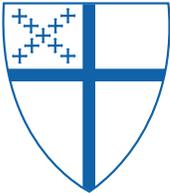


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**AWAKE** 

**MY SOUL**

**A Liturgical Resource for use  
with Children and Adults**

**Julia R. Huttar Bailey  
Ernesto R. Medina  
co-editors**

*The Office for Children's Ministries, Episcopal Church Center*

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# The Baptismal Covenant

*The Book of Common Prayer, pages 304 – 305*

- Celebrant* Do you believe in God the Father?  
*People* I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
- Celebrant* Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?  
*People* I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.  
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.  
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.  
He descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again.  
He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
- Celebrant* Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?  
*People* I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting.
- Celebrant* Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship,  
in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?  
*People* I will, with God's help.
- Celebrant* Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever  
you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?  
*People* I will, with God's help.
- Celebrant* Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?  
*People* I will, with God's help.
- Celebrant* Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons,  
loving your neighbor as yourself?  
*People* I will, with God's help.
- Celebrant* Will you strive for justice and peace among all people,  
and respect the dignity of every human being?  
*People* I will, with God's help.

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# Table of Contents

The Baptismal Covenant .....	i
Introduction .....	iv
From the Staff Officer for Children's Ministries .....	1
<i>Children's Charter for the Church</i> .....	2
A Brief History of the <i>Children's Charter for the Church</i> .....	3
Reflections on the <i>Children's Charter for the Church</i> .....	4
Steps to Effecting Change in the Congregation .....	7
Awake, My Soul!.....	9
Leading Congregational Song .....	11
Hymns for use with young children in the congregation .....	13
The Authority of Generations .....	15
Authority of Generations Hymn List.....	18
The Birth of Authority .....	20
Reflections on the Ministry of the Weaver.....	22
Examples of the Use of Authority of Generations .....	23
The Episcopal Rosary for Children .....	27
Preparing a Space for Liturgy .....	32
Designing Liturgical Space.....	32
Liturgical Road Kit .....	33
Recipe for Font.....	33
Recipe for Aluminum Cross.....	34
 <b>Models For Use During the Liturgy of the Word</b>	
The Collects .....	36
Readings.....	37
The Story of Creation .....	37
Abraham Bargains with God .....	39
The Call of Samuel.....	40
Isaiah 9: 2-4, 6-7 .....	43
Isaiah 61: 1-3 .....	44
Zephaniah 3: 14-18.....	45
A Dramatic Reading for Advent.....	46
The Good Shepherd .....	48
Jesus and the Children .....	49
Living Pictures .....	51
Loaves and Fishes.....	52
Doubting Thomas Rap .....	53
The Epistle for Pentecost (I Corinthians 12: 4-13) .....	55
An Affirmation Of Faith.....	57
Commissioning of Church School Teachers.....	58
"Choreography" of Commissioning .....	59
Prayers of the People.....	61
Prayers of the People for Advent and Christmas .....	62
Adoption of Sponsors (Godparents) .....	63
Creating our own Penitential Rite using Stones and Water.....	65
Resources .....	67

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# Introduction

In the fall of 1998, the Church gathered in Texas for a National Conference on Children's Ministries. At every liturgy at the conference, we modeled ways to engage God's children of all ages in worship together. Many of those who attended the conference asked for copies of the resources that came out of those liturgies.

This book began as a simple collection of those stories, litanies, and prayers that we used. But the project grew. We thought it might be of use for the larger church, and we remembered that there were many people who wanted to come to the conference, but couldn't. So we decided to include a section to set a context for those working models.

There are two sections to this book. The first is an introduction of our theological assumptions and tools for the design of liturgy as well as the full inclusion of all in the community of faith. The second is a collection of prayers, readings, and litanies developed by the Conference Liturgy Planning Team.

Some of these may be useful to you in your Sunday morning worship just as they are. Others will need to be adapted to fit your situation. *They are intended to be starting places.* They model techniques or ways of thinking that can be translated to other scripture readings or other prayers. We hope that you will use these models, and that these models will spark your creativity.

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## **From the Staff Officer for Children's Ministries**

Children are drawn to the greatest and richest of truths. It is in the spirit of the child that we offer you this booklet of prayer, scripture, and liturgy to share with the children in the Episcopal Church.

This liturgy booklet was developed from the Charting a Course for Children in the Church Conference held at Camp Allen, Navasota, Texas, in 1998. The publication of this booklet marks a new time in the church for children because it integrates practical models of formation that fully incorporate children in liturgy, advocacy, and education. These documents have been created out of prayer and scripture study. We offer them to you from the very heart of our souls.

There are two main assumptions found in the development of this document:

- The first is the claim of faith around the Biblical metaphor for children found in the Gospel of Mark 10:16. Jesus took the children in his arms, put his hand on them, and blessed them. There was no question of how the disciples were to treat the children. The children were to move to the center of the adults, to come closer to God to be blessed.
- The second is the claim of faith around baptism. As soon as children are baptized they are members and full participants in the Eucharistic community and in the church's common life of prayer, witness, and service.

How does the church respond to these claims of faith? How do communities gather the children and bless them? How does the church claim the baptism of the child as its very own?

The document known as the *Children's Charter for the Church* is a way to respond to these claims of faith that are brought to life in this booklet. The *Children's Charter* provides a way for people to evaluate and prophetically challenge their community in the way they incorporate children into its very life, into its very soul. This outstanding book of liturgical resources provides a way for congregations to listen to the voice of the child and observe the faith of the children in its community. It provides stories, prayers, and liturgical structures that invite children and adults together to come closer to God.

We invite you to enter into this book with the strength and courage to live out in joy and wonder the faith found in the very heart of every child.

—*Robyn Szoke*

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# Children's Charter for the Church

## **NURTURE OF THE CHILD**

Children are a heritage from the LORD, and the fruit of the womb is a gift. — Psalm 127:4 (BCP)

### THE CHURCH IS CALLED:

- ◆ to receive, nurture and treasure each child as a gift from God;
- ◆ to proclaim the Gospel to children, in ways that empower them to receive and respond to God's love;
- ◆ to give high priority to the quality of planning for children and the preparation and support of those who minister with them;
- ◆ to include children, in fulfillment of the Baptismal Covenant, as members and full participants in the Eucharistic community and in the church's common life of prayer, witness and service.

## **MINISTRY TO THE CHILD**

Then Jesus took the children in his arms, placed his hands on each of them and blessed them.— Mark 10:16

### THE CHURCH IS CALLED:

- ◆ to love, shelter, protect and defend children within its own community and in the world, especially those who are abused, neglected or in danger;
- ◆ to nurture and support families in caring for their children, acting in their children's best interest, and recognizing and fostering their children's spirituality and unique gifts;
- ◆ to embrace children who seek Christian nurture independently of their parents' participation in the church;
- ◆ to advocate for the integrity of childhood and the dignity of all children at every level of our religious, civic and political structures.

## **MINISTRY OF THE CHILD**

A child shall lead them — Isaiah 11:6

### THE CHURCH IS CALLED:

- ◆ to receive children's special gifts as signs of the Reign of God;
- ◆ to foster community beyond the family unit, in which children, youth and adults know each other by name, minister to each other, and are partners together in serving Christ in the world;
- ◆ to appreciate children's abilities and readiness to represent Christ and his church, to bear witness to him wherever they may be, and according to gifts given them, to carry on Christ's work of reconciliation in the world, and to take their place in the life, worship, and governance of the church. (*Ministry of the Laity pg. 855 BCP*)

Developed by the Episcopal Dioceses of: Alaska, Bethlehem, Central New York, Chicago, Dallas, Hawaii, Iowa, Massachusetts, Mexico, Southwest Florida, Western North Carolina, Wyoming, and The Office of Children's Ministries for the Episcopal Church

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# **A Brief History of the Children's Charter for the Church**

*Robyn Szoke*

The Episcopal Church has historically sought to live out its mission through the Baptismal Covenant by the development of many different kinds of ministries, programs, and liturgies. Between 1991 and 1997 twelve dioceses were called together by the Office of Children's Ministries to discern how our church could more completely live out its mission to children. The bishops of these dioceses responded by naming a diocesan coordinator who identified congregations living out their Baptismal Promise in regard to children. The coordinators, along with staff and consultants, dialogued with children, educators, advocates, and liturgists to create a vision of ministry with children that was founded on the beliefs and principles of the Baptismal Covenant. This vision statement for ministry with children is known as the *Children's Charter for the Church*.

The purpose of the *Children's Charter* is to provide ways for the church to honor, respect, and accept our children and their ministries as the children live into the Baptismal Covenant. The Charter sets forth the church's call to nurture the child, to minister to the child, and to provide the opportunity for children to share their ministry. Grounded in scripture, formed through the Baptismal Covenant, each section of the charter lists the ways that congregations will continue in the Apostles Teaching, fellowship and the breaking of bread and prayers that has full inclusion of children. Its goals:

- To include children as full participants in the Eucharistic community.
- To identify ways for the church to equip children for ministries in a pluralistic world.
- To identify ways to help families nurture children in their Christian formation.
- To organize and support instructional activities for children that they might participate fully in the Baptismal Covenant.
- To urge congregations to be advocates for the integrity of childhood and the dignity of all children.
- To urge Episcopalians to make their relationships, churches, schools, and homes hospitable and safe for children.

The 1997 General Convention adopted resolution B005, *Children's Charter for the Church*, as a way for congregations and dioceses to recognize how children are witnesses and ministers for Christ in the world. The development of the Charter has included the Children's Ministries Center, an educational display of the charter, a video that contains images of how congregations live out the Baptismal Covenant through the *Children's Charter*, and a curriculum, a six-session study, to help congregations implement the charter.

The *Children's Charter* has become a way for many people, congregations, and dioceses to open their hearts and deepen their call and their commitment to the child and to the Baptismal Covenant.

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# Reflections on the Children's Charter for the Church

*The following is a summary of talks given by Joseph Russell at the 1998 National Episcopal Children's Ministries Conference.*

## Nurture of the Child

From my living with the *Children's Charter for the Church* for some months now, I am personally aware of just how far reaching and radical this document is. It sounds reasonable enough. We must have deep concern for the children: of our congregations and in the world around us. There just can't be anything controversial or difficult about that, can there? Of course we love our children. Of course we want to nurture them. Of course we want to stand alongside our children in society and be their advocates and champions. Of course we want our children to be lifted up with their own gifts of the Holy Spirit enabling them to take an equal place in the ministry of the church.

As we get in underneath the words of the Charter, we soon realize, however, that it will affect everything we do in the congregation and in the wider church. What does a congregation look like that takes the first section of the *Children's Charter* seriously?

- For starters, children are active participants in the congregation's worship, and they share in the leadership of the worship.
- The coffee hour is intergenerational because children have natural relationships with adults growing out of their life together in the congregation.
- Church school is seen as a time of an on-going conversion to the Gospel, and a training-ground for the church's ministry development.
- Church teachers take their role as mentors seriously.
- The lectionary of the Prayer Book is the primary "curriculum" for the entire congregation.
- Children and adults are formed as Christians through the annual calendar of commemorations and celebrations.
- Children are enabled to see that there is more to life than career, job security, or making it in the world.
- Finally, children are given the tools to engage in social and personal ethics. Headlines happening all around our children are the curriculum in which adults and children constantly engage.

"Heavenly Father, we thank you that by water and the Holy Spirit you have bestowed upon these your servants the forgiveness of sin, and raised them to the new life of grace. Sustain them, O Lord, in your Holy Spirit. Give them an inquiring and discerning heart, the courage to will and to persevere, a spirit to know and to love you, and the gift of joy and wonder in all your works."

*God's grace is shining through in the life of our children now! Today!*

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## Ministering and Advocating for the Child

The *Children's Charter* is designed to radicalize us. It is not a benign document. Our politics are touched. Our values are tested. This is subversive stuff here. We may find ourselves in court hearings, school meetings, and City Council sessions if we take this *Children's Charter* seriously. We may find ourselves appearing before the vestry and speaking on the convention floor, advocating for children and their parents.

The problems are overwhelming, and it is tempting to back away from the issues rather than to risk burnout. Most congregations are not equipped to engage social problems in any kind of depth. Joining the church is not supposed to turn parishioners into social activists. But even the regular participation of the Sunday Eucharist where the vision of the Reign of God is experienced week after week may awaken us to prophetic ministry.

When the Word and Presence of Christ is proclaimed boldly in the worship of the congregation minds and hearts are stirred. Think of the Civil Rights movement and remember the dramatic role the church played in witnessing for justice. "We shall overcome" was a song of hope that united the worship of the church with the struggles of the world.

Here are some ways that two congregations have been drawn into ministry to the child. These

scenes are recorded in the excellent video, *Children: A Heritage from the Lord*.

- *The witness of St. Timothy's, Compton, Diocese of Los Angeles:* The parish offers an environment that speaks of love, joy, and support. It is an environment of safe haven. The church is the safest place for the child to be — in some cases more safe than in their own homes. The parish offers an environment of love. Children know that someone cares deeply for them. St. Timothy's realizes that children need a community to welcome them. (Children need to be welcomed by a community.)
- *The witness of St. Gabriel's, Philadelphia, Diocese of Pennsylvania:* This congregation sees their call to be a light to the community. Their advocacy for neighborhood children started with an after school program. Following their children home from the program, parishioners discovered their needs and responded out of love for their young charges. The congregation got involved in making the streets safe and helped get drug dealers out of their neighborhood. They got involved in working for affordable housing. They got involved in offering the gift of the arts to children. They got involved in advocacy for the entire family as they helped access needed services for parents and children.

