead on our own comforts and desires.

All: Forgive us, O God, when our selfishness prevents us from offering compassion to a hurting world.

Voice 2: We walk past our neighbors, blind to their hunger and thirst, blind to their need.

All: Open our eyes to the pain in our midst and open our hearts so that we might seek to end it.

Voice 3: When we focus our attention on our own priorities and fail to look for Christ in the face of others

All: Forgive us, O God, and inspire us to serve you more faithfully.

Voice 4: We fail to act with love and kindness and fail to seek justice and mercy for all people.

All: Remind us that we are called to bring Your kingdom near through our actions and our words. Lead us to lives of service to all. In Christ’s name we pray, Amen.

Assurance of Pardon (responsive):

All: Through Christ, we are made whole

One: We lay down our burdens, and drink from the well that never runs dry.

All: In Christ, we can find new life and new hope. The past is gone forever, and we can be dead to sin.

One: Friends, Hear this good news! In Christ we are forgiven!

All: Thanks be to God!

Assurance of Pardon (responsive):

One: God searches for the lost, around every corner, on every street

Many: and gathers us into the warmth of home

One: God prepares a feast and invites us to the table

Many: and feeds and sustains us for the journey

One: God frees us from bondage and calls us to God’s kingdom

Many: and heals us with grace and love. Thanks be to God!

Song Options

“Act Justly, Love Mercy, Walk Humbly” Pat Barrett, Chris Tomlin, Jason Ingram © 2021 Capitol CMG Genesis; Capitol CMG Paragon; Housefires Sounds; S. D. G. Publishing; Vamos Publishing; J Ingram Tunes; So Essential Tunes, CCLI song# 7168697
“I Will Follow” Chris Tomlin, Jason Ingram, Reuben Morgan © 2010 Rising Springs Music; SHOUT! Music Publishing Australia; Vamos Publishing; worshiptogether.com songs; Spirit Nashville Three; So Essential Tunes; Spirit Nashville Three, CCLI Song #5806878
“For Everyone Born” Glory to God Hymnal #769
“Come Now You Blessed” Glory to God Hymnal #186

Children’s Sermon Options

We’re All Connected

Preparation: Have enough name tags with different identifications on them such as: “sick,” “hungry,” “homeless,” “thirsty,” “stranger,” “lonely,” etc. You can have more than one child with the same label. Expand upon labels as appropriate in your context. Have enough name tags with “Jesus” written on them for each child (or even congregational member).

Gather the children and give them each a name tag with the label on it as they come up.

Ask: “Have you ever needed help and didn’t get any? How did that feel?” (Accept all answers.)

Say something like: “It doesn’t feel that good, does it?”

Ask: “Have you ever helped a friend or even someone that you didn’t know?” (Hopefully, they will say yes.)

Say something like: “We all have helped someone, even if we may not know it! When we offer a hug, a smile or say a kind word, very simple things, we can help someone know the love of God! Here at our church, we help people we know and people we don’t know in many different ways.” (List some of the internal ministries—meals for the sick, visits; and outward ministries. If you have any that children participate in be sure to say so and invite more children and youth to be a part of that ministry!)

Say something like: “Some of the people we work with are the people that Jesus talks about in our story today and are on your name tags. Why do we do that? Is it just to be good? Is it just because Jesus says so?”

“In our story today, Jesus does say that we should feed hungry people, give water to those who need clean water to drink, give people clothes, care for sick people, etc. And we do that! But it’s not just so that we can feel good about ourselves or make sure that God loves us, right? No, God loves us no matter what. You each have on a name tag with a label of a type of person on it. We’ve all been sick. We might need shelter one day or food. We never know, one day we help someone else and the next day someone is helping us. We all need stuff sometimes!”

