

Youth Sunday Resources



Youth Week is a special time to recognize the youth in your congregation and celebrate their gifts and contributions to the faith community. The suggested time for youth week each year falls between the last Sunday of October and the first Sunday of November. Choose one of those Sundays to engage youth in a creative way in the morning worship.

During the week, plan something special to recognize the youth in your congregation. This would be a good time to work on boosting your attendance at youth activities, or to have a midweek event celebrating youth. It could also be a time to begin planning for the upcoming year in setting some goals and objectives, evaluating how the present year has gone so far, and checking out what's on the agenda for the rest of the current year.

This week may not be the best time for you... and that's okay. You have 51 other weeks from which to choose!

The purpose of this information is to:

- Share some guidelines for planning a youth led worship experience;
- Suggest some scriptures and themes that may be used on Youth Sunday;
- Share a litany on making disciples and a leadership piece; and
- Provide information on Souper Bowl of Caring.

Planning and Preparation



Youth Sunday Timeline

1. Get a date for Youth Sunday on the church calendar as soon as possible.
2. *Two months* before Youth Sunday, meet with the leadership group.
 - This may be Seniors, or officers, or a small group of active youth.
 - Let them know that their opinion matters.
 - In this meeting, do the following:
 - ▶ Share faith stories: person who shaped your faith; favorite scripture or hymn; time you felt closest to God; etc.
 - ▶ Look for common experiences from the faith stories.
 - ▶ Choose a theme based on those common bonds.
 - ▶ Choose a main scripture that goes with the theme.
 - Share the theme to the youth group for approval.
 - Share the theme with church to start promotion.
3. Five weeks before Youth Sunday, study the theme.
 - Read the theme scripture to the group(s) several times.
 - Ask everyone to listen for a word or phrase that jumps out (allow time to share).
 - Ask everyone to think about how this scripture touches their life, challenges, comforts, and strengthens them.
 - Ask how this theme and scripture could help the church.
4. *Four weeks* before Youth Sunday, choose parts and design the service.
 - A big decision that must be made is the order of worship. Will the youth design their own? Will they use the traditional service of the congregation? Will they do something in between?
 - Another issue is who gets what parts. Each group should have a part of the service (Seniors preach, middle-schoolers do communion, younger youth do offering, etc.).

- Make sure to include the gifts of the youth (drama, dance, art, poetry, storytelling, technology/audiovisual, etc.).

5. *Three weeks* before Youth Sunday, write and develop parts.

- Once parts have been divided up, start writing.
- Adult sponsors can ask questions to help get things started.
 - ▶ Use the study of the theme for help.
 - ▶ Ask what the theme means to that individual youth who is writing.
 - ▶ Ask what is important about their part in the service.
- Make sure NOT to write parts for youth. This is very important!!! Too of-



ten adults write Youth Sunday and the congregation can tell the difference between youth who are well practiced and those who are scripted!

- ▶ Repeat back to the youth what they tell you.
- ▶ Ask questions to help them clarify their thoughts.
- ▶ Do NOT write parts for youth!!! (Did that get said already?)

6. *Two weeks* before Youth Sunday, practice.

- Go over parts one at a time from the place they will speak on Sunday.
- Be encouraging but honest.

7. *One week* before Youth Sunday, practice again!

- Use live microphones if you can. Go in order so that everyone knows who they follow in the service.



8. *One day* before Youth Sunday, practice again!!!

- Have seats marked.
- Have everyone's parts typed and printed (extra copies just in case!)
- Walk through the service from beginning to end (cues for movement to and from seats, slowing down, or being louder).
- Walk through the service again with NO cues/help.
- Remind youth where to show up the next day and where to meet.

9. On Youth Sunday, practice one more time.

- Have youth show up early enough to run through once quickly.
- Provide breakfast or snacks.

- Gather for prayer before service (maybe invite ministers or elders).
10. Go lead the people in worship!
11. After Youth Sunday, celebrate!
- Plan something to celebrate the work that was done. Maybe gather to watch the service on video or just plan a party/outing.
12. Evaluate and make notes for next year.
- Keep records of planning process and final draft of service. Assume someone else will be in charge next year when you make notes.