Now for the confrontation: what kind of advocacy do our children need in the congregation itself? Does the congregation provide a safe environment for its children? The sad reality of the teacher and caring adult is that it is risky to touch and hug a child. But we must be aware of how that simple privilege has been abused by the abusers over many generations, in and out of the church. Required workshops for all people relating with children are a sad necessity. Ironically, it was insurance companies who insisted on these programs! How aware are we of children and parents who are suffering

**Now for the confrontation: what kind of advocacy do our children need in the congregation itself? Does the congregation provide a safe environment for its children?**

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in our midst? Remember the sanctuary movement during the wars of Central America? Perhaps we as congregations need to see ourselves as a new sanctuary movement for the children in our midst.

## Ministry of Children

This third aspect of the *Charter* is just as radical as the other two, for it reverses all our expectations. We are accustomed to think of children on the receiving end of ministry, not on the delivery end of ministry. We are accustomed to teaching the children a body of knowledge rather than equipping them for ministry they are called to now.

What I find so exciting about the *Children's Charter* is that the Charter grows out of the Baptismal Covenant. The Charter takes seriously the fact that children are called and empowered for ministry in their lives. It becomes a vision statement for living out our baptism with our children. The *Children's Charter* is telling us that children have exactly the same responsibilities as adults in the congregation! Children are ministers just as adults are. They represent Christ and "take their place in the life, worship and governance of the Church." That quoted phrase from the Charter comes right out of the "Outline of the Faith" from the Prayer Book under the heading, "Ministry of the Laity." There's the vision of the *Charter*!

"We receive you into the household of God. Confess the faith of Christ crucified, proclaim his resurrection, and share with us in his eternal priesthood."

*That "eternal priesthood" is the role of our children now — today and not just tomorrow when our children become adults.*

Children are called into the ministry of worship leadership, and not just at the annual "youth Sunday" event. They are regular ministers of the liturgy, alongside adults, week-by-week. They are called to be part of the decision-making process of the congregation. *The Authority of Generations* is a process developed to enable persons - including children - to be a voice in the deliberations of various groups in the congregation.

Children are called into the ministry of healing and praying along with adults. They can make calls with Lay Eucharistic Ministers and add their prayers and healing hands to those who are suffering.

Children are called into a prophetic ministry in which they cry out for justice in their schools, in sporting

events, at home, at church, and in their neighborhoods. They participate with adults in hearing and speaking the Word of God into the issues of the day.

Children have a unique ministry to adults. They are called into the ministry of questioning. "Why do we do this?" "Is that fair?"

Children are called into a ministry of service. In the video, *Children: A Heritage from the Lord*, a fourteen-year-old boy is interviewed. He had revitalized a soup kitchen ministry that had begun to falter. At the time of the filming, he was leading the program volunteers.

As has often been said, our children are *not* the future of the church; they are the church today. They are called into ministry among us now at this very moment.

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# Steps to Effecting Change in the Congregation

*Joseph P. Russell*

- 1) **Believe in yourselves.** *Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to him from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever.* (Ephesians 3:20-21) Let these beautiful words be your guide. You are all gifted.
- 2) **Talk small and not big about ideas for change.** Not: “Let’s rip down the building so that we can have the perfect worship space designed for the present *Book of Common Prayer*.” Do: At the parish picnic say, “let’s celebrate the Eucharist around the picnic table and then reflect on how that worship experience felt.” Over a period of time, you can begin to make changes based on experiences that have been meaningful to the church family. Always experiment outside the usual worship, learning, or living area; and then introduce those ideas into the on-going life of the congregation at appropriate times.
- 3) **Form a study/action group** of educators, liturgists, evangelism people, and others who are interested in effecting change. A group in one congregation spent an academic year studying different styles of Christian education. Then they began to look at ways they wanted to reshape their Christian education program. Parish leaders at another congregation spent a year and a half in study before they started offering Christian education before (rather than during) the parish Eucharist and including young children in the Eucharist each week. Encourage the group to dream and share visions, but work to avoid discouragement.
- 4) **Plan for resistance.** Realize that any change is going to bring some resistance. That is part of what it means to live in community. Expect and plan for resistance. Think about the roots of the resistance. Include persons in the planning group whom you feel may block the change. You need to hear their concerns. They will be far more supportive of change if they feel they are a part of the process of bringing about the change. Be ready to adjust the dream to the reality of where the larger parish family is. Compromise stands at the heart of democracy! Remember that resistance and compromise are built into the Constitution of the United States. Our founders saw the need to ensure that every piece of legislation would have to stand the trial of searching questions and calls for further investigation. And so it must be in the church if we are to live together as a family in Christ. The resistance to a new plan may be valid, and you may need to listen closely. At other times resistance may simply be a way of blocking any change in order to protect turf or avoid upsetting people who resist any change. Try to get behind the resistance. Realize that clergy will sometimes resist change because they are the ones who often serve as lightning rods for anger. They bear the pain of discord.
- 5) **Evaluate constantly.** Avoid the use of the word “failure.” We do not ever fail when we learn from our mistakes. Keep a record of your evaluations so that the memory of the event is passed on to others who are responsible for planning in the future.

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- 6) **Celebrate small steps.** Acknowledge the changes that are happening. Even the smallest steps need to be affirmed and recognized.
  - 7) **Start from scratch when introducing new ideas.** You must begin where the people are. There can be no short cuts. An idea about liturgical change, for example, may be so familiar and obvious to you that you don't stop to think that your understanding was shaped over a long period of time.
  - 8) **Sometimes you have to take a stand.** "I'm sorry. I just will not be involved in a Christian education program that is scheduled during the time of the Eucharist." or "We will be happy to baptize your grandchild, but baptisms in this congregation are a major event celebrated when the bishop comes or at other major feast days of the church year." *Never* take an opinion poll of the congregation when, after study, discussion and prayer, you believe that a change is essential if the church is to live into the reality of being the Body of Christ.
  - 9) **Be sure you are ready before you try something.** Children can't just be dropped into the worship experience without good preparation. If you go ahead without adequately preparing the church family, it will be a long time before you can live beyond the negative memory. "We tried that two years ago, and it was a disaster!"
  - 10) **Be intentional about getting key persons to conferences and training events.** Support your pastor in receiving regular opportunities for continuing education. Encourage vestry members to participate in conferences where they will be exposed to new ideas. Never participate in a conference yourself unless one or two other members of the congregation participate in that conference with you. Encourage persons to attend who are outside your usual network of people. This way you will learn from each other as you reflect on your experience.
  - 11) **Be assertive about getting effective persons elected and appointed to positions of leadership.** Plan well ahead for vestry elections. Be sure that you know who is being appointed in Search Committees at a time of pastoral change. Be in close touch with parish leaders who are presently serving. Involve them in your plans and programs. Listen carefully to their needs and concerns.
  - 12) **See the congregation through the eyes of Christ, not just through your own eyes.** We are a people called out for ministry, a ministry that began with our baptism. This makes a difference in the life we are called to lead together and in the world.

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# Awake, My Soul!

*Julia R. Huttar Bailey*

*Awake My Soul!* is a corporate liturgy designed as An Order of Worship for the Morning, with lots of music, and lots of room for congregational participation. While it has room for much flexibility, its basic form is:

- Gathering Music
  - Acclamation
  - Psalm
  - Prayer for the Day
  - Scripture, Story, and Song
  - Intercessory Prayer
  - Blessing
- The Gathering Music is several hymns or songs. Hymns are chosen to awaken our hearts to praise God, to gather the people together, to set a theme for the day or for the liturgy, to anticipate the readings, and to build community. This is also a great way to teach new music to the congregation.
  - The acclamation may be borrowed from Morning Prayer (see pages 75 to 82 in *The Book of Common Prayer*), *Enriching Our Worship* (pages 18 - 21) or may be written for the occasion.
  - The Psalm may be said or sung, read in unison or in parts, chanted or sung as a hymn. Use your imagination!
  - The Collect of the Day, may be from the Book of Common Prayer, or may be written for the particular liturgy. In some cases, a prayer may be written to go with a theme for a conference or camp, and the same prayer may be used each morning. The prayer may be read by one person, may be read in unison by all gathered, or may be “echoed” by the congregation, after each phrase is read by the leader. This is a good place to incorporate some movement.
  - The time of scripture and singing is the heart of the service. It is a dance among scripture and story-telling and singing. There is no necessary number of each. Each piece needs to be related to what comes before and after and to the whole. This is a wonderful setting for trying new ways of opening scripture: Where will the congregation participate? What is God saying at this very moment? Which text of a hymn reinforces or provides tension to a reading of scripture? (Examples on how to tell scripture stories follow in this resource guide.) If *Awake* is used at a conference, and a keynote address is part of it, it could follow this section of the liturgy.
  - Intercessory prayers can be as simple as inviting spontaneous prayers from those gathered, or may use a form that calls us back to the stories we have shared earlier.
  - For the blessing, you might choose to sing together a hymn such as *Peace Before Us* (# 791 in *Wonder, Love, and Praise*). Here is another good place to invite the congregation to use motions. (For this particular song, it’s easy to make up appropriate motions: Peace *before* us, peace *behind* us, peace *under* our feet...).

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**Here is a sample *Awake My Soul!***

Hymns are from *The Hymnal 1982* (H) or *Wonder, Love, and Praise* (WLP)

• **Gathering Music**

- WLP 785      *Santo, santo, santo*  
WLP 797      *It's me, it's me, it's me O Lord*  
WLP 808      *Thuma mina*  
H 438        *Tell out my soul the greatness of the Lord!*

• **Acclamation**

- Leader*      Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead.  
***People***      ***And Christ will shine upon you.***  
*Leader*      Open our lips, O Lord.  
***People***      ***And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.***

• **Psalm**

Psalm 96

• **Prayer for the Day**

The voice of the young is rich with hope and alive with truth. We would hear it, O God, and be wiser. We would cherish the gifts of the children among us and seek to know you in them. Amen.

• **Scripture / Story & Song**

- WLP 757 *Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?*
- John 6:1-15 *Loaves and Fishes* with congregational responses (see page 52)
- WLP 761 *All who hunger gather gladly*
- Isaiah 9:2-4, 6-7 with congregational responses (see page 43)
- H 265 (verses 1-3) *The Angel Gabriel*
- *A Dramatic Reading for Advent* (see page 46)
- H 56 (one verse) *O come, O come Emmanuel*

• **Intercessory Prayer**

Prayers of the People for Advent and Christmas (page 62)

• **Blessing**

*Peace before us* (WLP 791)

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# Leading Congregational Song

*Julia R. Huttar Bailey*

The most important job for a church musician is to help make it possible for the congregation to sing and to worship God.

There are some simple, but important things the music leader can do to support the congregation's singing.

It is important to communicate that everyone is invited to sing, and that they can sing confidently without being afraid of doing something wrong. Congregational singing is not a performance. People need to be encouraged to sing even if they worry that they don't have a good voice or that they can't carry a tune. Welcome people, invite them to sing, and provide a safe, secure way for them to do. Everyone's participation is important.

## **Here are some ideas on how to encourage a community to sing boldly and with confidence.**

- Be a strong leader. Make it clear when it's time for the congregation to sing. So they don't have to guess: give a clear introduction, then a breath (take a breath yourself), and go (the leader should sing too). If you lead with a musical instrument, make sure to leave a full beat of silence between the introduction and the verses. Even if you are leading from the back and can't give visual cues, you can cue the congregation with the "breath." Take care not to leave space between the phrases of an introduction, if it may cause confusion as to whether the introduction is over or not. Be obvious, and be consistent each time.
- If there is an instrumental group playing the accompaniment and you are conducting them, turn to the congregation and give a clear signal to sing. Remember to invite. Remember to welcome. Keep in mind that the instruments *accompany* the congregation.
- Build up the congregation's confidence. When a congregation knows it can count on you to let them know *exactly* when it's time to sing, they won't worry about coming in at the wrong time.
- Be encouraging. Listen for God in the sound of the voices singing. Let it show on your face that you're happy they're singing so beautifully.
- Never play too loud. If the congregation can't hear other people singing, they think, "Why bother?" The sound of the voices is much more important than the sound of the accompanying instrument. Once the singing is confidently launched, let the people go for a verse (or more) without any accompaniment at all. They can hear themselves and know that they are really worshiping through song and not just singing along!
- Don't separate the choir (if there is one) from the congregation. The rehearsed singers can lead better if they are close to the ones who have not rehearsed.

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- Help the choir understand that helping the congregation sing is much more important than their performing the hymns beautifully themselves. Congregational singing, whether hymns or service music or chant, should never be a performance.

**Here are a few tips on introducing new music to the congregation:**

- Teach new music to the children first. Work with the kids in children's choirs or in church school. It is a great way to win over the adults. Adults may think, "if my 8-year-old daughter knows this, it can't be too hard for me!" What an opportunity for children to be leaders and ministers!
- When introducing new service music, choose a setting to use for one season, and make it clear that "this is what we'll use for Lent this year." This helps reduce the anxiety of losing a familiar setting. The congregation knows that you'll go back to the "good old tune" after that fixed period, so they are not so worried about learning the new one. They may come to love the new one, too, of course. If not, fine; don't use it anymore. If it does catch on, bring it out again next year, when it will be welcomed back: "Hey! I know this one!" Gradually it will be introduced into your congregation's comfortable and familiar singing.
- Have a congregational rehearsal from time to time right before the service. This can be a very good way to introduce new hymns or service music.
- Teach new music at a hymn-sing. These special occasions work well for teaching new music. Have a potluck supper first, and then sing. Call for favorites of the singers present, and mix in a few new hymns you want the congregation to learn. Take the time to go over a difficult phrase if it needs a little more work. Have a great time singing together.
- Be patient. If the congregation is used to singing just a few familiar hymns, it will take some time to introduce new music. Giving them too many new songs at once is not the best pastoral approach. Let the congregation know that you are not going to abandon their old favorites.