“Here is another name tag for each of you. Whose name is on it? Jesus! That’s right! Jesus says that he loves us all very much, is with us always and we know that each one of us reflects Jesus to the world with every word, smile, and action. Jesus says that you are a part of Jesus and Jesus is a part of you! And you, and you, and you and you (point to all of the children and all of the adults)! Jesus says that we are connected to God and so we are also connected to each other – EVERYONE matters! We want everyone to know God’s love and to know that Jesus is with them and a part of their lives. So, this name tag today reminds you that Jesus is part of you and your life each and every day and you are also connected to all of God’s people!”

Closing Prayer:

We are grateful that you love us all and bring us together for community, support and help when we need it. We pray for all of those who do not have enough to eat, do not have clean water, shelter, or are lonely in any way. We pray to look for ways to spread love to all in the world and we long for the day when all of your people have what they need for daily life. We love you, God. Amen.

The Extension Cord

Say something like: “Good morning!” (Hold up an extension cord.)

Ask:

- “Can you tell me what this is?” (An extension cord!)
- “And what does it do?” (It helps bring power/electricity to a place where there is not power/electricity.)
- “And what happens if the extension cord isn’t long enough?” (Then you get a longer extension cord...or you move the lamp.)
- “But what if you can’t move the lamp and you don’t have a longer extension cord? Can you just unplug the extension cord you already have from the wall and bring it over to the lamp? Wouldn’t that fix that problem?” (NO! Because the extension cord has to be plugged in to be able to send the power.)

Say something like: “Oh... I see... so THAT’S why none of my lamps at homework!”

“Well, it just so happens that in today’s scripture story Jesus tells a story that’s very similar to the idea of an extension cord. But instead of extension cords, he’s talking about people. And instead of plugging those people into an outlet (which would be dangerous!), he’s talking about how the people can be plugged into God. And when they are plugged in, Jesus says that those people are then better able to share God’s love, light, and power with the people around them – especially with people who are struggling or are in need.”

“Jesus calls those people who share God’s love “sheep” in today’s scripture story. Jesus then says there are other people who are supposed to be plugged into God but are not plugged in – like the extension cords at my house. Jesus calls those people “goats” in today’s story. Jesus says the goats are people who were not plugged into God and then do not share God’s love with the people around them – even with people who are struggling. We all can be sheep and goats throughout our lives – being plugged in or not plugged at various times.”

“We can learn from what Jesus was teaching the disciples to do... about how to be extension cords for God. As we learn how to plug into God’s love, then we are also learning how to be God’s sheep who share God’s love with others. That’s right! You, me, all of us, are meant to know and then extend God’s love to others – just like Jesus did.

Closing Prayer:

This is a repeat after me prayer.

Dear God,

Thank you for Jesus...

Who teaches us...

How to receive...

Your love...

So that we can extend...

Your love to others.

Thank you, God, and amen.

Serve Others, Serve Christ

Greet children and begin with a few questions...

Say something like: “Good morning, friends! Here’s a question...”

Ask:

- “If Jesus showed up here today, how do you think we might treat Him?”
- “What would we do to make Him feel welcomed and loved?”
- “If He asked for something, would we provide it?”

Say something like: “Well, I have another question...”

Ask:

- “Have you ever seen Jesus?”
- “What do you think He looks like?” (Take some answers, maybe holding up a picture of Jesus that kids are familiar with.)

Say something like: “We aren’t exactly sure what Jesus looked like, and people have said different things about what He might have worn and been like in appearance. But I have a few other pictures here.”

Ask: “Do you think He looked like.... This? Or maybe this? Or this?” (Display several pictures of people in need, perhaps including refugees, homeless people, people in prison, or a few of “average” looking people.)

Say something like: “It might seem like these would be people we try not to think about too much, or maybe we feel sad for them, but ignore them if we saw them out and about. If we were being honest, we probably wouldn’t think of Jesus when we saw these types of people, right? Would we help them?”

