



Time and space for renewal, discernment, new beginning and building Christian community...all of these crucial elements of our journey of faith are offered in dynamic ways at **Presbyterian Camps and Conference Centers**. Youth come to know Christ, themselves and others while at camp, away from the roles they play at school and at home. In the light of Christ, illumined by camp counselors and hands on Bible study, the category “child of God” trumps all of the others and we are free to better see the world through the lens of faith. Somehow, gathered around the camp fire, surrounded by God’s beautiful creation, worship speaks, through the power of the Holy Spirit, in a fresh way to an elder who’d been feeling far away from the Lord who’d called him to this service. A group of church

leaders gather together and, through laughter and awkwardness and a little fear, figure out how to get everyone through the ropes course, the experience brings them closer and fosters a trust that will help them carry out the challenging vision they’ve set for their church when they return home. Faith shaping and disciple forming happens in a unique way at our camp and conference centers. Those who’ve been there know, those who haven’t need to know. **Camp and Conference Sunday** is an opportunity to both celebrate and give thanks for the ministry we share and a time to encourage others to join us.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA), along with the Presbyterian Church Camp and Conference Association, invites your congregation to rejoice, remember, pray for, and visit one of your camps or conference centers. This special emphasis Sunday, at the date that best fits your congregation’s calendar, is set aside by the General Assembly so that congregations across the denomination may recognize the ministry provided by camps and conferences. It is a Sunday that lifts up the important role camps and conference centers play in celebrating and caring for God’s creation, in helping people of faith discern how to live out their Christian vocation, in facilitating spiritual renewal and in building Christian community. Join with Presbyterians across our denomination in giving thanks for the ministry we share in our camps and conference centers.

To help you celebrate **Camp and Conference Sunday** we have included several orders of worship. Each worship service is built around a theme that highlights one of the areas of camp and conference ministry, with one service designed to be used on a youth Sunday. We hope you find these helpful. Adapt them to best suit your congregation and if you have questions or suggestions please contact Brian Frick (brian.frick@pcusa.org).



Camp and Conference Ministry Emphasis Sunday

Worship Service

Hearing God's Call

Welcome and Announcements

Minute for Mission *Invite someone from your local camp and conference center to give you an update on all that is going on there. You could also ask a member of your church who has attended camp or a retreat to share what their experience meant to them. It would also be appropriate to ask a church member who volunteers at your local camp and conference center to tell the congregation about the work they have done and other possible volunteer opportunities there.*

Passing the Peace of Christ: *Invite the congregation to share the peace of Christ with one another perhaps introducing it with the words, "Jesus says, 'Whenever two or three are gathered together in my name I am in the midst of them.' Let's greet one another with the peace of Christ, knowing that Christ is here with us this morning."*

***Call to Worship** (Psalm 95:1-7)

One: O come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

Many: Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!

One: For the Lord is a great God and a great King above all gods.

Many: In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also.

One: The sea is his, for he made it, and the dry land, which his hands have formed

Many: O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!

One: For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. O that today you would listen to his voice!

***Prayer of Adoration**

Eternal God, you are always speaking to us, coming to us, reaching out and inviting us into a deeper relationship with you. During this hour of worship help us to hear your Word. Silence in us anything that distracts us from your voice. Through the power of the Holy Spirit help us to listen to your call as we humbly seek to discern and do your will. In Christ's name we pray.
Amen.

***Hymn suggestions:** #426 Lord Speak to Me that I May Speak, #324 Open My Eyes That I May See

Prayer of Confession

Great and good God, we confess that you have called and we have failed to answer. We have ignored your voice, distorted your instructions, and tried to escape your total claim on our lives. We have hoped that we could listen to only those portions of your word that suit us, while stopping our ears to the parts that call for us to change. Forgive our evasions and excuses. In your mercy put people in our path that will help us to discern your life-giving call. Through your grace grant us the power to do whatever it takes to place ourselves in front of Jesus Christ when he comes so that we will be transformed into the people you want us and have created us to be...(silent prayer)...Amen.

Assurance of Pardon (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Leader: Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation! The old is continually being passed away. A new life has begun. Believe the good news of the Gospel:

All: In Jesus Christ we are Forgive. Hallelujah! Amen.