Our expressions of God's love and of our praise to God must not be limited to what we already know! We must be ready to learn new ways to sing the Lord's song.

**A Few Quick Tips for the Church School Teacher on Leading Music**

1. Don't sell yourself short – you will do just fine. Perfection is not the goal. In any case, it isn't about you; it's about God and the children.
2. Give the starting pitch. (Play it on an instrument if you're using one, or hum the starting note.)
3. Give a good cue to communicate exactly when it's time to start singing. A deep breath works very well.
4. Pick 2 or 3 seasonal hymns that help open the Bible readings you will be exploring, and use them several weeks in a row.
5. Ask the Music Director (or a choir member) to make a tape for the teachers, so they can practice and learn the songs.

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# Hymns for use with children in the congregation

Julia R. Huttar Bailey

*This is by no means a complete list! Almost all on this list will work well even with very young children (pre-readers). In some cases, the verses of the hymns will take a while to learn, but the refrains are quickly accessible.*

## **From *The Hymnal 1982***

- 56 *O Come, O come Emmanuel*
- 99 *God tell it on the mountain*
- 110 *The snow lay on the ground*
- 113 *Oh sleep now, holy baby*
- 114 *'Twas in the moon of wintertime*
- 115 *What child is this?*
- 175 *Hail thee, festival day*
- 178 *Alleluia, Alleluia, sing praise to the risen Lord*
- 187 *Through the Red Sea brought at last*
- 207 *Jesus Christ is risen today*
- 325 *Let us break bread together on our knees*
- 370 (6<sup>th</sup> verse) *Christ be with me*
- 383 *Fairest Lord Jesus*
- 405 *All things bright and beautiful*
- 412 *Earth and all stars*
- 453 *As Jacob with travel was weary one day*
- 473 *Lift high the cross*
- 490 *I want to walk as a child of the light*
- 536 *God has spoken to his people*
- 602 *Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love*
- 648 *When Israel was in Egypt's land*
- 711 *Seek ye first*
- 712 *Dona nobis pacem*

## **From *Wonder, Love, and Praise***

- 756 *Lead me, guide me*
- 764 *Taste and see*
- 784 *Hallelujah! We sing your praises*
- 785 *Santo, santo, santo*
- 787 *We are marching in the light of God*
- 791 *Peace before us*
- 797 *Standin' in the need of prayer*
- 805 *I want Jesus to walk with me*
- 806 *If you believe and I believe*
- 808 *Thuma mina*

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- 809 *We adore you*  
812 *I, the Lord of sea and sky*  
813 *Way, way, way*  
817 *Christ is risen from the dead*  
819 *Guide my feet Lord*  
821 *Glory to God*  
822 *Through North and South*  
827 *O Lord, hear my prayer*  
829 *Laudate Dominum*  
832 *Veni, Sancte Spiritus*  
886 *Glory to you, O Lord*

**From *Lift Every Voice and Sing II***

- 21 *God tell it on the mountain*  
70 *I want Jesus to walk with me*  
74 *Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love*  
91 *Give me Jesus*  
105 *I'm so glad Jesus lifted me*  
114 *Every time I feel the Spirit*  
115 *Spirit of the Living God*  
117 *I'm goin' a sing when the Spirit says sing*  
128 *Hush, hush, somebody's callin' my name*  
136 *I have decided to follow Jesus*  
151 *One bread, one body*  
154 *Taste and see*  
177 *Standin' in the need of prayer*  
194 *Lead me, guide me*  
219 *This is the Day*  
228 *When Israel was in Egypt's land*  
233 *Amen*  
273 *God's love is everlasting*  
275 *Lord, send out your spirit*  
280 *To you, O Lord*

Also good with the ENTIRE congregation, including very young children: almost all of the Taizé Chants (some of which are included in *Wonder, Love and Praise*, #825 – 834). They are repetitive and easy to learn, yet they have some depth to feed the soul.

For another list of Hymns for use with Children, please see the Service Music volume of the accompaniment edition of *The Hymnal 1982*, page 682.

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# The Authority of Generations

Ernesto R. Medina and Michael Cunningham

*The Authority of Generations (AG) is a viable option for congregational decision-making and program development, inclusive of all ages. While it was designed for replacing a congregational committee meeting, it can and has been used for vestry meetings as well as diocesan program groups. We are finding its use flexible to most any church decision making event as it engages the Holy Spirit and asks us simply to listen and respond.*

## ASSUMPTIONS AND DEVELOPMENT

AG has been developed with the following assumptions:

- All persons are created by God and God is already working within them.
- An 8-year-old (any child or youth) has equal access to the life of a church community as does one who is 50 or 60 years of age (any adult).
- The elders of a community have the gift of wisdom and the children of a community have the gift of prophesy. Both gifts must be exercised in the church.
- It is rooted in the liturgical tradition of our church.

The development of AG has come from a combination of influences, including:

- *Children's Charter for the Church*;
- Ojibway Night Prayer;
- Theological Reflection tools from the Education for Ministry Program.

## PROCESS

The heart of AG is relatively simple. Each person in the group will be invited to answer a question about their faith journey. After *each* story is offered, the group will sing a hymn in response to that story.

The question that elicits the stories is flexible. Some examples of the type of question (or task) include:

- Bring a holy object from your home and tell the story about it.
- When was God most present in your life?
- Draw of picture of when you first saw God and share the story.
- When was God most present to you this week?

You are free to create your own question based upon your own knowledge of the group meeting. What must not be compromised, however, is the intentionality about God!

There are two presiders for the process:

**The Weaver:** This person should have basic skills in listening, theological reflection and integration and prayer. The Weaver listens to the stories told by each person and is praying throughout the process. This person welcomes the group and at the end of the story telling and singing weaves all the stories together by articulating all common elements. The Weaver's primary role is to be in prayer so that the weave calls out the prophetic voice which exists in the community.

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**The Discerner of Song:** This person should have basic skills in song leading, listening and prayer. The Discerner of Song listens to each story and prays. After each story is told, this person then discerns which hymn will be sung as a response to that story.

### **The Steps for Authority of Generations**

1. Identify a purpose for the meeting (e.g. planning a year for Christian Education, or Stewardship response, or mission for a church).
2. Call a meeting, allowing about 2 hours (this is based on 8 to 10 people in the group).
3. Gather in a comfortable place.
4. After the group has gathered, the Discerner of Song leads a hymn and the Weaver offers a prayer.
5. A passage from scripture is read.
6. The Weaver asks the God question. Each person in the group (in no particular order) is asked to share their story. The stories are told without comment from the other members of the group. It is usually a good idea for both the Weaver and Discerner of Song to offer their own stories.
7. After each story, the Discerner of Song (who has been praying during the telling of the story) suggests a hymn to be sung by the group. The group then sings.
8. Once all of the stories have been offered, the Weaver (who has been praying and listening carefully to each story) links all the common threads from each of the stories told. It is a good idea to name each person during this weave. It is always all right to take notes so as to help yourself be comfortable with your task. The Spirit works best when not pushed.
9. Allow the group to discuss the experience and what common links they themselves heard or experienced.
10. The Weaver then articulates the purpose for the meeting and listens.
11. If there are children present, they will probably speak first (as long as the adults are not too controlling, but AG supports the release of that control). The ideas the children share should provide a fairly strong foundation and direction for the group. The adults may then, and only then, use their experience to build on the foundation laid. This part of the process usually comes together very quickly.
12. The group sings a final hymn and prays once more.

### **ADDITIONAL NOTES**

- AG may be done with any combination of people, regardless of age. If children are present, there is a higher probability of new and prophetic vision being created. If there are adults only, you will probably experience the building of strong community and ownership to an existing vision.
- AG appears to transcend many cultural barriers.
- The presiders cannot assume an outcome to the meeting! AG allows normal agendas to go out the window and openness to the Holy Spirit and her guidance.

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- We have found that the music is best sung without instrumentation (although drums, tabletops, hands, and feet work great).
  - If, for example, you want to plan a Christian Education Program, you don't have to get all the "Christian Ed people" to have this meeting. Any 8 – 10 people from the congregation (as different as you want them) will be able to develop a program or response.
  - For those of us who have done AG, it is one of the scariest things we have ever done, but the results are worth the time and energy. The process of learning to trust is scary, but we also believe strongly that AG is growing the voice of prophecy in our church, and that of course, is the scariest thing of all.

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## **Making your own Hymn List for use during *Authority of Generations***

A list is created by the Discerner of Song, identifying the hymns they know and feel comfortable leading with the group. Here is a model of a list which may be useful as a starting point since we have attempted to list some of the most familiar and most easily sung hymns from *The Hymnal 1982*. (Please understand that this list is highly subjective).

Have fun creating your own list. You need not limit yourself to *The Hymnal 1982*, of course.

- 8 *Morning has broken*
- 25 *Oh Gracious Light, Lord Jesus Christ*
- 172 *Were you there?*
- 204 *Now the green blade riseth*
- 265 *The Angel Gabriel from heaven came*
- 293 *I sing a song of the saints of God*
- 304 *I come with joy to meet my Lord*
- 324 *Let all mortal flesh keep silence*
- 325 *Let us break bread together*
- 380 *From all that dwell below the skies*
- 383 *Fairest Lord Jesus*
- 390 *Praise to the Lord, the Almighty*
- 400 *All creatures of our God and King*
- 405 *All things bright and beautiful*
- 410 *Praise, my soul, the King of heaven*
- 420 *When in our music God is glorified*
- 433 *We gather together*
- 435 *At the Name of Jesus*
- 437/8 *Tell out, my soul*
- 439 *What wondrous love is this*
- 460 *Alleluia! Sing to Jesus*
- 470 *There's a wideness in God's mercy*
- 473 *Lift high the cross*
- 474 *When I survey the wondrous cross*
- 482 *Lord of all hopefulness*
- 487 *Come my Way, my Truth, my Life*
- 488 *Be thou my vision*
- 490 *I want to walk as a child of the light*
- 493 *O for a thousand tongues to sing*
- 508 *Breathe on me, Breath of God*
- 513 *Like the murmur of the dove's song*
- 529 *In Christ there is no East or West*



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# **The Birth of Authority**

*Ernesto R. Medina*

It was a normal Sunday morning. I had made my way down to St. John's Parish in Costa Mesa without too much traffic. The Rector and members of the congregation had asked me to help them develop a program of education for their children. I had come well prepared, with all my "tools" from my "Christian Education Toolbox."

At the ten o'clock service I was invited to preach. We celebrated Eucharist and I assisted in the administration of the bread. I had given bread out to about six people when I noticed, out of the corner of my eye, a young boy "taking cuts" and making his way up to the altar rail. This boy, who appeared to be about ten, found his way to the rail and extended his hands. I gave him the bread. I had moved down the rail and had given communion to two more people when I heard the boy say, "Excuse me."

I turned to see what it was the boy wanted. He then asked, "What would you do if someone gave you the Holy Grail?"

A bit shocked, I answered, "Can we talk about this after church?" The boy agreed.

After the liturgy, I was outside the narthex greeting people when the boy, Austin, came to me again and said, "Okay, what would you do?"

Not really wanting to put him off, I said, "You know, before our meeting today we are all going to have lunch. Why don't you and I sit together and then we can spend some real time with your question?" He thought that was a great idea.

The entire congregation gathered for lunch. Fortunately, it was the normal kind of church potluck with a generous sampling of delicious dishes. I politely filled my plate and sat down to enjoy lunch.

My wife and I sat down with Austin and his mother. I said to Austin, "You know, I'm not really sure of what you are asking, but what I think I'm hearing is what would I do with holy objects."

Austin said, "Yeah, that's it!" His mother, who had no idea what we were talking about, just looked at us, appearing slightly bewildered. I filled her in on Austin's question.

I began to tell Austin about the holy things in my house. The icon, which is the first thing we place in any house into which we move, the angels which hang in the kids' rooms, the pieces of clay that my wife and I made years ago. I told him that there were stories connected to each piece, and I told him some of those stories.

Now, trying to be the Good Missioner for Christian Education, I said to Austin, "I would like to give you a homework assignment. It will be an assignment that could take you 30 years to complete. Are you interested?"

Austin responded, "Yes!"

I said to him, "Austin, you need to go looking for your Holy Grail, your holy object."

Austin looked me right in the eye and said, "Oh, I already know what that is."

My holy object is the cross my grandmother gave me." His mother looked at both of

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us in shock. Austin went on to tell me about his grandmother and the unconditional love he felt from her. He told me many stories.

If truth be told, this entire interaction did not take more than 15 minutes. But in that short time, we had managed to share some of our most holy moments. It didn't matter that I was ordained and he was lay; that I was an adult and he was a child; that I was brown and he was white; that I didn't know what subjects he was good at in school, and that he didn't know about my kids or hobbies. We had shared the essence of the love which we experience from God. It was very sacred time.