“Did you know that Jesus told us when we do things for other people, it’s like we are doing things for Him? It seems crazy, but it’s true! In our scripture today, Jesus was describing for people what it might be like someday, when He comes back to Earth. He said that He would gather everyone together and look at how our lives have been lived. Jesus promised to bless those who had served and cared for Him, but He said it would not go well for those who ignored Him when He came. The people listening to this message were confused, since they didn’t remember seeing Jesus or giving or denying help to Him. Jesus would tell the people that whatever they had done to help others, they actually did to help Him. We might be a lot more motivated to help people in need if we recognized that in doing so, we were helping Jesus!”

“But what does this mean for us? Does it mean we’ll get in trouble if we don’t do enough to help every needy person we see? Well, of course we can’t help everyone that asks. However, it is important to take care of other people, as God takes care of us. Sometimes this means giving to people who don’t have much. Sometimes it means just showing someone that we are willing to listen if they need to talk, or saying a kind word to someone who is sad. We are called to love everybody. Even people who are hurt, or sad, or who don’t have a place to live! They all belong to God. So, keep your eyes open! There are chances around us all the time to love and serve Jesus by loving and serving others.”

Closing Prayer:

(Have kids repeat each line.)

Dear God,

Thank you for letting us be part of your work

When we serve other people, we serve you

Help us look for ways to do that

And to care for those around us

Help us to share your love
We love you, God!
In Jesus name, amen!

Intro to the Scripture

Our scripture today, the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats, is the only place where Jesus suggests criteria for the Divine judgment of humanity. It is a judgment of *the nations*, which means that at some level, it is a parable about how we, as societies, embody or fail to embody, the value of solidarity with the suffering that Jesus calls us to. This parable follows immediately after the Parable of the Talents, where a master gives resources to his servants and expects them to invest those resources in ways that will please him. By extension, this story of sheep and goats issues a challenge for us to organize *our resources* in ways that demonstrate solidarity with those in our communities who are suffering and so fulfill *Our Master's* desires. Listen now to the Word of God...

Scripture Reading

Matthew 25:31-46.

Skit: When did I see YOU? *a skit about the parable of the sheep and the goats*

Actor 1: Hey! Did I see you yesterday at the Bill Millers? You seemed worked up about something.

Actor 2: That's because I was Hangry!

Actor 1: Hangry? What's that?

Actor 2: I was so hungry I was mad! Mad at the world, mad at the people around me. MAD!

I made an order but then discovered I had no money to pay for it!

Hey, I saw you, too...but why didn't you help?

Actor 1: Well...I wasn't sure it was you. If I knew it was you, I sure would have helped!

Actor 1: Hey, I think I might have seen you the other day at the hospital, but you didn't look like yourself.

Actor 3: I was sick and discouraged. I just received a cancer diagnosis, and I was in shock.

I thought I saw you too. Why didn't you say, hi?

Actor 1: Well...I wasn't sure it was you. If I had recognized you, I'm sure would have!

Actor 1: Hey, were you at the bus station yesterday?

Actor 4: Yes, I was exhausted. I just walked over 1500 miles with both of my kids to get away from the gangs that had taken over our town and had threatened to kill my children, so we left.

We had just been released from the detention facility.

I saw you, how come you didn't come over and talk?

Actor 1: Well...I wasn't sure it was you. If I had recognized you, I'm sure would have!

Actor 1: Hey, were you at the bus stop yesterday?

Actor 5: I had just spent all day in this heat going across town for a doctor appointment, but I ran out of money for the fare home.

I was drenched with sweat and dehydrated. I'm sure I looked like a wreck.

Hey, I thought I noticed you driving by...but why didn't you stop and give me a ride?

Actor 1: Well...I wasn't sure it was you. If I had recognized you, I'm sure would have!

Liturgy for Holy Communion

Meeting Jesus at the Table

Invitation

Voice 1: Jesus said, "The first shall be last, and the last shall be first!"

Voice 2: "Whoever would exalt themselves will be humbled, but God will exalt the humble."