Scripture Suggestions and Themes

Scriptures: (Choose one)

- Whom shall I send? - Isaiah 6:1-8
- Follow me—Matthew 4:18-22
- Go and make disciples of all nations—Matthew 28:16-20
- Gifts that differ—Romans 12:4-8
- Cloud of witnesses—Hebrews 12:1-2
- Family—Genesis 15:1-6
- Getting It—Luke 17:11-20



Theme suggestions:

- ▶ Called to Be Leaders
- ▶ Becoming One in Christ
- ▶ We are Family

Abraham and Sarah (as well as Hagar) become the root of a great family of faith. God makes a covenant with Abraham that will be passed down from one generation to the next. Today we are a family of faith, bound in covenantal communion with God through Jesus Christ. The word family has meant lots of different things over the years and there are lots of different kinds of families in our world today. No matter what a person's family is like, each is a child of God

and each has a place in God's family. Communion is a family meal where we all gather around the table with Christ at the head.

In a world with so many family types, some people struggle to feel "normal". Divorce, single parents, blended families and other issues are very real in our world, but in God we all have a family and in the church we all have a home.

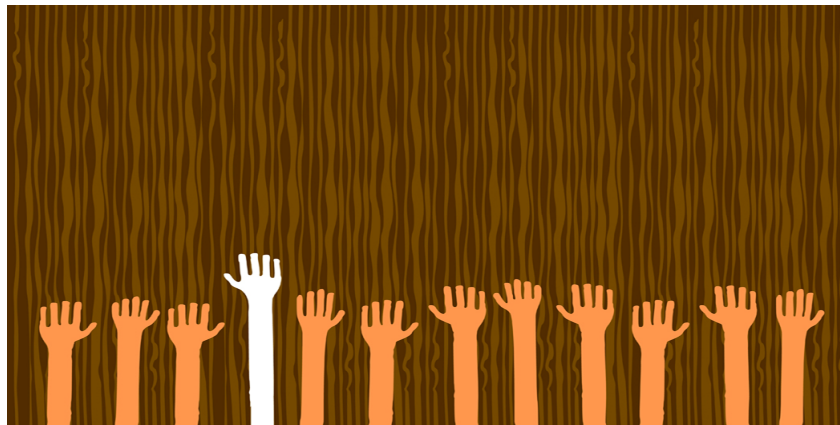
► Join the Cloud

Since creation there have been people who have trusted God and walked by faith. Believers around the world, from the beginning of time up to the present day (and including those living) belong to a great cloud of witnesses.

Just as we have been encouraged in faith and life, we need to encourage and support other believers around us, and to model for new or future believers the grace and forgiveness of Jesus Christ.

► Getting it

The lepers all came to Jesus for healing but only one "got it". There are a lot of people who show up for church, but how many of them really "get it"? In a selfish society, it is hard to talk about giving other credit. In a time when the church seems watered down to make everyone feel comfortable, it is also easy to turn a blind eye to apathy in the church. God calls us to lift up the ones who respond to God's word, naming those who have shaped us, and praising God through their actions.



Litany for Congregations



"Go Therefore and Make Disciples"

READER 1: Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.

READER 2: I'm willing to become a follower of Christ.

ALL: Go therefore and make disciples.

READER 1: When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted.

READER 3: I'm willing to let God change what needs to be changed in my life.

ALL: Go therefore and make disciples.

READER 1: And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me".

READER 4: I'm willing to make specific changes in my life to be a better disciple.

ALL: Go therefore and make disciples.

READER 1: "... of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you."

READER 5: I'm willing to stop activities and attitudes that keep me from being a disciple.

ALL: Go therefore and make disciples.

READER 1: "And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

READER 6: I'm willing to risk people picking on me and laughing at me to be the best disciple I can be.