It was at that very moment that "The Authority of Generations" was born.

I asked Austin if he would sit next to me during the meeting with the parish and he agreed.

After lunch, the congregation gathered and I was introduced once again. I looked at the people around the table and said, "I came to this meeting with many tools from my Christian Ed tool box. I came ready to do some serious work with you. But I need to tell you that I have just thrown my plan out the window. Instead, I need to tell you a story." I then shared with them the story of Austin and the Holy Grail.

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# Reflections on the Ministry of the Weaver

*Michael Cunningham*

It is all about breathing.

The process of Weaving, or Theological Reflection, as I practice it and pray it, is a process of discovery, listening, and breathing. My process involves listening intently, and in prayer, to the offerings of the group. I listen for the shifts in actions. This is based upon the premise that in life, human beings move like this:

A does to B. B shifts. B does to A.

The space between the two actions — in the shift or in the gap — is where feelings and thoughts lie. The role of the Weaver is to sense the feelings and thoughts, articulating those thoughts and feelings into words. Those words, when viewed, are most frequently the words we use for the sacred, for the holy, for God, for that which we do not understand, but for which we yearn. When I collect a number of these thoughts and feelings from a number of persons in a group, an image or an issue emerges. The group then works together to articulate this image.

Once the image is created there are five fundamental theological perspectives that immediately apply. They are: Creation, Sin, Judgment, Repentance, and Redemption. Questions like “What is life like here in the world of the image? What causes separation? What surprises you or causes you to look at it with new eyes? What causes a change of heart, or mind, or action? What saves this world?” These questions propel the Theological Reflection into an understanding of the world of the metaphor.

That examination, now understood within the context of Theological Perspective, takes us to the world of our Tradition. Be it the Bible, the Hymnal, the Prayer Book, or our common history, all of these come into view, and frequently a Bible story emerges. Then, the same theological perspectives apply, as do the questions asked to illustrate the perspective. Bring in a dialogue between the World of the Metaphor and the World of Tradition, and then discuss both from a perspective of our culture. And one is left with three critical questions. What do you see? What do you know? What are you going to do about it?

The first question sees our vision as Christians as valid — our prophecy. The second question sees our sense of history and experience as informing us — our wisdom. The third question demands response of us — our ministry.

Theological Reflection is intended, in my mind and practice, as a means to understand and move into the ministry of Jesus Christ. Reflection for the sake of knowing is meaningless without action taken in the name of Jesus.

Breathing for me is prayer, relationship, action, God. It is a combining of listening intently and acting boldly. It is authentic because it is done in relationship, and is not a singular activity. It is very different from breathing in and breathing out. It is A breathes with B. B shifts. B breathes with A.

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# **Examples of the Use of Authority of Generations**

## **The Use of *Authority of Generations* in the Diocese of Pennsylvania**

*Robyn Szoke*

Whenever a congregation is struggling with the awareness that “It is time for a change in curriculum material,” we introduce *Authority of Generations*. Every time *Authority of Generations* has been shared in a congregation, the focus becomes not on the struggle to learn a new material or how to do the most with the least amount of time, but the importance of relationship and spiritual development and providing the best environment and resources.

We have also used *Authority of Generations* with our Diocesan Youth Council and our Bishops to determine program and to envision the mission of the Diocese. *Authority of Generations* has also been experienced during our summer camp, Camp E.L.M.O. The unexpected surprise for us was the amazing sense of community our children and youth (who came from extremely diverse backgrounds) had with each other in worship, play, learning, and ministry. *Authority of Generations* was used to plan the events and schedule for the day as well as a part of the ministry program for the children and youth. Presently, *Authority of Generations* has grown to become a way to do congregational development, to determine the direction of ministry and outreach, and to listen to the voices of all the ages.

## **The Use of *Authority of Generations* in the Diocese of Central New York**

*Nancy Wart*

Probably the most impressive use of *Authority of Generations* is in a prison. This is what three people involved with prison ministry did during their session with inmates:

- They told the inmates that the three of them were prepared to share with the inmates a story about a time when they felt God was present in their lives. The three of them brought objects that represented that time. One was the Weaver and another was a Discerner of Song. They shared their stories and sang songs from a songbook that was used at the prison. After the weaving, an invitation was extended to the inmates. Five out of the twelve inmates said that they would like to share the next week. They brought objects and focused on the same question. They concluded with the weave. It succeeded in building community where little vulnerability is lived. In this case *Authority of Generations* was demonstrated, invitations extended, and the next week the observers became the participants.
- The Program Committee (12 people) of the Diocesan Board used *Authority of Generations* for their planning retreat. We had a ten-year-old child present. We

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brought objects that represented a time when God was most present in our lives. We began with a meditation to open our hearts and minds. We shared our stories and weaved them. Others added their comments. The child could not do that, so she was asked if there was anything she would like to say about God. She made a comment that caught all the adults' attention. Afterwards, we read the Bishop's convention address and focused on his statements about diocesan mission and ministry. We then discussed how what we learned through our stories and weaving connected with the Bishop's address. It gave us some direction, but was more of an affirmation.

- The Program Committee decided to use *Authority of Generations* with the program leaders of the diocese at our annual Program Leaders Day. The day brings together people who serve on diocesan commissions including Children, Stewardship, College, Social and Outreach (JPIC), ECW, and Leadership Development. We asked how God has been working in their particular commission or group. Because there were so many people, we had the commissions break into their own groups to discuss how they would answer the question, and then one person represented the group in the response. The stories were interspersed with song and there was a Weaver. A participant wrote on the evaluation form that he finally realized that a function of the Program Committee was to be a Weaver - to find and be the connecting and common thread in all the commissions.
- The Stewardship Commission (before the Program Leaders Day) decided that a Fall training event would not draw people because the parishes would already have planned their canvas approach and not need more information (especially if parishes were doing year-round stewardship). So the commission decided to offer a prayer day, where stewardship committees could bring their concerns and thanksgivings and offer it up to God. We used *Authority of Generations*. Everyone was to bring an object that represented how God had been working in their lives. We met in a circle with a lit candle. We started with a short meditation and description of the process. We broke into two groups, each with a Weaver and Discerner of Song. At the end of the weave we asked that people think about and write down, "if you and/or your parish stewardship committee were to receive a letter from God, what would it say?" One man in my group shared a flash that came into his mind: "Would you dare put Me first?" We came back together into the large group. Each group was to pick an object (a different object, an object reflecting the weave) and share it with the other group, saying why they picked it. Then we all sat around the lit candle and lifted up to the Lord our prayers and concerns and ended with a song.

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## ***Authority of Generations on a Large Scale***

*Stacy A. Thorpe*

Serving as Vice-Dean of the South Central Deanery in Alaska, I realized the need for a spark to re-ignite our Deanery. With the upcoming annual Deanery meeting, I decided to throw out the traditional two-page agenda, making way for the innovative process of *Authority of Generations*. Having experienced the process myself, I knew once the meeting was turned over to God, miracles would happen!

Tailoring the intimate process to fit my gathering of forty people was my first challenge. Knowing the intensity of the experience and the time involved, the question was whether to break the group into more manageable, smaller groups, or to keep the group as a whole. Keeping the group as a whole meant a major time commitment as well as monumental job for the Weaver, but it also meant the entire group would hear each other's stories, creating cohesiveness and productivity. Although simpler, breaking into smaller groups would lend itself toward formation of small cliques, negating the purpose of the group bonding experience.

Once I had decided to keep the group together, logistics were the next step. How does one facilitate a group of forty, all sharing intimate stories? How do you incorporate breaks, yet keep the continuity? How does one weave together that many stories?

First step, the invitation. When I sent out the notices for the two-day gathering, I requested that each member bring along their most holy, sacred object. When they called to R.S.V.P., I used the opportunity to reiterate the importance of bringing their sacred object. My request was met with eager anticipation. It established a sense of mystery and excitement. This was not going to be one of those typically dry annual Deanery meetings.

We met in an open, oblong shaped room. The chairs were set in one large oval, and a coffee table was placed in the center, to hold the sacred objects. I placed a single vase with fresh budding branches from some trees in the area.

As the Weaver, I was aware of the number of stories we would be hearing. Knowing the importance of personalization, I took discreet notes while each member shared their story. I chose two Discerners of Song to work together during the process. They spent a few minutes to prepare before the meeting, choosing familiar hymns.

Knowing it was essential to have all participants together for the sharing process, I devised a way to ensure time for restroom and stretch breaks, while reconvening in a timely manner. First, we used the song, *We Are One Body*, each time we came together. Second, when we took a break, I gave them the exact time we were to reconvene, using an odd time: 10:18, 1:42, etc. At that exact time, I would award an "on-time" prize to the "winner" chosen from those present. Gifts were brightly wrapped, and the winner could choose from the drawing basket. (Gifts were inexpensive items found at a Christian bookstore: bookmarks, mints, window decals, etc.) Everyone was so eager to win that we *never* had a latecomer. This helped establish the continuity of the meeting, and mutual respect.

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When it came to the actual sharing, the depth of the stories was amazing. We had a wide range of participants, from teens to seventies, ordained and lay. There were tears and laughter, and deep compassion. I was not prepared for the flood of tears — tears of joy, tears of sadness and tears of memories. With no Kleenex in the room, we had to resort to rolls of toilet paper. The two rolls were continually in motion. We were truly becoming one body.

We began at 9:00 a.m., and spent six hours sharing our stories. It was difficult to convince folks to take breaks, as the intensity and interest were running very high. Other than short bathroom breaks, we only took a 45-minute lunch. When we finished up in the afternoon, I chose to give the group some reflection time before the final Weave. We broke for an hour. During the break, I spent the time looking over my notes, studying the sacred objects that had been left on the table. When that hour was up, participants were eager to come together. As I wove the stories by memory, through generations, experiences and geographies, I was careful to handle each item from the table, presenting it to the group. I continually walked within the circle during my weave. The physical contact with the individual items brought back the initial emotion of the sharing experience. This created an entirely new group reaction. By the end of the weave, raw emotions and pure awe were enveloping the room. This set the tone for the following day's continuation of business.

One of the greatest outcomes of this meeting was that barriers were dissolved — unknown, invisible barriers between individuals and congregations. When the group was asked about our Deanery's greatest need, "Communication" was the prevalent answer — communication with each other and between the congregations. It was then that God offered us a miraculous solution. We decided to create a quarterly, or semi-annual, rotating schedule of all priests in the South Central Deanery, having the priests rotate churches on the same Sunday. This would give the priest of the small congregation the opportunity to preside over the large congregation, and vice-versa. This would also enable congregants to be exposed to the different styles and personalities of preaching without leaving the "safety" of their own church. It would welcome diversity. The Deanery reaction to the idea was overwhelmingly affirmative! The response to the entire process of the meeting is still topic of conversation in the Deanery today.

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# The Episcopal Rosary for Children

*Julia R. Huttar Bailey*

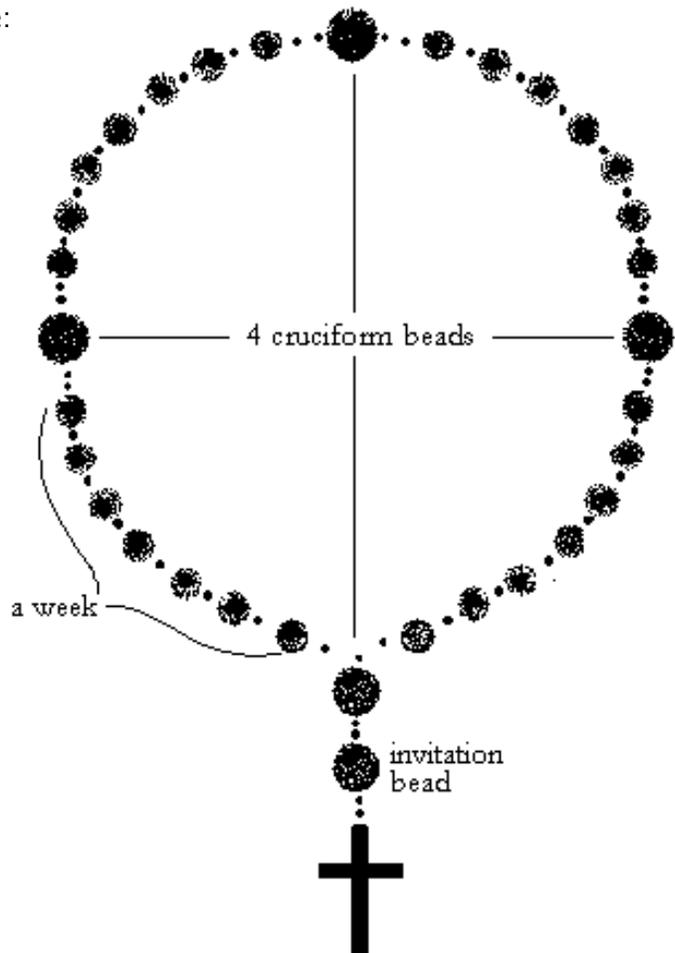
Sometimes when I pray, I like to use the Episcopal Rosary. As I go through the circle of beads, I can concentrate better while I touch each bead, and my mind doesn't wander so much. And as I repeat a phrase, chanting or speaking, I notice that I am able to listen for God's voice in a way that's not as easy when I'm trying to think up the words to say, or even reading a prayer.