People: Humble us, O God, remind us we are dust, made of earth yet filled with Spirit...joining matter and mystery to receive the gift of Life.

Voice 3: Jesus said, "Come to me all who are heavy laden, take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble in heart, and you shall find rest for your souls."

**People: Bent over by burdens born of our strivings
Fragmented by frailties we are desperate to hide
Pressed down by persistent pursuit of perfection
We come as broken vessels...Empty, yet longing to be filled
To be filled with You.**

Voice 4: Come to the Table of the Lord, for no one will be turned away!

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

Minister: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Minister: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God!

People: It is right to give God thanks and praise!

Voice 1: Inviting God, from the beginning of time you have set tables and invited us to join you. Tables of Welcome, Tables of Grace, Tables of Forgiveness, Tables that reconcile us to each other, to those who suffer and to You.

People: Today we say 'Yes!' to your invite. We take our place at this table because know we belong. We know we are loved. We know we are forgiven. We know that we are called to solidarity with those in need. Just as you are the God who is 'with us.'

Voice 2: Take the bread of our lives and the blood of our love and use them to serve the needs of your hurting people. Help us to spend our lives for others the way you have given your life for us. For joined to You everything is possible!

Words of Institution

Minister: For this reason, we take the bread as Jesus did on the night he was betrayed, when he blessed it and broke it and offered it to his disciples and saying: "This is my body, broken for you, all of you eat this and remember me." And after supper he took the cup, giving you thanks, and gave it to his disciples saying: "This is my blood, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sin. All of you drink this in remembrance of me.

As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup we proclaim, the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord, until he comes.

Prayer

People: Bless the food and drink upon this table, O Giver of Life, make them holy gifts of Love that they may fill us with life and salvation. Reshape us as a holy and transformed people, so that by your grace we may continue Your transforming work for the salvation of the world.

Minister: These truly are the gifts of God for the people of God.

Communion of the People

Come forward for communion and break off a piece of bread then dip it into the cup. When all have been served, we will join in the following prayer.

Closing Prayer

People: As Your Body, nourished at Your Table we now pray...Grant us eyes to see the suffering around us...hearts that overflow with your compassion...mouths that speak your truth...hands to touch the ones called 'untouchable'...and feet that run to do your good works, through Christ, Our Lord, we pray. Amen

Communion Songs

“Crowded Table” The Highwomen, 2019 Highwomen LLC under exclusive license to Elektra Records

“Hungry” Kathryn Scott, 1999 Vineyard Songs (UK/Eire) CCLI song #2650364

“Come to the Table of Grace” Glory to God Hymnal #507

Prayer Stations

Prayer Stations are a wonderful opportunity to experience some of the topics of today's worship. You can extend the communion time to include space for prayer stations. You can also invite folks to visit the prayer stations following worship if they wish. Here are some topical prayer station ideas including necessary supplies, an overview, and suggested text to make a sign for each station.

1. Prayers for the sick

Supplies: Poster-board, various sizes of band aids (include larger ones), and sharpies.

Overview: Create a list of people in the lives of your congregation who need healing—physically, emotionally, spiritually—and write their names on individual band aids. After they write the names on the band aids, they can put the band aids on a posterboard prepared with phrases like... “I’m hurting...I’m lonely...I’m wounded...I’m weak...” Once they do that they are encouraged to pray for that person.

Station Sign:

Prayers for the Sick

“I was sick and you took care of me” Mark 25:36

Illness comes in many forms and fashions. We all know people who are in need of healing— whether it be physical or emotional. We ourselves also might be in need of healing of some kind. We are called to care for the sick and ill.

In this station, take a band aid and write the name of someone needing prayers for healing. As you write their name, pray for them. Ask God to heal whatever they are going through. Then place it on the poster board.

Let this remind us of our need for our community of faith and support systems of people in our lives. As people who have others who support and lift us up, we need to lift them up as well.

