

A Liturgy for Family Week

April 27, 2014

Kip Rush

Call to Worship

Leader: We live our lives each day looking for a way out of the darkness of the world.

People: God provides a lamp, lighting the path for our journey through the darkness.

Leader: Along the journey, we add unforgettable memories of a life filled with joys and sorrows.

People: We gather stones, mementos, along the way as a reminder from where we have come.

Leader: At times, the journey has been challenging for the world is uncertain.

People: Yet, knowing that God's love abounds, serves as an anchor of hope for the future.

Leader: And that hope is made alive when Jesus enters our lives and our families.

People: Each time we break the bread, we are reminded of the magnitude of God's love.

Leader: It is God's love and Christ's gift of grace that transform us.

People: Like a butterfly emerging from the cocoon, we spread our wings with a joyous celebration.

Leader: Yet we also hear a voice calling us to share the gift we have received.

People: We are now those casting our nets into the fish-filled waters wanting to share a message.

Leader: It is a message that inspires, challenges, and brings us to this time of worship.

People: It is the message that the cross is empty, that death is defeated and God's faithfulness never ends.

Call to Confession

God's love, God's compassion and God's faithfulness are always being given to us as a gift to open. We know that all we have to do is turn away from our sin and receive this gift. Let us confess our sins to God.

Prayer of Confession (unison)

God, why is it so hard to say we are sorry. We know we are not perfect. We know that we don't do everything right, but it is still hard to be wrong.

God, when we hurt other people, forgive us.

When we don't help others when we know we can and should, forgive us.

When we waste food and drinks, and energy and mess up your world, forgive us.

Just like our family, God, when we say we are sorry, you hear us and love us and forgive us.

Help us to be like to other people and forgive them too. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Let's say thanks to God because God forgives us if we say we are sorry. This is good news and something we should really cheer about. Believe this good news. In Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Hallelujah! Amen.

Children's Sermon

Items Needed: Family Portrait, Church pictorial directory, Mirror

When the children arrive, pull out a family portrait. (If you can find one of your family when you were a child, use that.) Ask them who is in the picture and what each person's responsibilities might be. Ask them what they see in the picture. Ask, "What do our families teach us about?"

Then pull out the church directory. Show pictures of the church family. (If the church doesn't have a directory, point to the people sitting in the pews.) Talk about all the people that make up the church family. Then ask "What are the responsibilities of the church?" Ask, "What does our church teach us about?"

Discuss that both of our "families" have somewhat different roles. Yet, they also have a similar role. Ask, "What is the one thing we should learn from both?" (Hopefully, you can guide them into saying, "Learn about God and Jesus.") Ask "And how do they teach us?" (By loving us, praying for us, teaching us, taking time for us, etc.)

Then pull out the mirror and say, "now what do you see?" When they see themselves and say, "ME!" Say something like, "Right, and you know who else we see? We see God, IN YOU! You have a part in the family as well, to help in sharing God with everyone."

God is with us every day and we want others to know that we are part of a very special family.

Prayer for Illumination

God, help us to hear the message that you have for us in this scripture. Open our ears to listen and open our hearts to act in your name. Amen.

Scripture Possibilities for the Sermon

- **Lamentations 3:22-23**—In Lamentations, we read that God's faithfulness to us never ends—in fact, it is renewed every day. For seven days, using seven everyday objects, households of all shapes and sizes are invited to find God **In Every Day**.

Prayers for Worship

Loving God, we enter this week with a special focus on families. You have blessed us with so many different families.

Those we call mommy and daddy, grandma and pawpaw.
Brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, cousins and the rest.
Those whose love shelters us, protects us, and gives us life.

People who read us books before bed, spoil us when we visit and even discipline us when we need it. They cry with us, laugh with us and hold us.

Those we call our church.

Teachers and pastors and elders and friends.

Those who make a commitment at our baptism to help us learn more about you and your son, Jesus. They give their time to lead us in worship or make special crafts with us, sing songs with us and pray with us. They encourage us, teach us and inspire us.

Those we call friends.

Boys and girls, men and women who stand beside us when we feel alone.

People who care enough to accept our faults, keep us accountable and hold our hands. They comfort us, walk with us and accept us.

These are the people who help shape our lives and who embody your love and grace. They aren't perfect, nor are we, but it is through them, O God, we encounter you every day.

And so, we pray with hearts filled with the touch of those we call family.

In the name of our loving Savior, Amen.

Invitation to the Offering

What is it that we bring to give to God? Everyday things—money that we use to buy the things we need, sometimes food that we eat, sometimes ourselves. Let's collect those everyday things up and present them to God so God can use them for a new thing.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

O God, we bring you these things that we use every day and hope that in bringing them to you that you will make them into things that can help other people. Bless them and help us use them to bless others. Amen.

Charge and Benediction

Go into the world and your neighborhoods and do the things that God needs to be done.

Feel the love of God, the compassion of Christ and the renewal of the Holy Spirit in all that you do. They are with you always. Amen.