Here is a little bit about the way the beads are arranged for the Episcopal Rosary, and some examples of how you might pray with it. You may also make up your own prayers and your own ways to use the beads. There is no wrong way to do it! God is happy you're praying!

Here's what the Episcopal Rosary looks like:

There are 33 beads and a cross that make up the Rosary (not including the little spacer beads). Prayers begin with the **Cross**, then move to the **Invitation Bead**. The next bead, along with the other three beads around the circle that are just like it, make up the **4 Cruciform Beads**. In between those are sets of seven beads. These are called the **Weeks** (like seven days in a week).

When you pray, pick one prayer (or chant) for the Cross, another for the Invitation Bead, another for the first Cruciform Bead, then another one that is said (or chanted) seven times. Next, repeat the prayer (or chant) you have chosen for the Cruciform Beads, and continue this way around the circle and back down through the Invitation Bead to the Cross.



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Here are some samples of the prayers:

## A Rosary for ADVENT

### The Cross

*The Magnificat* (use the refrain)

*Refrain*

My soul mag - ni - fies the Lord, and my spi - rit re -  
joi - ces in God, for he has done great things, the  
might-y one has done great things, and his name is ho - ly.  
*Fine*

*D.C. al Fine*

1. God has looked on my low - li - ness, I will be called blessed.—
2. God has scat - tered the rich, but filled the hun - gry with good things.—
3. God has shown from age to age. mer - cy to his own.—

By Susan K. Bock, copyright © Susan K. Bock, 1982

### Invitation Bead *A Taizé chant*

*Prepare the way of the Lord,  
prepare the way of the Lord,  
and all people shall see  
the salvation of our God.*

### Cruciform Beads *Hymn 56, refrain*

*Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

### The Weeks

Come, Lord Je - sus, come.

Julia R. Huttar Bailey

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## A Rosary for LENT

**The Cross** *Hymn 473, refrain*  
*Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim*  
*Till all the world adore his sacred name.*

**Invitation Bead** *spoken*  
*The Lord is full of compassion and love. O come let us adore him.*

### Cruciform Beads



*the tune is an Ojibway lullaby*

### The Weeks



*(God bless Courtney, God bless Michael, God bless Melissa...) With a group, use one the name of one person in the group for each bead, going around the circle and repeating if there are fewer than 28 of you!*

*If you are praying alone, use the names of your family and friends, or others you for whom you pray.*

## A Rosary for EASTER

**The Cross** *Hymn 207 (first verse)*  
*Jesus Christ is Risen today, Alleluia! Our triumphant holy day, Alleluia!*  
*Who did once upon the cross, Alleluia! Suffer to redeem our loss, Alleluia!*

**Invitation Bead** *spoken*  
Leader: Alleluia! Christ is risen.  
People: *The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!*

**Cruciform Beads** *Wonder, Love and Praise 784 (refrain)*  
*Hallelujah! We sing your praises! All our hearts are filled with gladness!*  
*Hallelujah! We sing your praises! All our hearts are filled with gladness!*

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**The Weeks**



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

Julia R. Huttar Bailey

**A Rosary for BEDTIME**

**The Cross** *spoken*  
The Lord's Prayer

**Invitation Bead** *spoken, or sing Hymn S 102*  
*Holy God, Holy and Mighty,*  
*Holy Immortal One, have mercy upon me (us).*

**Cruciform Beads** *spoken*  
*Holy Spirit, guard me while I sleep.*

**The Weeks** *spoken*  
*Jesus Christ, Son of God, bless \_\_\_\_\_.*

Use a different name for each bead.  
Or if you prefer, pick seven names and repeat them for each "week."

**A Rosary of Praise to God**

**The Cross** *Wonder, Love and Prase 785*  
*Santo, santo, santo, mi corazon te adora!*  
*Mi corazon te sabe decir: santo eres Señor.*

or

*Holy, holy, holy, my heart, my heart adores you!*  
*My heart is glad to say the words: you are holy, Lord.*

**Invitation Bead** *A Taizé chant*  
*Come and fill our hearts with your peace,*  
*You alone O Lord are holy,*  
*Come and fill our hearts with your peace, Alleluia!*

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**Cruciform Beads**                    *spoken*  
*Be joyful in the Lord, all you lands;  
Serve the Lord with gladness,  
and come before his presence with a song!*

**The Weeks**                                *this is Latin for "We adore you, Lord God."*



A - do - ra - mus te, Do - mi - ne.

Julia R. Huttar Bailey

**An ACTS Rosary:**  
Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication

**The Cross**                                *spoken*  
*Jesus said, "I am the light of the world;  
whoever follows me will not walk in darkness,  
vbut will have the light of life."*

**Invitation Bead**                        *Wonder, Love and Praise 814*  
*Jesus Christ, Son of God,  
make yourself known through me.*

**Cruciform Beads**                        *A Taizé chant; Wonder, Love and Praise 827*  
*O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer,  
When I call, answer me.*  
*O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer,  
Come and listen to me.*

**For the first "week"** (Adoration)

On each bead, name something wonderful about God. (example: God is loving, God made the world...)

**For the second "week"** (Confession)

On each bead, tell God something you did that you wish you hadn't done, or something you didn't do, but wish you had done.

**For the third "week"** (Thanksgiving)

On each bead, tell God something you are thankful for.

**For the fourth "week"** (Supplication)

On each bead, say a prayer asking God for something, either for yourself or someone else. (example: Please keep my friend safe as she travels tomorrow.)

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# Preparing a Space for Liturgy

*Jim Sims*

## I. Designing Liturgical Space

There is really no secret to designing liturgical space: pray and play. Open yourself to the power of the Holy Spirit, and enjoy where the Spirit leads you. Work with what you have. Use the Word and nature as the sources for inspiration and supplies. My friend Michael Cunningham says, "Show up, pay attention, tell the truth, and do not become attached to the results." This advice provides me all I need to make decisions regarding the space, to discern how the space speaks of God's presence, and to help release my investment in the design. Let me break these three areas open for you.

- 1) **Making decisions:** Through prayer and spirit we are all dancers, artists, musicians, sculptors and co-creators with God. Believe this. Your resources are people and nature. Involve clergy, laity, and dreamers, especially children and artisans.
- 2) **Discerning how the space speaks of God's presence:** Is this clearly God's space? How does the space relate to people? How do you feel in the space? Is it clear that the space needs people to be complete? Where are the lines of sight? Can we see and hear each other and our leaders? Some important elements of the space are our symbols: the table or altar, the cross, and the font. Strive for simple beauty. Duke Ellington said, "If it sounds good [or looks good] it is good." Pay attention to lighting. Dramatic things are accomplished with canned spotlights and candles.
- 3) **Releasing investment in the design:** This piece is critical to embracing creative flow and allowing the full participation of all involved. It is our nature to be proud of our work, especially when we feel God has used us and Spirit has flowed through us and enriched our hearts and lives. Yet we know there is a fine line between honoring what is holy and falling into idolatry. I urge you to release your attachments to your own creations and your creating. God is speaking through us and to us. May we remain unencumbered and ready to respond in new ways.

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## II. Liturgical Road Kit

- 30' tape measure
- Scissors
- Sharpie
- Black magic marker
- Duct tape
- Clear packaging tape and dispenser
- Razor knife
- Screw gun & various screws
- Glue gun & glue sticks
- AC kit:
- 100' 12/2 with ground extension cord
- 25' 12/2 with ground extension cord
- Adapter plug
- Fishing line (10#, 60#, 150#)
- Coat Hangers (wire)
- Pliers (vise grips)
- Fused plug strip
- Jigsaw
- Saw blades
- Drill bits
- Screws, nails & tacks
- Large trash bags
- Fabric (seasonal): hangings, streamers, altar cloths
- Paper towels

## III. Recipe for a Font

### Ingredients

1 vinyl pond liner (found at home supply stores and garden supply shops)

1 pump (same)

Plants, turf, flowers, cat tails, etc.

Several large rocks and side of road gravel

### Process

1. Find a level area, preferably close to an electrical outlet. Arrange "sides" of your font/pool, being careful to allow enough excess liner to lap over the "sides". Sides can be made of cinder blocks, logs, cross ties, etc. Rolls of indoor/outdoor carpet may be used. As always, use your imagination and whatever is at hand.
2. Secure the excess liner so that it does not slip into the pool once you start filling.
3. Fill the pool with water. Use the pump to create the aural reminder of our Baptism. Water running over rocks has a beautiful chuckling sound, and the volume can be increased or decreased.
4. Create your garden!

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## IV. Recipe for an Aluminum Cross

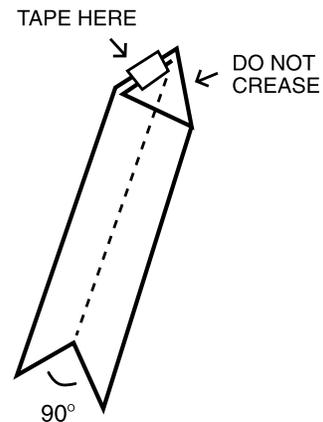
### Ingredients

- 1 roll of 12" aluminum roof flashing (at least 20 feet. You won't use it all but you need extra for practice)
- 1 roll clear packaging tape (2" width)
- 1 pair heavy scissors or metal shears
- 1 tape measure

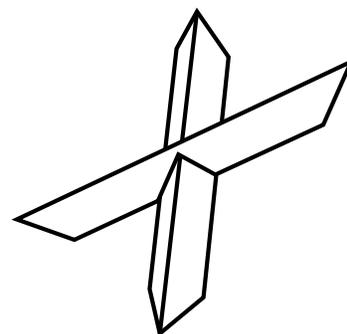
### Process

1. Determine the size of the cross you want. Equilateral is nice, but a longer vertical works also. I suggest 48" or 36" for this width of aluminum.
2. Cut 2 pieces to length desired and set aside.
3. Rehearsal. My policy is try everything on a small scale before you begin on the real thing. Cut two 24-inch pieces. Take one and begin to fold it in half, joining the sides, not the ends. Use the edge of a table and gradually bend the metal to about a 90-degree angle. If you bend it too far it will break.
4. Take the two corners of one end and bend one corner over the other. Do not crease! Secure with clear packaging tape. Repeat this step on the other three ends of the 2-foot practice pieces.
5. Now is the tricky part... You must notch one of the 2-foot pieces so that the other will rest in it. The difficulty is the angle of the notch cut on either side of the notched piece. I am certain that there is a formula to determine this distance but with practice you can get close enough. At this point the rehearsal is over and you are ready to do the real thing. Take your long pieces that you laid aside at the beginning of this project and try to get it right this time!
6. Suspend with fishing line and clean with spray cleaner designed for aluminum.

FOLDING 4 ENDS



SIDE VIEW



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**Models for use  
during the Liturgy  
of the Word**

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## Collects

*These were written in response to the Children's Charter for the Church.*

Ever-Giving God, whose heart overfull has given us birth and made us your own; Chart us a course to follow together that leads to the fullness of life. Through Christ, in the Spirit, we pray. Amen.

You have trusted us, God, with the care of our young, so they might thrive, and live free and strong. Help us to nurture them, guard them and serve them, and to follow their lead in the path of true life; through Christ, in the Spirit, we pray. Amen.

The voice of the young is rich with hope and alive with truth. We would hear it, O God, and be wiser. We would cherish the gifts of the children among us and seek to know you in them. Amen.

God of the ages, creator of all, the map of your future lies in our hearts. Give us the courage to unfold it and follow, and to bring all your world into joy. Through Christ, in the Spirit, we pray. Amen.

*The leader may invite the congregation to repeat each phrase:*

Ever-Giving God, *(Ever-Giving God,)*

whose heart overfull has given us birth *(whose heart overfull has given us birth)*  
and made us your own; *(and made us your own;)*

Chart us a course to follow together *(Chart us a course to follow together)*  
that leads to the fullness of life. *(that leads to the fullness of life.)*

Through Christ, *(Through Christ,)*

in the Spirit, *(in the Spirit,)*

we pray. *(we pray.)* Amen.

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# Readings

## The Story of Creation

*Read with a drumbeat "behind" the words; the rhythm can change anywhere, along with the volume and tempo. Each time the reader says "so good," the congregation echoes it.*

In the beginning, there was nothing but water,  
deep and cold, deep and cold.  
With a blanket of darkness stretched all across,  
and a wind moaning over it all.  
In the beginning, before God spoke,  
there was only this dark, cold void.

Let there be light! God said, and there was,  
and it was... so good! *(So good!)*  
The light split the night,  
and the first day was made.  
And a dome, that God called "Sky,"  
to hold the waters, safe in their places,  
above and below, so good! *(So good!)*

By God's command, there appeared dry land,  
to push the waters together.  
The land was called Earth,  
the waters were Seas,  
and strolling the shores, God was pleased.

Then God told the Earth to put forth seeds,  
and plants and fruits and trees.  
And she did!  
She turned the whole world green,  
and juicy, and fragrant, and moist.

On the fourth day, God spoke to the Sky,  
and called for a Sun to rule the day,  
and a Moon to gently guard the night.  
And stars were set shining,  
and shooting and falling,  
for guiding and gazing.  
And it was all so good! *(So good!)*

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Let there be creatures!, said God, that fly,  
and swim and lumber and crawl,  
And there were, and it was... so good!

*(So good!)*

So God blessed them, blessed them all.  
Saying, Fill up the Earth,  
and the Sky, and the Seas!  
And they did. God was pleased.