Prayer for Illumination

Lord, in this time of worship we intentionally set aside time and space to listen. Speak to us now through your Word, read and proclaimed. We make our prayer in the name of your Word incarnate, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Scripture passages: 1 Samuel 3:1-10

Luke 19:1-10

Proclamation suggestions

Retreats and camp are times when we set aside time to put ourselves in a better position to hear God speaking to us. While at summer camp children and youth have “Eli”, counselors, chaplains and other camp staff, to help them discern the Word of God. On retreats we are far enough away from the fray and crowds of our daily life to actually see Jesus when he passes us, and Jesus sees us, and come to us and eats with us. There are opportunities to talk with other committed Christians about what happened in worship, to discuss in depth scripture passages, and to share insights regarding God’s Word to US. In our busy culture such opportunities are all too rare. Camp and Conference Sunday reminds us to stop and listen for God’s voice and to seek out those in our community who have the wisdom to help us understand it. For the proclamation this Sunday, rather than a traditional sermon, invite some of the leaders in your church, the pastor, elders, youth advisors or others, to share their call story in worship. There are many who have heard God’s voice and acted upon it in a myriad of ways. Ask them to recount how they

discerned God's Word to them, sharing who helped them hear it and how they decided what to do next. Was it a "burning bush" or "Samuel" type experience or did it unfold gradually over time? Did it confirm what they had thought about themselves and God or compel them to make a big change in their actions and beliefs?

Another possibility would be to highlight Christians throughout history that have heard God's call and then followed where it led them. Examples might be Paul, Augustine, Constantine, Martin Luther, Mother Teresa or, in more recent history, Millard Fuller, founder of Habitat for Humanity and John Wood, a former Microsoft executive who, after a vacation in Nepal, ended up quitting his job and founding Room to Read, an organization that publishes books in many languages and opens libraries in impoverished countries. There are likely people in your community who have started a ministry, become a volunteer or advocate and made other life changes as a result of hearing God's call and responding. Invite them to come and tell their story during Sunday School and/or worship. The proclamation can be concluded with a prayer of praise and thanksgiving or with the following litany.

Litany of Call and Response

God, yours is a living Word that come to the earth and does not return to you empty. Your creative and life-giving Word is always speaking, bringing forth night and day, sea and dry land, transforming Abram and Sarai into Abraham and Sarah, giving a stuttering Moses the courage to declare your command to pharaoh. In this time and place we humbly and sincerely say:

Speak, Lord, for your servants are listening.

Great God, you enlist us in the work of your Kingdom, anointing a shepherd boy king, making ordinary people your priests, calling dressers of sycamore trees to be prophets. How do we dare speak your Word to your people if we don't first humbly and sincerely say:

Speak, Lord, for your servants are listening.

Ruler of all, the psalmist says when you utter your voice the earth melts. Your Word has the power to create and destroy, you break the bow and shatter the spear and burn the shields with fire and yet you tell us, "Be still and know that I am God!" Heeding your command we stop and humbly and sincerely say:

Speak, Lord, for your servants are listening.

God of grace, you condescend to come to us, meeting us where we are, even seeking us out when we are lost. You run out to embrace us when we are still far off and unworthy of welcome, let alone a celebration. How could we possibly express our gratitude and praise? Tell us how best to give you the glory as we humbly and sincerely say:

Speak, Lord, for your servants are listening.

God of the past, present and future, you sent the angel Gabriel to tell Mary she had found your favor, sent your Holy Spirit with flames of fire and a myriad of languages, and spoke to Peter and Cornelius through visions. There is no limit to how and when you will make your Word manifest in the world. Know we want to hear it now as we humbly say:

Speak, Lord, for your servants are listening.

Almighty God, your Word became flesh and lived among us and we have seen your glory. Such knowledge is too wonderful for us and so we humbly ask you to give us the power to hear when you speak in order that we can say we faith and conviction, “Here I am, for you called me.” Now, send us out to share with the world the Good News we have heard. Amen.

Alternately an **affirmation of faith** could follow the sermon. The following is taken from *A Declaration of Faith*, Chapter Eight, lines 23-35.

God sends us to proclaim the gospel.

God sent his Son to proclaim release to those who are bound, to announce that God’s promised kingdom is at hand, to urge everyone to repent and believe the good news.

The Lord is moving toward a time when the glorious liberty of the children of God will be manifest throughout the whole creation.

We testify God is at work here and now when people obey Christ’s commission to witness to him and make disciples of all nations, when they spread the good news by their words and embody it in their lives.

***Hymn suggestions:** #525 Here I Am, Lord or #343 Called as Partners in Christ’s Service

Presentation of Tithes and Offerings (part of the offering might be designated for your local camp and conference center)

Offertory

***Doxology**

***Prayer of Dedication**

***Hymn suggestions:** #418 God, Bless Your Church with Strength! or #419 How Clear Is Our Vocation, Lord

***Charge and Benediction**

Following the service offer a time of fellowship, perhaps setting up the fellowship hall or other space with a “camp fire” while playing or having some people sing camp songs. Serve smores and hot chocolate, gather around the camp fire for stories and singing. Scatter pictures around the room of church retreats or photos of the youth from camp. Invite members to bring in any pictures they have from times they have spent on retreat or at church camp.

