

GENERAL PROGRAM INSTALLATION

DISCIPLES WOMEN



2011

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Consecrated Beginnings

Purpose:

The installation service is a covenantal time of worship and commitment. Those who will lead in the coming year affirm their calling and enter into a covenant with the group and with God.

Suggestions for the Leader:

Appropriate music suggestions:

Here Am I Lord, Be Thou My Vision, I Have Decided to Follow Jesus, Sing of Mary

As part of the service each person could be given a symbol which represents their important part of the community – i.e. a small candle, a link from a chain, a cross, puzzle pieces. The symbol is a reminder that each person is needed to make the community whole and healthy.

Prior to the meeting, solicit readers and give them their scripts to allow for practice.

Call to Worship:

Leader: My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God.

All: We are gathered here as handmaidens to the Holy One. We come as servants.

Leader: Just as Mary was called so long ago so too are we called to give glory to God

All: Here and now in this place and time God's messengers come. Let us keep awake that we may see and hear and answer.

Scripture: Luke 1:26-33,46-56

Lesson:

When was the last time a messenger from God visited you? God comes in so many different ways and very often when God comes into our lives it is a

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surprise. When we least expect it the Word of God touches our lives and calls us to respond.

You know her, Mary, just a girl, barely breaking into adolescence. She is the peppy little teeny bopper who is looking forward to going to her first football game. She giggles a lot and her days are filled with worrying about zits and how her hair looks and whether the jeans make her look too big?

To this unsuspecting one comes a holy presence, a messenger, a proclamation.

The angel comes to announce. Gabriel comes to say, “You have been chosen. The Lord is with you.”

I love the next line. “Mary is perplexed.” You think? She says, “How can this be?” She might have said, “You’ve got to be kidding me, does this mean I won’t be able to be the Freshman Homecoming Queen? What is going to happen to me? Is Joseph going to ditch me now? Will my parents send me to outer Mongolia or some other desolate place? Will my friends stand by me? What are they going to say at the temple? Who will help me?”

If Mary had any of these questions, Luke didn’t write them down. Unlike most teenagers what Mary did was listen.

Reader 1: Have you ever noticed how life interrupts our best laid plans? We have everything figured out, we have sketched out in our minds a long term plan and then something happens. Something comes along and changes are direction. Sometimes it is terrible, sometimes it is wonderful. Opportunities that we didn’t expect come and we must decide whether to embrace them or not.

Much of life depends not on what actually happens to us, but on how we respond to what happens to us. In the face of all that could go right and all that could go wrong, do you know what Mary does? She sings. She says, “Yes Lord”.

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Reader 2: Deciding to say yes, doesn't mean we have no fears or apprehensions. It means that we don't let fear rule our lives and that we trust that God will lead us. Saying "yes" to God means that we step out in faith and know that we are not alone. The one who loves us most fully will help us along the path.

Reader 3: The medieval theologian Meister Eckhart once said, "We are all meant to be mothers of God. What good is it to me if the eternal birth of the divine Son takes place unceasingly if it does not take place within myself? What good is it if Mary is full of grace, if I am not also full of grace? What good is it to me for the Creator to give birth to this Son if I do not also give birth to him in my time and culture? This is the fullness of time, when the Son of God is begotten in us."

Reader 4: Greetings favored ones, the Lord is with us. Nothing is impossible with God.

Throughout the Bible we hear about people who are called by God to serve in special ways. The reluctant Jonah is sent to Nineveh. Stuttering Moses is sent to be spokesperson and deliverer of the Hebrew people. A woman who made a mess of her life was suddenly charged to share the good news that Jesus is the Messiah. In some way every single person created is born into the world with God's special purpose.

Story – There are a lot of wonderful stories about serving and community.

(Listed below is a story from William White. Other stories that would work are: *The Selfish Giant* by Oscar Wilde in which a giant learns that sharing brings life. The story Partners from the book *Does God Have a Big Toe?* talks about how we partner with God in creating the world.)

In *Stories for Telling* William White tells the story of an African folk chief. (*This may be performed as a short skit with a narrator, messenger, Ezra, and his wife.*)

A Nigerian tribal chief sent out his messengers to invite all the men of the tribe to a great feast. All of the food will be provided," they announced, "but

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each man must bring one jug of palm wine.” Ezra wanted to attend the great festival very much, but he had no wine. He paced the floor trying to think of a solution for his dilemma.

Finally, his wife suggested “You could buy a jug of wine. It’s not too expensive for such a great occasion.”

“How foolish” Ezra cried “to spend money when there is a way to go free”

Once again he paced until he came upon a plan.

“Rather than wine I will carry water in my jug. Several hundred men will attend the festival. What will it hurt to add one jug of water to the great pot of wine?”

On the day of the feast the tribal drums began to beat early in the morning reminding the people of the great festival. All of the men came dressed in their finest clothes.

Each man, including Ezra carefully poured the contents of their jug into a large earthen pot.

When all the guests arrived the chief commanded the servants to fill everyone’s glass with wine.

The chief spoke; they raised their glasses and drank. A cry of disbelief arose from the crowd and they quickly drank again.

What they tasted was not wine, but water. Each guest had decided that his one jug of water could not spoil the great pot of palm wine.

Every person is needed. When we all share our gifts we make the good stuff – the best wine for the festival comes because we all bring our best for the community.

Invite the attendees to share.

- Who was a person in your life who brought “the good stuff” – who brought their special gifts and made a difference in your faith journey?

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- What are the gifts you are called to bring to enrich the community of faith?
- If you use the puzzle pieces theme, at this time ask all to come together and complete the puzzle on a near-by table/worship center/installation focal point.

Leader:

Would all those who have been elected and are here to be installed into these honorable offices please come forward as your names are called. (*Name each person and the office which she will hold.*)

Our Disciples Women have chosen you to lead them into the future. I charge you with the responsibility to seek after God's vision and purpose as you fulfill your calling to this community of faith. Will you to the best of your ability be faithful witnesses by your leadership to this group and strive to serve God in all that you do and say?

Officers: We will.

Leader: Will you the members of Disciples Women offer your encouragement, support and help these officers so that together we may be all that God has created us to be?

Disciples Women: We will.

Prayer of Installation: Holy God, you have richly blessed us with this community of faith, with this Christian Women's Fellowship and with these leaders. Send your spirit here among us and give to these leaders your great vision as you inspire us all to share the good news, to live our faith and to be your messengers in the world.

People: Our soul magnifies the Lord. Our spirit rejoices in God our savior. With God nothing is impossible!

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