Then God said, let us make people,  
in the image of Us!  
In our likeness, a woman and man.  
They shall be stewards of all this creation,  
and they shall make children,  
whose children make children,  
and good it shall be, so good! *(So good!)*

So God spoke, and blew breath,  
and people were made,  
and given the care of the Earth  
which God said would feed them.  
And God blessed them; it pleased him.  
God smiled at the goodness.  
So good! *(So good!)*

God saw all that had come to be,  
and was pleased at the land and sky and sea,  
And the life that they swarmed with,  
and the noise it all made, and the  
color and rhythm and song.

So God sat down for a well-deserved rest,  
and with a contented sigh,  
and a heart full of pleasure,  
said, This is so good! *(So good!)*

This is so very, very good!  
This is so good! *(So good!)*

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*In the following example, the biblical text is mostly intact, with some paraphrasing, and takes advantage of the dialogue by having two readers take on the characters.*

## **Abraham Bargains with God      Genesis 18:17-32**

### **Lord**

Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, seeing that Abraham shall become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?  
Shall I keep my plan hidden?

*(silence)*

No, I won't hide my thoughts from Abraham, whom I love. I have chosen him, that he may charge his children and his household after him to keep the way for the Lord – MY way — by doing righteousness and justice; so that I the LORD may bring about for Abraham all that I have promised him.

*(turning to Abraham)*

Abraham, listen to me. How great is the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah and how very, very grave their sin. I must go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me, and if not, I will know.

### **Abraham**

My heart is heavy, my Lord. Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will you then sweep away the place and not forgive it for the fifty righteous who are in it? I can't believe you would do such a thing. So far be that from you. Shall not the Judge of the earth do what is just?

### **Lord**

If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will forgive the whole place for their sake. I AM GOD.

### **Abraham**

Let me take it upon myself to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking? Will you destroy the whole city for the lack of five? Lord, I'm speaking to you.

### **Lord**

I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there.

### **Abraham**

How about forty?

### **Lord**

For the sake of forty I will not do it.

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**Abraham**

Oh, don't be angry if I speak. Again, I mean. Suppose *thirty* are found there?

**Lord**

(Not likely.) I will not do it if I find thirty there.

**Abraham**

Suppose twenty are found there?

**Lord**

For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it.

**Abraham**

O Lord, do not be angry if I speak just one more time. Suppose just ten are found there?

**Lord**

For the sake of ten I will not destroy it.

arranged by Caroline S. Fairless and Michael Cunningham

*As a model for storytelling, this example shows how a commonly known refrain can provide for congregational participation and also engage the congregation in the story.*

## **The Call of Samuel**

A long, long time ago, in a town far away, lived a woman named Hannah. A beautiful woman, how could she not be beautiful with such a name... Hannah.

Hannah was one of the lucky ones in those days. She loved God. Oh how she loved God. She spent her days in prayer, thanking God for all her gifts.

- *The congregation sings the refrain, "Here I am, Lord, is it I Lord?..." (WLP 812), or another appropriate refrain.*

Of course she loved God. Who wouldn't? Hannah had everything. Or at least that's what you'd think.

Hard to imagine how she could possibly love with a heart any bigger than the one she already had, but that would happen. You see, Hannah's heart was breaking. And if it were to come back together at all, as with all broken hearts, it would come back bigger. You see, the very thing that Hannah wanted above all else, was the only thing she didn't have.

Ah. Don't give me that. It's always the case that whatever it is that we don't have is the very thing we want. Hannah was old and getting older. That's not how she'd have

---

put it, but that was the reality. Hannah was getting old, and what she wanted was not something she was likely to get - each day that went by she was less likely to get it - Hannah wanted a baby. But Hannah was barren.

She was in good company, that's for sure. Sarah, Rebekkah, Rachel, don't you ever wonder if it was something in the water down there in those infamous wells?

Water, no water. The fact was, Hannah was barren and there was no baby.

So, what do you think Hannah did? Well, she cried a lot. She'd go to the temple and cry. Cried so hard, in fact, that Eli the Temple Priest thought she'd been drinking, but she hadn't.

O Lord I am so miserable. I am old. I have no child. If only you would give me a child, Lord, I would give him to serve you night and day in the temple.

She called that a prayer? That's not what it sounded like at all. Old fool woman was drunk, and I didn't need her hanging out with her crying ways in the temple.

• *Congregation repeats refrain*

Well, whether it was the sweetness of her prayers or an act of grace or a divine plan or simply an act of whimsy, doesn't matter really. Hannah conceived and she grew and she was filled with joy.

Hannah bore a son, and she named that boy Samuel, and as she had promised, when he came of age, she gave him to serve God in the temple, day and night. Nobody asked me if I wanted him in there. That boy meant trouble for me, I could smell it. There's more than one prophet in this place, if you ask me, which of course nobody is, I already said that.

One night, deep in the heart of the night, while Eli slept and Samuel slept, a voice came to the boy.

SAMUEL. SAMUEL. I AM CALLING YOU.

Samuel thought it was old blind Eli, calling out from a dream, or from a terror of the night, and he went running to him. Did you call, my master?

No, I didn't call. Why would I call, whatever is it I need that you think you could supply? That's arrogance — the arrogance of youth and don't tell me otherwise — I was young once, too, you may or may not remember — Samuel went back to his mat, but later in the night came a voice.

SAMUEL. SAMUEL. DO YOU HEAR ME SAMUEL?

Samuel thought it was old blind Eli, calling out from a dream, or from a terror of the night, and he went running to him. Did you call, my master?

No, I did not. I may be old, but I'm not stepping aside yet. Boy thinks I don't know what he's up to. Well, I've been around a while, and I've got news for him; Go back to your mat. Samuel did.

A third time, in night's deepest moment,  
SAMUEL. SAMUEL. My child. My beloved.

And to Eli. IT'S TIME. My child, my beloved.

---

Samuel ran to Eli. Did you call, my Master.

Samuel, God calls you, not I. Go back to your mat. When you hear God again, say this: Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening. I said those words, once, a long time ago. My memory is dim. Such a long time it's been — I am old, my time is near.

When God spoke again, Samuel did as his master had instructed.

Speak, Lord. Your servant is listening, but the words he heard were hard words.

I AM ABOUT TO DO SOMETHING IN ISRAEL THAT WILL MAKE BOTH EARS OF ANYONE WHO HEARS IT TINGLE. ON THAT DAY I WILL FULFILL AGAINST ELI ALL THAT I HAVE SPOKEN CONCERNING HIS HOUSE, FROM BEGINNING TO END.

Samuel lay there until morning.

- *Congregation repeats refrain*

He'd have been happy to lie there indefinitely. No desire at all to tell me those hard words that God spoke to him. Not that I blame him. I've not been the easiest of masters. I will help him.

Samuel, come. Tell me all that God told you. Leave nothing out. May God do so to you and more also, if you hide anything from me. I am not afraid. You needn't fear me, only God.

Samuel told Eli the words God had told him.

- *Congregation repeats refrain*

As Samuel grew up, the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was a trustworthy prophet of the Lord.

arranged by Caroline S. Fairless

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**Isaiah 9:2-4, 6-7** from the Propers for Christmas Eve

*This is an interactive reading. The congregation is invited and encouraged to respond with the directions in the right hand column. Please do the things that are in ITALICS. Please say those things that are in **bold**.*

The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
those who lived in a land of deep darkness —  
on them has the light shined.

*polite applause*

**Oh no!**

**Oh Good!** *loud applause*

You have multiplied the nation,  
you have increased its joy;  
they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest,  
as people exult when dividing plunder.

**Yes!**

**Yes!**

**Rejoice! Right on! Yeah!**

For the yoke of their burden,  
and the bar across their shoulders,  
the rod of their oppressor  
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

**Oh!** *as if in pain*

**Oh!** *as if in pain*

**Oh!** *as if in pain*

**Oh Good!** *loud applause*

For a child has been born for us,  
a son given to us;  
authority rests upon his shoulders;  
and he is named  
Wonderful Counselor,  
Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father,  
Prince of Peace.

**Yes!**

**Yes!**

**Relief!**

**Wonderful Counselor**

**Mighty God**

**Everlasting Father**

**Prince of Peace**

His authority shall grow continually,  
and there shall be endless peace.

**Higher and Higher**

**God's peace!**

He will establish and uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness  
from this time forth forevermore.  
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

**Yes!**

**Yes!**

**Thank you God!**

*loud applause*

arranged by Ernesto R. Medina

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**██████████**

## Isaiah 61:1-3

*At the end of each phrase the congregation is invited to say the words in bold.*

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,	<b>grace</b>
because the Lord has anointed me;	<b>chosen</b>
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,	<b>Gospel</b>
to bind up the brokenhearted,	<b>heal</b>
to proclaim liberty to the captives,	<b>release</b>
and release to the prisoners;	<b>freedom</b>
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor,	<b>blessing</b>
and the day of vengeance for our God;	<b>power</b>
to comfort all who mourn;	<b>embrace</b>
to provide for those who mourn in Zion— to give them a garland instead of ashes,	<b>gift</b>
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,	<b>birth</b>
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.	<b>strength</b>
They will be called oaks of righteousness,	<b>creation</b>
the planting of the Lord, to display his glory.	<b>forever</b>

arranged by Ernesto R. Medina and Caroline S. Fairless

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*Dividing a reading into more than one voice can help the listener to hear it anew. Some of the prophetic and poetic readings are especially suitable for this model.*

*To adapt a reading, listen to the reading or write it out. Ask yourself questions such as a) Where do I hear a different voice? b) Do I hear more than one voice at a time? c) Are the voices coming from one location or from different places? Break the reading down and assign parts.*

### **Zephaniah 3:14-18**

*This is prepared as a three-voice reading.*

V1: Sing!  
V2: Sing!  
V3: Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion!

V1: Shout!  
V2: Shout!  
V3: Shout! O Israel!

ALL: Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem

V1: The Lord has taken away the judgments against you,  
ALL: he has turned away your enemies.

V2: The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst;  
ALL: you shall fear disaster no more.

V3: On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:  
ALL: Do not fear, O Zion, do not let your hands grow weak.

V2: The Lord, your God  
ALL: is in your midst;

V2: a warrior who  
ALL: gives victory;

V2: he will rejoice over you  
ALL: with gladness,

V2: he will renew you  
ALL: in his love;

V2: he will exult over you  
ALL: with loud singing as on a day of festival.

*(Pause)*

ALL: The Word of the Lord.

arranged by Ernesto R. Medina

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## A Dramatic Reading For Advent

*Luke 1:24-27 may be read prior to this dramatic interpretation.*

*The presenters are not aware of each other and speak to the congregation. It is most effective for the presenters to come in “on top of each other’s lines” so that the lines tumble and are sometimes concurrent. Their movements may be choreographed so that they move across the entire presentation area and finish either back to back or facing each other. Our presenters ended by reaching toward each other and just barely touching each other’s hand.*

*It is important for Mary to be very anguished in contrast to Elizabeth’s elation.*

*Elizabeth* (Happily) They say you should be careful what you pray for!

*Mary* (With obvious anguish) They say you should be careful what you pray for.

*Elizabeth* For years we have prayed for a child, Zechariah and me.

*Mary* For years, I have prayed for the deliverance of Israel. But I didn’t mean like this!

*Elizabeth* I can’t be having a baby!

*Mary* I’m hardly more than a baby myself, but this much I know: a girl can’t get pregnant without the help of a man.

*Elizabeth* But here I am, (*touching the roundness of her belly*) as certainly pregnant as anyone could be!

*Mary* But here I am, pregnant! What will people think?

*Elizabeth* I know what they’ll think. “Elizabeth?! We thought she was too old!”

*Mary* And the terrible things they’ll call me...

*Elizabeth* Long have they called me barren! But God has remembered me and lifted my shame. \*The angel said — was there really an angel?

*Mary* \*The angel said — was there really an angel?

*(These two lines — Elizabeth’s and Mary’s identical lines — could be synchronized.)*

*Elizabeth* Gabriel was his name, and he said this child will be filled with God’s spirit, even in my womb. He certainly is lively in there, and he’s filled me with such life. And hope. Hope for us all. (*Pause*) His name will be John.

*Mary* His name will be Jesus.

*Elizabeth* He will be great, and will prepare the way for the Messiah!

*Mary* He will be great, and save our people from their sins. But who will save *me* from the wrath of the rabbis?!

*Elizabeth* (*In an uplifted, heaven-looking posture*) I’ve always said, Lord, there’s nothing you can’t do!

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*Mary* (In a more prayerful, thoughtful posture) I've always said there's nothing you can't do. So, please, Lord, help me now.

*Elizabeth* I have to talk to someone!

*Mary* What am I going to do? Who can I tell?

*Elizabeth* He never was much of a talker, my Zechariah. But now he's speechless. Claims he can't talk. The angel made him mute. Likely story!

*Mary* I must go and see my cousin. Only, please, Elizabeth, don't condemn me!

*Elizabeth* Mary! I could talk to her. She's young and hasn't waited so long! She probably believes in angels! Only, please, Mary, don't laugh. But I want to laugh!

*Mary* (Just a bit more hopeful) Yes, I can talk to her.

*Elizabeth* And shout, and sing. I'd dance if I could!

*These lines need to really topple over each other:*

*Mary* Please, Elizabeth...

*Elizabeth* Please, Mary...

*Mary* I'm so afraid...

*Elizabeth* Don't laugh...

*Mary* Don't condemn me.