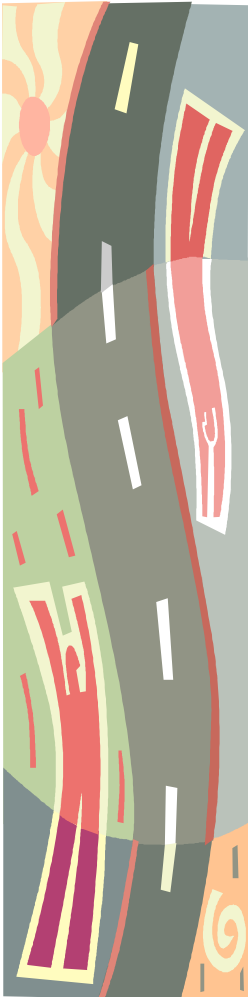
ALL: Go therefore. Amen.

(Matthew 28:16-20 NRSV and adaptation of "Willing Spirit Ballot", Your Life As A Disciple. Group's Active Bible Curriculum. Group Books, 1990)

Meditation for Congregations

Follow the Leader

Do you remember the game you used to play as a child called "Follow the Leader", and how each player in turn was to mimic the antics or the sills of the one who was "it"? Today we are going to think about following the leader.



First, think a minute about the loyalty of the Old Testament prophets who followed a leading of God, knowing full well that they would pay the price of becoming unpopular with the mass of people to whom they preached. What would it have been like to have been one of them? (Keep silence for a time.)

Now, think about the twelve men and those women who left their homes and ordinary occupations when Jesus went to them and said "Follow me". What would it have been like to have been one of them? (Keep silence for a time.)

Think of the men and women who themselves were leaders in the early church, welcoming traveling Christians, perhaps hiding them and always risking their own lives for their beliefs. What would it have been like to have been one of them? (Keep silence for a time.)

All of us have been called to be leaders when we accepted the name of "Christian". But today, the risks are not nearly so great as they were before, at least not in the United States. It is good to remind ourselves at this time that leadership is not given lightly nor should it be accepted without a sense of dedication to the task.

Within our own community of faith we recognize the potential for leadership that exists among young and old. So often we tap the leader resources of our "old" and ignore our "young". As we live in to being "a dynamic faith community", may we recognize, identify and nurture our youth to be leaders "in prophetic, redemptive and reconciling ministries to the whole world."

God is expecting great things of us all. Those of us called to lead have the responsibility of leading. Those of us called to follow have the responsibility to "follow the leader". But more than that, we all need to acknowledge our need to follow the leader who is Christ, who came that we might have life and have it abundantly.

(Adapted from "Follow the Leader" from *Youth Plan Worship* by Betty Jane and J. Martin Bailey.)

Souper Bowl of Caring

The Souper Bowl of Caring began in 1990 in a Columbia, SC church with a simple prayer and the vision to mobilize young people to fight hunger and poverty in their communities. Since that year, tens of thousands of youth have participated and generated \$41 million for soup kitchens, food banks and other charities in communities across the country.

The concept is simple: young people ask others to give one dollar each to help those in great need on Super Bowl Sunday. Each participating group then gives every dollar they collect directly to charitable organization of their choice, which, in the past, has included the Week of Compassion and other Disciples projects and causes.

Last year, over 350 Disciples groups joined this effort and raised close to \$115,000. What a tangible way to demonstrate Jesus' love and compassion for our brothers and sisters in need! In 2010, we hope to have 600 Disciples groups participate and collect \$175,000 for organizations that fight hunger and poverty!



Would you share Souper Bowl of Caring with the congregations in your region?
Souper Bowl of Caring can provide you the resources you would need, including:

- sample emails to pass along to your local congregations;
- articles for newsletters;
- letters for mailings to congregations;
- the Souper Bowl of Caring logo for your use as you deem appropriate; and
- a sample blurb for your Web site.

(Please email caroline@souperbowl.org for these resources.)

We hope you will encourage all of the congregations in your region to register and participate. Together, we can share God's love with our neighbors in need!