2. For those homebound

Supplies: Small cards, pens or sharpies, and a list of names of your homebound members of your church

Overview: Have members write letters of encouragement to those homebound members of your church community. These letters will be mailed to members of your community who are no longer able to physically be a part of the day-to-day life of your church.

Station Sign:

For Those Homebound

“I was in prison and you visited me.” Mark 25:36

It’s important for us to remember those people who paved the way for us as a church. It’s also important to remind seniors that they are cared for and loved.

Every community has members who are no longer able to physically go out as they used to and are confined to their homes. As you can imagine, this can make someone feel forgotten about, unloved, and many other emotions.

At this station we want to write cards to these individuals reminding them that they are not forgotten and that they are loved. If you know the person, write to someone specifically. If you don’t know who anyone is, write a more generic card that can be sent to anyone on the list.

3. The chains that bind us...

Supplies: paper cut into strips (long ways), markers or sharpies, tape, and some place to put the items on.

Overview: Write on a slip of paper something that binds you or has you feeling caught or imprisoned. Then use the stapler to add your paper link to the chain. As others add their strips you will make a chain of all the things that bind us or hold us down.

Station Sign:

The Chains that Bind Us...

“I was in prison and you visited me” Mark 25:36

Each of us are bound by things that weigh us down and keep us from fully embracing the abundant life God calls us to. For some of us are bound by the chains of addiction or abuse. Others are bound by the chains of unresolved relationships, our inability to accept forgiveness from God or to forgive ourselves, or for past mistakes and pain.

God calls us to freedom from the chains that bind us!

Write on a strip of paper the things that weigh you down and keep you from God. Attach your strip to the paper chain on the cross. As you do so, give this part that is not serving you to God, and invite God into your broken places.

4. Hygiene Kits for the homeless

Supplies: gallon size baggies, sharpies, various supplies which can include soap, shampoo, deodorant, toothbrush, toothpaste, or other essential items based on need.

Overview: Personal hygiene items are standard everyday products we use to clean, deodorize, and keep our bodies as clean and healthy as we can. You’ll be creating kits that can be given out to those people in your community who are most in need. Make a kit and take it with you to give to a homeless person you encounter or gather them and donate to a homeless ministry in your city.

Station Sign:

Hygiene Kits

“I was a stranger and you welcomed me. I was naked and you gave me clothes to wear” Mark 25:35-36

We all know people who have gone through hard times, or we personally have where even our basic needs weren't able to be met.

We are called to take care of all our brothers, sisters, and siblings, and helping with basic hygiene needs is one way to do this.

At this station, you are creating a hygiene kit to be given out to someone in your community who doesn't have access to basic hygiene needs. Grab the specified amount of each of the items on the table and put them in the gallon bag and seal it up.

5. Food Kits for the homeless

Supplies: gallon size baggies, sharpies, various supplies which can include granola bars, Slim Jims, to-go peanut butter, nuts, crackers, water bottles, Emergen-C, vitamin c packets, and other essential items based on need in your areas.

Overview: Create a bag full of snacks that you can take with you to give to a person in need that you encounter, or to share with a homeless ministry in your town.

Station Sign:

Food Kits

“I was hungry and you gave me food to eat.” Mark 25:35

We know that well-being begins with having our physical needs met, and having food to eat is one of those needs.

At this station, you are creating a food kit to be given out to someone in your community who doesn't have access to basic food needs. Grab the specified amount of each of the items on the table and put them in the gallon bag and seal it up.

Benediction

We are called to see Jesus in the face of everyone, and in this simple act we are compelled to respond to all of creation with compassion, grace, and love. As you go from this place, take with you the heart of God, overflowing with steadfast love, the hands of Christ, both wounded and full of healing, and the presence of the Holy Spirit who inspires and leads us. Amen.

Closing Song

“One Foot/Lead with Love” Melanie DeMore, Oakland, CA – 2016

“Jude’s Benediction” David Cook, Integrity Music davidcook.org

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