

A Liturgy for Christian Education Kick-off Sunday

August 31, 2014

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Call to Worship

We gather now to worship God—the source of all knowledge, the source of all creativity, the source of all potential. Let us open our hearts and minds as we worship together.

Call to Confession

Throughout our lives, we continue to learn what it means to be disciples of Christ Jesus. Yet, throughout our lives, we continue to make choices that do not reflect our desire to follow him. Let us trust that God, who loves us as we are yet wants us to grow into the life to which we are called, will hear our confession and be faithful to forgive.

Prayer of Confession

One: Holy Parent, you have given us models of discipleship at home, at church, and around the world.

Many: Sometimes we are too critical or judgmental of them. Sometimes we simply choose to ignore their example. Forgive us, we pray.

One: Holy Teacher, you have given us teachers and leaders who are dedicated to helping us grow in our faith.

Many: Sometimes we take them for granted, failing to appreciate their commitment of time, talents, and energy. Forgive us, we pray.

One: Holy Communicator, you have given us both scripture and the writings of many who have studied scripture faithfully so that we might benefit from your messages to us in this day and time.

Many: Sometimes we would rather focus only on the scriptures that comfort us or those that tell us what we want to hear. Sometimes we want to study only curriculum with messages that do not challenge us, convict us, or require anything of us. Forgive us, we pray.

One: Holy Creator, you have given us minds and hearts so that we may learn to follow you.

Many: Sometimes we excuse ourselves from opportunities to learn and grow. Forgive us, we pray.

All: Deepen our desire and commitment to grow in relationship with you. AMEN.
Assurance of Pardon

Friends, hear the good news: If we confess our sins, [God] who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Thanks be to God!

Based on 1 John 1:9 (NRSV)

Prayers for Illumination

Holy Spirit, open our ears, our minds, and our hearts so that we may learn from the scripture. Guide us in a new understanding. Help us to hear a holy message today. AMEN.

Scripture Possibilities for the Sermon

- **Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (NRSV)**

⁴Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone.^[a] ⁵You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. ⁶Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. ⁷Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. ⁸Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem^[b] on your forehead, ⁹and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

- **Psalms 78:1-8 (NRSV)**

¹Give ear, O my people, to my teaching;
incline your ears to the words of my mouth.
²I will open my mouth in a parable;
I will utter dark sayings from of old,
³things that we have heard and known,
that our ancestors have told us.
⁴We will not hide them from their children;
we will tell to the coming generation
the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might,
and the wonders that he has done.

⁵He established a decree in Jacob,
and appointed a law in Israel,
which he commanded our ancestors
to teach to their children;
⁶that the next generation might know them,
the children yet unborn,
and rise up and tell them to their children,
⁷so that they should set their hope in God,
and not forget the works of God,
but keep his commandments;

⁸ and that they should not be like their ancestors,
a stubborn and rebellious generation,
a generation whose heart was not steadfast,
whose spirit was not faithful to God.

- **Matthew 7:24-29 (NRSV)**

Hearers and Doers

²⁴ “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. ²⁵ The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. ²⁶ And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷ The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its fall!”

²⁸ Now when Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astounded at his teaching, ²⁹ for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

- **Luke 11:1 (NRSV)**

Prayers of the People

Loving God, we recognize you as the source of all knowledge and wisdom. You created us and knew us before we were born. You surely know us better than we know ourselves. You know our needs; you know our longings; you know our joys; you know our pains. Grant us confidence that you know our sadness, our confusion, our anger, and our fear. Help us remember that you love us with an unmeasurable love and that you are faithful in your promise that we are never alone.

We ask, too, that you equip us to show your love, your comfort, your gentleness, your strength, and your peace to others. We thank you for the honor of being the Body of Christ in this time and place. Help us live your love in all situations so that we may reflect your character.

We pray for all who teach. Give them wisdom, energy, creativity, and courage.

We pray for all who learn. Give them open hearts, curious minds, and a strong desire to know you.

We pray for all who support teachers and learners. Give them words and acts of encouragement and gratitude to share.

We are grateful for all who have shown us an example of lifelong growth in discipleship. We are grateful for all who share in the planning of our education ministry. We are grateful for the opportunities to continue to grow. Thank you, Lord! AMEN.

Invitation to the Offering

All that we have, all that we are, and all that we can become—these are gifts from God. Now we have a joyful opportunity to give to God! What can we give the creator of all? Our hearts, our talents, and our treasures! Let us worship God through all we give.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Gracious God, we know that giving began with you. Thank you for sharing with us the joy of giving. Please accept now our gifts, whatever they are, as gifts from our hearts. We give them out of love. AMEN.

Blessing/Commissioning of Teachers/Leaders (and Students/Learners)

Gracious and loving God, you have called us—each of us—to be yours. You have called us—each of us—to grow in relationship with you and with each other. You have called us—each of us—to share the love with which you have equipped us.

At this time we ask that you bless these leaders, teachers, and shepherds that you have called. Help them to challenge us, to teach us, and to guide us in your ways. Give them wisdom, knowledge, energy, creativity, sensitivity, insight, stamina, inspiration, and grace to fulfill this special calling. Help them to be a living reflection of you.

Likewise, we ask that you help each of us remember our responsibilities as learners in this relationship. Grant us the curiosity to ask questions, the patience to continue to struggle when we don't find ready answers, and the respect and appreciation for those who teach and lead. Help us to see in them a reflection of you.

In the name of the great teacher, the good and gentle shepherd, we pray. AMEN.

Charge and Blessing

Go now to continue to live your faith in full view of all, not so that you will be noticed, but so that God will be evident in you! Live as a Christian disciple. Teach by example with your attitude, your choices, and your actions.

May you be so filled with the love of God that it spills out on everyone you meet, and may your faith be contagious! AMEN!