

A Liturgy for Children's Home Sunday/Family Week
April 7, 2013
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Call to Worship

Leader: In the early church, all ages worshipped together.

People: All people prayed, served, shared, learned and ate meals together because they were a family—God's family.

Leader: Families come in all shapes and sizes—even one person can be a family.

People: We come together as a church family—praying, serving, sharing, learning and even sometimes eating.

Leader: As we come together to praise God's name above anything else, let us remember that we come as a family,

People: Needing to be guided, needing to be supported, needing to be loved.

All: Amen.

Call to Confession

In the Old Testament and even in Jesus' time, many people believed that people were punished by the sins of their family members, either their children or their parents. But we know that it is our task to repent of our own sins, not those of our family. Let us come as individuals to confess our sins to God and with others so we have the opportunity to be washed clean.

Prayer of Confession

O God, we may say we are a family, but we don't always act in loving ways towards others. We gossip about our friends when we should be lending a helping hand to them. We let bullies take advantage of our families and friends because it is easier than getting involved. We allow children in our community to be neglected and abused, when it is our privilege to care for them. We stand silently by waiting for someone else to raise a cry for justice. We are just too busy or apathetic or tired. Forgive us for our sins of commission and omission. Give us the strength and courage to do what we are able and the will to do what we feel is impossible. For we know in you all things are possible. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

God assures us that if we repent, God is faithful and just and will forgive us of all of our sins. Friends, believe the good news. Our sins are forgiven and we are welcomed back into the family of God. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Children's Sermon "Welcome"

Prop Needed: A Welcome Mat

This week we are celebrating something very special. We are celebrating Family Week in our Church. I want to talk to you about how important families are. Families help us in many ways. Families help to nurture us and teach us. Families help us to grow.

Have you ever seen one of these (Welcome mat)? What do we call it? This is a welcome mat. Why do we have welcome mats at our door? They help to remind us to wipe our feet before

entering the house, but what else does it help us to say? It helps us say that we want people to feel welcome as they enter our home. Have you ever thought about the Church that way? Do you think that visitors feel welcomed when they come to church? Do you ever bring a friend with you to Church? Have you ever noticed when we have visitors at church, many people will go and shake their hand to welcome them to our Church?

All people are welcomed into the Church no matter their age, or size, or how they are dressed. Do you ever think about the fact that this building, which we call, “the Church” is actually God’s house and it doesn’t really belong to us? Since it is God’s House, it belongs to God. Since this is God’s house and everyone is welcome to come here, then all who gather in God’s house are a part of God’s family. Did you ever think about how those of us who come here are a part of God’s family? We are! We gather here to worship God as children of God and that makes all of us a part of God’s family. We love one another and care for one another just like family, because we are family, and that is what God wants us to do for one another as a part of the family of God.

Prayer: God, thank you for welcoming us into your family. Help us to be your faithful children and to honor you by welcoming all your children as brothers and sisters. Help us to learn what it means to be a part of your family as we celebrate Family Week. In the name of your Son and our brother Jesus, we pray. *Amen.*

Prayer for Illumination

Just as the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples at Pentecost, so Holy Spirit, we ask that you now descend on us. Bring the truth of this scripture to light and our minds open to hear and see it, so we might give life to it in the days to come. Amen.

A Litany for Families

By breathing spirit into dirt, God created something new.
God created humanity.

Humans gave birth to more humans.
Families were naturally born.

God blessed Abraham and Sarah with a child when they were old.
From this family was born the people of Israel.

The prophets called the people of Israel children of God.
Israel became God’s adopted family.

Like a parent with a child, God let Israel grow and blossom.
Israel loved being God’s adopted child.

Even when the child fell, and Israel seemed to fall often, God was always there to hold their hand.
God’s family is an accepting and forgiving family.

Within God's adopted family was born his son, Jesus.
Something new was happening in God's family.

Jesus called all, women and men, his sisters and brothers.
God's family became inclusive through Jesus' love.

Today, our families embody those naturally born into the family, those who are adopted into the family, and those who are included through love into the family.
Our families are like God's family.

Imagination and love is the only guide to what a family may look like.
Our families are like God's family.

God's family is inclusive, accepting, and forgiving.
May our families be like God's family.

Amen.

Scripture Possibilities for the Sermon

Acts 2:42-47

Offertory Sentence

In response to all of wonderful gifts that God has given us, let us bring to God our tithes and offerings.

Offertory Prayer

O God who is the giver of good gifts,
We are grateful for these gifts. As we bring these gifts together, may you multiply them to meet the needs of your family. Amen.

Charge & Benediction

We are all God's children. We are all sisters and brothers. We are all family.
Go forth this day in the embracing love of God, the accepting grace of Jesus and the forgiving power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.