*Elizabeth* And come soon!

*Mary* Please.

*Elizabeth* Please.

*The Magnificat may be read or sung here.*

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## The Good Shepherd

Once there was someone who said such amazing things — and did such wonderful things — that people began to follow him. And the more they followed him, and heard the amazing things that he said, and saw the wonderful things that he did, the more they wondered who he really was.

And they heard him say:

I am the good shepherd. I know each of my sheep by their names, and they know me by the sound of my voice. And when I call them, they follow me. I take them to where there is good, green grass. And I take them to where there is cool, clear water. And I even show them the way through the dark places. They follow me, because they know my voice, and they know that I care for them. Even if they are afraid, they have courage, because they know that I go before them, to show them the way.

In the evening, I lead my sheep back to the safety of the sheepfold. And I count them, to make sure that all are safe. If even one of my sheep is missing, I will go anywhere to find that sheep. I will look in the good green grass... I will look by the cool, clear water... and I will even go again into the dark places looking for my sheep.

And when I find that sheep, I will be so happy. I will not scold or yell, but I will take care of any hurt places, and I will pick up my sheep, and carry that sheep all the way home, even if my sheep is very heavy.

And when all my sheep are safe in the sheepfold, my heart will be full of joy. But I cannot rejoice all alone. I will call all my friends and neighbors, and we will have a great feast.

There is also an ordinary shepherd. The ordinary shepherd helps out with the sheep when the Good Shepherd is away. The ordinary shepherd wants to do a good job, but it is difficult because the ordinary shepherd doesn't know all the sheep by name, and they don't know his voice. When he calls them, they scatter. And when the wolf comes, the ordinary shepherd runs away, for the sheep do not really belong to him. But the Good Shepherd will stand between the wolf and the sheep, and the Good Shepherd will even give his life for the sheep.

I wonder. . . how many sheep can fit in the sheepfold?

I wonder. . . what their names are.

I wonder. . . if you have ever heard the Good Shepherd call your name?

Sources:

Psalm 23; Ezekiel 34:11-16; Matthew 18:10-14; Luke 15:3-7; John 10:1-18

Sofia Cavalletti et al, *The Good Shepherd and the Child: A Joyful Journey* (New Rochelle, NY: Don Bosco Multimedia, 1994).

Sonja M. Stewart and Jerome W. Berryman, *Young Children and Worship* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989).

Re-told by Lydia Huttar Brown (training 1985 with Sonja Stewart and Collette DeNooyer at Western Theological Seminary, Holland Michigan)

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## Jesus and the Children

from Mark 10

*To be memorized, and told in story form.*

It's not all sweetness and light, you know, that other world to which children can take us, if we'll let them. But it's true, and deep, and deeply good. It takes a lot of courage to go there, but it's well worth it. Because there, the so-called "impossible" can be believed, and the truth can be whispered into your ear, and a soft, small touch can heal you.

How do you get there? Well, it's easiest if you start somewhere down here, below knee-level. [*Here the storyteller may get down on the floor and stay until the tiresome adult makes him get up!*] Then, you just gaze into the clearness of their eyes, and you'll find your way.

One day, Jesus was all tangled up with some children, laughing, wrestling, cuddling. Drinking up their delicious simplicity. Storing up hugs for that long, lonely road that seemed to lay ahead of him. When SUDDENLY, he is assaulted by a very *grown-up* adult.

Pushy! Intense! Deadly serious!

And hell-bent on "getting it right". Adults, you know, are very intent on "getting it right." Which is the exact right combination of *trying very hard*, and *not risking much at all*.

Reluctantly, Jesus shifts his attention to the serious, adult world that is pressing in all around him, and kneeling right there in front of him.

"You want to talk scripture? Theology? *Exegesis*? OK. We'll talk. But, if you want to know what's important and true, here [*gesturing at your feet*] are your very best teachers."

Only, the rich young man doesn't even see the children, so captivated is he by his own agenda. Which is all the more urgent, you see, because it's *his*. And he is, well, he is an ADULT, after all.

See Me! Hear Me! He demands of Jesus. *Engage* me in meaningful, stimulating, *adult* conversation. But, for God's sake, don't frighten me off with anything like the truth.

While Jesus is quoting scripture to him, "Well, you know, you shall not murder, or steal, or...", he is seeing right through him. Seeing how hard he's tried, for so long. Seeing how old and tired his young soul is already. With the speed of light, he knows him. And he loves him. He *loves* him. Go figure.

Jesus is struck with a sudden, profound affection for this man. And so, while he could've, perhaps should've tried to reel him in, slowly, with strategy, and logic. Instead, as ingenuous as the kids still playing at his feet, he offers him a heartfelt of love.

"Why don't you come with me? Come with us!"

"Your money?"

"Well (*pondering, and then, excitedly, innocently*) you could give it away! You won't be needing it anyway. Listen, this is an adventure that money can't buy!"

As he watches the man slump and sputter away, his own heart falls and aches not just a little. And then he sees the children, who are listening hard, and watching closely,

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like they do. So he kneels and gathers them close. And as their hands are caressing his face, wondering at his “old” skin, so different from theirs, like children do, he closes his eyes and gives thanks that all the precious truth of heaven has been given to such as them.

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*Some readings lend themselves well to visuals. Listen to the story and identify three to five “pictures” you would like to see. Gather a number of people who will help in sharing the story. Ask one person to read the story while the listeners begin to “see” the pictures in their minds. Read the story again, pausing at your identified points, while they “freeze” into each picture, taking on characters and poses to reflect the reading (this should not take more than 10 to 15 minutes). Give permission to exaggerate expressions. They become a collection of living pictures that can now be shared with the congregation.*

*When the reading occurs during worship, the congregation is asked to close and open their eyes at the sound of a bell, so that their eyes are closed when listening to the reader, and then opened to see each “living picture.” After 6 seconds, the bell is rung again, which signals the congregation to once again close their eyes, and the reader continues until reaching the next visual point in the story.*

## **Living Pictures      Mark 10:13-16**

*Reader introduces the reading to the congregation in these or other words:*

I invite you to close your eyes to hear this reading. Several times, you will be invited to open your eyes to behold a living picture. The bell will be your cue, first to close your eyes, and then to open them.

*bell [congregation closes eyes]*

A Reading from the Gospel of Mark.

People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them.

*bell — six seconds — bell*

But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.”

*bell — six seconds — bell*

“Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.” And he took them up in his arm, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

The Word of the Lord.

*bell*

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*In the following model, certain words or themes, which you want the congregation to remember, are identified and associated with a sound or word. The repetition helps people to recall that association (i.e. Jesus — Savior of the World; Boy — he shared his lunch.)*

## **Loaves and Fishes John 6:1-15**

*Before beginning the story, the reader invites the congregation to respond as follows to these verbal cues. It helps to practice a little.*

Jesus	“Savior of the World”
Loaves	“Nice and warm”
Fish	“Tasty!”
<i>A number</i>	<i>When a number is mentioned, count from one to that number.</i>
5,000	<i>Count by thousands from 1,000 to 5,000</i>
Boy	“He shared his lunch.”

After this, **Jesus** went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs he was doing for the sick. **Jesus** went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples.

Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, **Jesus** said to Philip, “Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?” He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do.

Philip answered him: “**Six** months’ wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.”

One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him, “There is a **boy** here who has **five** barley **loaves** and **two fish**. But what are they among so many people?”

**Jesus** said, “Make the people sit down.” Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about **five thousand** in all. Then **Jesus** took the **loaves** [which he had received from the **boy**], and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also with the **fish** [also received from the **boy**], [and they ate], as much as they wanted. When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, “Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.”

So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the **five** barley **loaves**, left by those who had eaten, they filled **twelve** baskets.

When the people saw the sign that **Jesus** had done, they began to say, “This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.” When **Jesus** realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

arranged by Ernesto R. Medina

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## **Doubting Thomas Rap**

Peter was sitting in the Upper Room  
with James and Andrew and John.  
Thad-de-us was there  
and Matthew, too  
along with Levi and Bartholomew.

And in comes Jesus  
through the door which was closed.  
Right into the middle of the room.  
“No way!” cried Peter. “You can’t do that!  
You’re supposed to be lying  
in the stone cold tomb.”

I DOUBT IT! is the word,  
that everybody heard.  
I DOUBT IT! I DOUBT IT!

Don’t be afraid, Jesus told his friends.  
Shalom be upon you today.  
He blessed each one  
and when he came to the end,  
He left the same way he came in.  
Through the door, which was closed.  
(Are you gettin’ it?)

I DOUBT IT! is the word  
that everybody heard.  
I DOUBT IT! I DOUBT IT!

Now in came Thomas, in from the street.  
He’d been keeping an eye on things.  
“We saw him! We saw him!” the disciples cried.  
But Thomas shook his head  
as though they had lied.  
And looked around for something to eat.

I DOUBT IT! is the word  
that everybody heard.  
I DOUBT IT! I DOUBT IT!

“You’re telling me that Jesus  
just walked in the room  
through the door which wasn’t even open?  
You expect me to believe that Jesus is alive  
the same Jesus whose body was broken?”

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I DOUBT IT! is the word  
that everybody heard.  
I DOUBT IT! I DOUBT IT!

“I need to touch the holes in his hands  
and his feet.  
The holes where they put those nails.  
And I need to put my hand right in his side  
and then I can know for sure that he died...  
because..

I DOUBT IT! is the word  
that everybody heard.  
I DOUBT IT! I DOUBT IT!

There was a hush in the air  
and Jesus was there.  
Thomas had tears in his eyes.  
“Lord, is it you? How can it be?  
Don’t you know I was there when you died?”

I DOUBT IT! is the word  
that everybody heard.  
I DOUBT IT! I DOUBT IT!

“Thomas, don’t you fear,  
there’s a mystery here.  
And we all have a big part in it.  
Death isn’t the end, my doubting friend.  
Death is only just the beginning.”

I DOUBT IT! is the word  
that everybody heard.  
I DOUBT IT! I DOUBT IT!

“Thomas, put your hands in the holes  
in my hands and my feet.  
Put your other hand in my side.  
It’s true what I tell you.  
I’ve risen from the dead.”  
Thomas was so happy that he cried.

Now tell me the word that everybody’s heard.  
I BELIEVE! I BELIEVE! I BELIEVE! I BELIEVE! I BELIEVE!

That man made a believer out of me.

Caroline S. Fairless

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**1 Corinthians 12:4-13     the Epistle for Pentecost**

*Position voices 1, 2 and 3 up front or centrally, with 1 standing between 2 and 3. The other voices are spread through the assembly. Each stands when they speak their first line and remains standing until the entire reading is complete.*

- voice 1    Now there are varieties of gifts,  
v.2        but the same Spirit;  
v. 1        and there are varieties of services,  
v. 3        but the same Lord;  
v. 1        and there are varieties of activities,  
v. 2,3     **but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.**
- v. 1        To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.  
v. 2        To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.  
v. 3        To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.
- v. 1        To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom,  
v. 2        and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit,  
v. 3        to another faith by the same Spirit,  
v. 4        to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit,  
v. 5        to another the working of miracles,  
v. 6        to another prophecy,  
v. 7        to another the discernment of spirits,  
v. 8        to another various kinds of tongues,  
v. 9        to another the interpretation of tongues.  
All 9     **All these are activated by one and the same Spirit,  
            who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.**
- v. 1        For just as the body is one and has many members,  
v. 2,3     **and all the members of the body, though many, are one body,**  
v. 1        so it is with Christ.  
v. 1        For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—  
v. 2        Jews or Greeks,  
v. 3        slaves or free—  
All 9     **and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.**

arranged by Bruce Stewart, Director, Center for Liturgy and the Arts (used by permission)

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# **Preaching**

## **Prophetic Voice: A suggested model for helping youth prepare for preaching**

*Ernesto R. Medina*

- 1) Gather a group of youth and distribute copies of the Bible readings that will be used for the liturgy. Ask that they read and pray the readings each day and open themselves to the day's events.
- 2) Consider the following:
  - a. Where is the voice of God through the readings relating to what they see or experience throughout the day?
  - b. What is God saying to them through the readings?
  - c. What memories are triggered from their own life experience or the life experience of others as a result of reading and praying the passages from scripture?
- 3) Let the group know that they will be sharing their insights at their next meeting.
- 4) At the next gathering, ask the youth to share their insights with one another. When all have had the opportunity to share, invite the group to:
  - a. Name common threads or themes.
  - b. Call out particular stories or illustrations that were powerful.
  - c. Create an outline for a sermon or homily.
- 5) Adults in the group may wish to exercise the gift of wisdom, by sharing with the youth any particular revelations they had while listening to the youth.
- 6) The group may wish to ask that one, two, or three persons take the responsibility of continuing the work and put together the presentation. This work should occur before the next meeting.
- 7) At the final gathering, a presentation of the sermon or homily is made. The youth who are listening will be asked to share their observations.
  - a. What worked well in the presentation?
  - b. What message might be said with more conviction?
- 8) Those who will be preaching may wish to practice in the church in order to be familiar with the space and equipment.

