

General Programs

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# Mission / Service



Authored By:

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### Opening Set Up:

Need mural/butcher paper or dry erase boards around the room or on tables, whichever fits your space issues. You will need either marker or dry erase markers depending on which you chose. You will need either tables/chairs for smaller group discussion if your group is over 15 or one large circle of chairs if your group is small enough to allow for significant discussion while remaining together.

### Opening:

As people come in, welcome them to your gathering and invite them to visit one of the murals either on the walls or on the table. The murals will read (You don't have to include all of them if your group is smaller):

**At the top of the page write -**

I was hungry and you . . .

I was thirsty and you . . .

I was a stranger and you . . .

I was naked and you . . .

I was sick and you . . .

I was in prison and you . . .

**At the end of the page write -**

When did I see you hungry?

When did I see you thirsty?

When did I see you a stranger?

When did I see you naked?

When did I see you sick?

When did I see you in prison?

After they have gone from mural to mural completing the phrase I was \_\_\_\_ and you ... they are free to take a seat. Leader save the murals – leave them up. You will use them in worship at the close of your gathering.

### Program:

Our program today is about how we can be bearers of the image of God to the community in which we are connected or the community which longs to be connected. Each person we encounter no matter their life events and circumstances deserves to be recognized as a child of God.

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As a people of faith, we profess this belief. (You will ask the following questions of your group. They can either discuss the answers in a large group, smaller groups within your group, or let them journal the answers and share a few of their thoughts.)

1. *What do our societal systems say about who is of value – of equal value – in the eyes of God?*
2. *What are the unjust systems that create and perpetuate poverty?*
3. *What are the consequences of the decisions of the affluent that affect those who suffer from inequality in areas of access and quality of education, health, vocation, and shelter?*
4. *What human capital is required to create a culture of generosity to affect those decisions of the affluent as discussed in question #3?*
5. *When we think about mission and service, what do we think about?* (Answers will vary depending on individuals' experience within your group.)
6. *How do you match your expertise and resources to meet a community need when you think about doing mission or service?*
7. *What is different between tithing monetarily and tithing your time to be in relationship with those in your community? Is there a difference?* (Note to the group that this is not assigning value – just articulating how these experiences are different.)
8. *Why do you volunteer to do mission and service?*

Have someone from your community gathered read Luke 10:25-27. After reading it lectio divina style three times, discuss with your group as you did above the following question:

*How is volunteering or doing service the same as “loving neighbors as self?” How is it different?*

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Have someone from your community gathered read Luke 10:30-37 and Matthew 14:15-21. After reading each of them three times, discuss with your group as you did above the following questions:

1. *In each of these texts, what is the stated need of the community?*
2. *How did the Good Samaritan and Jesus match the resources to the community need?*
3. *How are we called to love our neighbor like we found in the image of God reflected in these stories?*
4. *How is the action of love in these two stories a model for how we are to be in relationship and present with those we find surrounding us in community? How is this difficult?*
5. *How is this different than our daily lives?*



Service and Mission tend to be viewed as special events, doing something for others.

1. *If this is our approach to service, what does this say about how we feel connected to the local, national, and global community?*
2. *Are we bearers of the image of God if we approach service and mission as short term volunteer vacations?*
3. *How are we able to challenge the societal injustices if we only approach it as a special event or an opportunity to travel?*
4. *How do we recognize that we are all connected as community – that we are all children of God when we only engage with others outside of our socio-economic level or immediate comfort surroundings an average of x amount of hours a year?*
5. *How does this apply to how the church approaches the idea of service and mission?*

6. *How are we, as church, engaged to the community around us? Local? National? Global? Beyond just in name only and sending resources?*
7. *How are we, as church, bearers of the image of God in relationship with those in our world?*
8. *Do we approach these relationships in equal standing with those we serve? Do we see them as equal in the eyes of God? In society?*
9. *What prejudices do we assign to those we serve in mission? Does this automatically distance us from being in equal partnerships and relationships where we both give and receive?*
10. *How is this complicated with international socio-political issues that are realities? Do we use this as an excuse for inaction or patronization of the individual?*

If you have been discussing in smaller groups, have them move into one large group and let them share any insights, challenges, or places of ambiguity that they felt in the study and discussion. Once you felt that all voices have been heard, take a quick break to allow your community to move into closing worship.

## Closing Worship

### Set Up:

If your space is limited, just move all of your chairs into a circle with a small table in the middle with a candle for the light of the world present among you, communion elements, and anything else that you feel relates to the theme like perhaps maps, cutouts of a chain of people in all shades holding hands, pictures of your local community or neighborhood, etc. If your group is really large you can sit in multiple semi-circles with the altar at the opening of the circles.

### Call to Worship:

Assign several people in your community to participate. One person will read one mural from when they arrived. The murals of “I was \_\_\_ and you...” Read all of them.

**Music:** “We are Walking in the Light of God” (Chalice Hymnal) You can sign without instruments if you need to – it is beautiful acapella.

### **Scripture:**

Genesis 1:27. Have someone read the text. Encourage them to use gender inclusive language with this text.

### **Offering:**

As they come forward to take communion, have them consider making a donation to one of the many beautiful ministries that Disciples Women engages in relationship with like the Woman-to-Woman Worldwide micro-credit loan support in the two Congos. (*Service project information is available at [www.discipleswomen.org](http://www.discipleswomen.org) / click on the Woman-to-Woman Worldwide link / then click Service Projects.*) As they bring their money forward, have a sheet like the kind that folks hang when they are offering services, looking for a roommate or selling something. The sign will read “You Can Make A Difference. Reflect God’s Love To Each Person.” And then the tags that will hang down sideways that they tear off will say: “I Will.” They take the “I Will” piece of paper home with them. A sample is included in this program.

### **Communion Meditation:**

In Jonathan Kozol’s book, *Ordinary Resurrections*, he talks about the Greek word, *anastasis*, which means “standing up again.” He says that we all have times in our lives and circumstances where we all lie down and other moments like riding the crest of a wave where we rise up. He talks about how we do this sometimes within spaces of time: minutes, hours, days, months, years, and seasons. He brings to bear the strength of ordinary resurrection rising up against loneliness, fear, societal injustice, separation from community, exhaustion of spirit, and unequal affirmation as a bearer of the image of God. At this table, we see a larger reflection of God’s image through the words, “when did I see you...” “We acknowledge that it is

easier to love thy neighbor once a year or from the long arm and segregation of our donation. We affirm that we want this table always to be a reflecting pool glistening with love not a barrier of power affixed in between us and the diverse community of humanity. At this feast of love and shared community, we acknowledge our connectedness to one another and our shared destiny as children of God.

### **Words of Institution:**

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11:23-26 (serve and partake the elements)

### **Prayer:**

Creator God, we struggle to be engaged in the world. We desire to transform the world to reflect your image but we become distracted by and disconnected from those who are longing to have their worth acknowledged. When we commit to mission and service as an act of faith, we yoke our stories to the larger community and rise up through ordinary resurrection to challenge the inequalities that exist that perpetuate violence, poverty, and injustice. Help open our spirits to see you in the experience of the other and expand our capacity to reflect love in the world to all of creation. Amen.

**You can make a difference.**



Reflect God's love to each person.

I Will										
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