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# **An Affirmation Of Faith**

based on the *Children's Charter for the Church*

*What do you believe?*

**We believe in God, the Father Almighty.**

*How will you live your belief?*

**We will receive, nurture, and treasure each child as a gift from God;  
We will proclaim the Gospel to children, so they might know God's love;  
We will include children in all of the life we share with God in the Church.**

*What do you believe?*

**We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord.**

*How will you live your belief?*

**We will love, shelter, protect, and defend all children;  
We will help strengthen families to act in the best interest of children;  
We will honor the gifts and spirituality of children;  
We will stand for childhood and the dignity of each child.**

*What do you believe?*

**We believe in the Holy Spirit of God who loves the Church and gives it life.**

*How will you live your belief?*

**We will make ways for Christians of every age to know and care for each other and to serve the world as partners with Christ;  
We will open our hearts to the special ministries of children, and see in them the signs of God's Reign.**

*What do you believe?*

**We believe in the worship of God as set forth by the apostles;  
We believe in the gifts of repentance and forgiveness;  
We believe the Good News of God in Christ is to be proclaimed to all;  
We believe that all who need us are our neighbors,  
and Christ is served as we serve them;  
We believe in the dignity of every human being,  
and that justice and peace are God's will for us all.**

*Will you live these beliefs with all God's children, for the love of Christ, through the power of the Spirit?*

**We will, with God's help.**

*May God help us and keep us in all life and truth.*

**Amen.**

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# Commissioning of Church School Teachers

*Julia Huttar Bailey and Ernesto Medina*

*All Youth (to the Congregation)*

Do you renew your promise to do all in your power to support us in our life in Christ?

*Congregation* We do.

*All Youth (to the Teachers)*

As our teachers, do you promise to cherish and love us?

*Teachers:* We do.

*Young Person A* Will you nurture in us an inquiring and discerning heart?

*Teachers* We will.

*Young Person B* The courage to will and to persevere?

*Teachers* We will.

*Young Person C* A spirit to know and to love God?

*Teachers* We will.

*Young Person D* And the gift of joy and wonder in all God's works?

*Teachers* We will.

*The children lay hands on the teachers, and the congregation comes forward and lays hands on the teachers.*

*Presider*

Almighty God, we thank you that by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ you have overcome sin and brought us to yourself, and that by the sealing of your Holy Spirit you have bound us to your service. Renew in these your servants the covenant you made with them at their Baptism. Send them forth in the power of that Spirit to perform the service you set before them; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. *Amen.*

**The Peace**

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# **“Choreography” of Commissioning**

*Devon Anderson and Ernesto Medina*

The Commissioning of Church School Teachers occurs after the Prayers of the People and before the Peace during a Sunday Eucharist service.

After the Prayers of the People, if children are not already in the sanctuary, the congregation is seated and sings a processional hymn. *All Things Bright and Beautiful* or *We are Marching in the Light of God* both work well. Choose a hymn with which the children are especially familiar.

The children process into the sanctuary, gather around the altar area, and stand facing the congregation. The children should stand in a place where they are most visible. In some churches, this means standing on the top two steps.

If children are already present in the congregation at the time of the Prayers of the People, no procession is necessary. The congregation simply begins the commissioning by singing a hymn, and children rise from their seats and gather up around the altar area during the hymn.

The teachers process with the children, and assemble at the bottom of the steps in front of the altar, facing the children. Again, if no procession is necessary, teachers also rise from their seats and gather together facing the children at the hymn.

The children ask their questions to the congregation and to the teachers.

After the last “We will,” the Presider asks the teachers to kneel on the bottom step, still facing the children. Then, the Presider asks the children to place their hands on the heads or shoulders of the teachers. (It is a good idea to pause for a moment here, so the congregation can drink in this image). After a pause, the Presider asks the congregation to come forward and place their hands on the teachers. Then, the Presider says the concluding collect.

The Commissioning concludes with the Peace, which provides an opportunity for teachers and children both to be greeted and loved, and also gives the congregation an opportunity to return to their seats before the Offertory Anthem.

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## Rationale

In this liturgy, the “choreography” (meaning, where people stand) is as important as the words that are said. The children should stand in the place where people in authority (clergy, lay readers, Lay Eucharistic Ministers) stand during a regular Sunday worship service – on the top step, or near the altar, facing out towards the congregation. This place of authority is also the place where a bishop would stand to ordain, confirm, baptize, or commission. Thus, children are invited to be present in the space of authority, and to lead the congregation in the commissioning from that space.

This “choreography” speaks a million words. Most importantly it avoids the traditional procedure of adults charging other adults to minister to and with children, and places children precisely in the middle of the transaction. The liturgy reminds us that adults who minister to and with children are accountable to the children themselves, as well as to other adults, and to God.

The words spoken in the liturgy are also deeply significant. The *children* rather than the clergy or lay adults are asking the congregation and the teachers questions, which faithfully follow the Baptismal Covenant. Basically, the *children* are asking the adults to support them as they grow into their baptismal promises. The liturgy supports children to speak for themselves, and take responsibility for their own baptismal promises.

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# **Prayers of the People**

## **Prayer Cards**

1. Index cards are made available to those in the congregation.
2. People of all ages are invited to draw or write a prayer of intercession or thanksgiving on a card.
3. Completed cards are placed in a basket visible to all. Cards may be placed in the basket at any time before or during the first part of the service (even during the Prayers of the People).
4. At the time of the Prayers of the People, the prayers from each card are read (words), or interpreted (drawings) by one to three people. The leaders of prayer will want to be mindful of the following:
  - a. Find a natural rhythm, being careful not to be too slow;
  - b. Speak clearly so that all can hear;
  - c. State the prayer written or drawn without editorials or long commentaries;
  - d. Hold each card showing respect and honor for the prayer on the card.
5. To better involve the congregation, you may wish to begin with a simple refrain, and repeat it after every few petitions, or have the congregation softly sing a Taizé style chant during the prayers.
6. At the end of the prayers, place the cards on the altar.

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## **Prayers of the People for Advent and Christmas**

God of the prophets, give your church courage to speak truth, and to tell of your love.  
*God of the prophets, hear us and help us!*

God of the angels, give your church voice to sing your presence into the world. Give the world a freedom song, and help us to speak peace throughout the earth.  
*God of the angels, hear us and help us!*

God of Mary and Elizabeth, give your church grace to be pregnant with hope and to bring forth new life for a barren world.  
*God of our mothers, hear us and help us!*

God of Zechariah and Joseph, give your church dreams and visions, and the courage to follow them.  
*God of our fathers, hear us and help us!*

God of the shepherds, give your church humility, and give to all who sit in darkness, alone and afraid, a light from heaven proclaiming peace.  
*God of the shepherds, hear us and help us!*

God of the magi, give your church gifts, and the will to leave home to find you amongst the poor.  
*God of the magi, hear us and help us!*

God of the Holy Innocents, give your church power to stand against violence and to protect the powerless.  
*God of the Victim, hear us and help us!*

God our Sovereign, you are always coming into the world. Come to us now, soon, and forever, and let us receive you as the Child of holiness and the Wind of change, through whom, this night, we pray.

*Amen.*

Susan K. Bock

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# **Adoption of Sponsors (Godparents)**

*Julia R. Huttar Bailey and Ernesto R. Medina*

*This liturgy was developed in response to a pastoral need for parents to provide additional godparents for their children. In some cases, godparents may have moved and lost touch with the family. The intention is not that the newly-adopted godparents replace the sponsors who made promises on behalf of the children at their baptisms, but rather that they become additional adults in the children's lives who share in this special relationship. This liturgy may be adapted to fit in the context of a Sunday morning Eucharist.*

## **Gathering**

*Several hymns are sung.*

## **Welcome**

## **A Reading**

## **Presentation of the Godparents**

*Presider* The new godparents may now be presented.

*Parents* We present *N. (and N.)* to be godparents for our *son/daughter N.*

*The children then ask their new godparents*

*Will you please be my godmother and godfather?*

*The new Godparents express some form of affirmation.*

*The Presider then asks the new godparents*

*Will you be responsible for seeing that this child is brought up in the Christian faith and life?*

*Godparents* I will, with God's help.

*Presider* Will you by your prayers and witness help these children to grow into the full stature of Christ?

*Godparents* I will, with God's help.

*After all have been presented, the Presider addresses the people saying*

*Will you who witness these vows do all in your power to support these persons in their life in Christ?*

*People* We will.

## **The Baptismal Covenant**

*(found on page 304 in the Book of Common Prayer)*

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**██████████**

## **Prayer**

Almighty God, giver of life and love, bless these newly extended families. Grant them wisdom and devotion in the ordering of their common life, that each may be to the other a strength in need, a counselor in perplexity, a comfort in sorrow, and a companion in joy. And so knit their wills together in your will and their spirits in your Spirit, that they may live together in love and peace all the days of their life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **The Lord's Prayer**

*The Presider may then bless the families, concluding with the following prayer*

May God the Father, who by Baptism adopts us as his children, grant you grace.

**Amen.**

May God the Son, who sanctified a home at Nazareth, fill you with love. **Amen.**

May God the Holy Spirit, who has made the Church one family, keep you in peace.

**Amen.**

## **The Peace**

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# Creating our own Penitential Rite using Stones and Water

Ernesto R. Medina

*After experiencing the Penitential Rite developed by **Caroline Fairless** and the congregation of Holy Family Church in Half Moon Bay, California, this outline was written as a guide for church school teachers, helping them to find their own voice as they recall our Salvation Story. This model is suitable for use in the classroom and in the context of liturgy.*

## Preparation

1) Recall five to ten bible stories which have (or could have) stones or rocks in them.

These might include:

- Creation
- Noah on dry ground
- Tower of Babel
- The Israelites walking for 40 years in the wilderness
- Altars built with stones
- The Samaritan Woman at the well
- Peter as the Rock
- Golgotha
- The empty tomb

Find the stories that work for you, and summarize them in one to three sentences to create a short narrative, linking them together. You may wish to use a “refrain” such as “you hold that stone [or rock] in your hand,” or “you are the Rock of my Salvation,” or “On this rock I will build my church.” Repeat your “refrain” after every story or couple of stories.

2) Recall five to ten bible stories which have (or could have) water in them.

These might include:

- *Some of the stories from the previous list*
- The Flood
- Crossing of the Red Sea
- Moses and Water from the Rock at Meribah
- Reaching the River Jordan (the promised land)
- Jesus Baptized by John
- Water into wine
- Water of baptism

Find the stories that work for you, summarize them in one to three sentences and create a short narrative to link them together.

3) Assemble your “props”

- Ordinary stones which are easy to hold in the palm of a hand. You will need one stone for each person.

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- ██████████
- A bowl large enough to easily hold all the stones
  - A pitcher of water

### **The Penitential Rite**

- 1) Invite each person to hold a stone in their hand.
- 2) Tell your narrative of salvation history using images of stones.
- 3) Invite everyone to place the burdens from their heart onto the stone that God has made for them.

“Remember those things you have done this week that you are sorry for — let the burden be lifted from your heart and place the burden on the stone that God has made for you.”

“Remember those things you didn’t do, but probably should have, things done and left undone. Let the burden be lifted from your heart and place the burden on the stone that God has made for you.”
- 4) Collect the stones and place them in an empty bowl.
- 5) Tell your narrative of salvation history using images of water. While telling your stories pour water into the bowl and wash the stones.
- 6) At the end of the narrative, declare that the water has washed the stones. The prayer of confession may be used, with an absolution or declaration of forgiveness following.

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## Resources

### ***Children: A Heritage from the Lord***

A video study guide for the *Children's Charter for the Church*  
Available from The Office for Children's Ministries, Episcopal Church Center.  
1-800-334-7626.

### **A Dove Kite**

Available from *Friends of the Groom*, 909 Center Street, Milford, Ohio 45150;  
Fogmail@aol.com, ww4.choice.net/~dcooksey/  
Approximate cost is \$20 plus shipping and handling.

### **Telescoping Pole**

Order from *Into the Wind*, 1-800-541-0314. Approximate cost is \$25 for a 12 foot pole.  
(They also have 16 and 20 foot poles.)

### **God's Trombones**

A book of seven sermons in verse, by James Weldon Johnson, published by Penguin Books.

### The Song ***A New Heart I Give To You*** from ***Knowledge of Peace***

Collection of music by Eric Law, ehflaw@aol.com, Diocese of New Westminster,  
604-684-6306.

### **Episcopal/Anglican Rosary Resources**

#### ***Holding Your Prayer in Your Hands: Praying the Anglican Rosary,***

Kristin Elliott and Betty Kay Seibt, Open Hands, email: bkseibt@iglobal.net, 1997

**Workshops and Consultations:** Suzanne Edwards-Acton, sumijaime@aol.com

### **BOOKS TO BE PUBLISHED**

***Children at Worship: Congregations in Bloom,*** by Caroline Fairless, to be published  
by Church Publishing, Inc., July 2000

Look for **Susan K. Bock's** upcoming book from Morehouse Publishing.

### **OTHER RESOURCES**

**Center for Children at Worship**, Caroline Fairless, director, c/o St. John's Episcopal  
Church, PO Box 257, Roanoke VA 24002, 540/343-9341, www.childrenatworship.org

**Center for Liturgy and the Arts**, J. Bruce Stewart, director, 4327 Ravensworth Road  
#210, Annandale VA 22003, 703-941-9422 phone & fax

**Office for Children's Ministries**, Episcopal Church Center 815 Second Avenue, New  
York, NY 10017, 1-800-334-7626, WEBSITE: www.ecusa.anglican.org/myp

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Additional copies of this booklet are available from Episcopal Parish Services for \$----- plus shipping.  
Call 1-800-000-0000 and ask for item number 56-0010  
This document is also available online at: <http://www.ecusa.anglican.org/myp>