Camp and Conference Sunday: Youth Sunday Liturgy

Children of God

Welcome and Announcements

Minute for Mission *Invite someone from your local camp and conference center to give you an update on all that is going on there. You could also ask a member of your church who has attended camp or a retreat to share what their experience meant to them. It would also be appropriate to ask a church member who volunteers at your local camp and conference center to tell the congregation about the work they have done and other possible volunteer opportunities there.*

Passing of the Peace: Invite the congregation to greet one another with the peace of Christ, using the words, “Peace be with you, Child of God!”

*Call to Worship:

One: “Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.”

Many: “Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love.”

One: “Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and what mercy he has shown you.”

Many: “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.”

*Prayer of Adoration

Merciful God, when Jesus came up out of the waters of his baptism in the river Jordan you declared from the heavens: “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.” Through your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, we are also claimed by you and called beloved children of God. Help us, through the power of your Holy Spirit, to remember our identity as your sons and daughters and help us to see others as your beloved children and our brothers and sisters in Christ. Amen.

***Hymn of Praise** #361 (blue) How Firm A Foundation or #492 Baptized in Water or #439 In Christ There is No East or West

Prayer of Confession

Gracious God, when you gave Adam the power to name all living creatures you entrusted humanity with a power that we often abuse. We forget that you called your creation good and in

our forgetting we label others as evil, God-forsaken or unworthy. Instead of seeing others as made in your image we see them as our enemies or even sub-human, calling your children names that hurt and divide. We use our power to name as a way to distance ourselves from our suffering brothers and sisters believing that stereotypes and slurs are substitutes for the only label that truly matters: child of God. Forgive us and help us to see with the eyes of Christ, in whose name we pray, amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Leader: Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Friends, believe the good news: through Jesus Christ we are forgiven!

All: Thanks be to God! Amen.

Prayer for Illumination

Living God, our senses are dulled to your Word because we are bombarded with the conflicting messages of our culture. Tweets, texts, Facebook, phone calls, YouTube, and more...we have little time when we aren't overloaded with sights and sounds that tell us who we are and who we should be and how we should perceive others. Send your Holy Spirit, that as the Word is read and proclaimed, we will be open to your voice and able to listen to what you tell us about who and whose we and others truly are. Amen.

Scripture Passages Genesis 17:1-8
 Galatians 3:23-29
 Matthew 3:13-17

Proclamation

Often it is at camp or on a retreat that youth have the opportunity to break out of the roles and labels that they have been given at school or home or even in their church youth group. In these settings they meet people who don't know that they are a gifted athlete, star of the academic team, drummer in the marching band or shy kid who sits alone at lunch. They have a chance to see themselves and others in a new light, the light of Christ, which reveals that much of what others value and evaluate is unimportant to God. Youth are surrounded by messages that try to sell them something, that tell them that they aren't "enough" or that heighten divisions between people. The message of the Gospel is radically different from those voices and at camp or on retreat, with cell phones turned off and the internet inaccessible, God's message that, through Jesus Christ, we are beloved Children of God becomes clearer. Once back into the routine of home it is important to be reminded that the label "child of God" trumps all others and should be the lens through which we see ourselves and everyone we encounter.

A suggestion for the proclamation would be to construct a facebook page for “Child of God.” This could be done during the worship service with input from the congregation or done prior by the youth and then presented in worship. What would be the profile picture? Friends? Relatives? Status? Education and work? An alternative would be to do a facebook page for several Biblical characters first as they were viewed by others and then as Jesus saw them. Some suggestions would be the Gerasene Demoniac, the Samaritan woman at the well, the woman caught in adultery, Zacchaeus, or the man blind from birth.

Another possibility for the proclamation would be to use the litany below in conjunction with a power point or photo story presentation. Each petition could be associated with an image that visualizes what is being read.

If access to the technology needed to do either of the above is an issue Max Lucado’s You Are Special could be read and simply acted out as it is read.

Litany of Labels

You have heard it said that there are people with whom we should not associate, those who are unclean and unwelcome at the table. The Pharisees say, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” But Jesus says, “I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.” And God has said:

These are my sons and daughters, my beloved, with whom I am well pleased.

You have heard people talk about the demoniac, out of his head, talking to himself, dirty, restrained by shackles and living among the dead. Everyone avoids him, but Jesus says, “What is your name?” No one recognizes the man now clothed and in his right mind but God knows:

This is my son, my beloved, with whom I am well pleased.

You have heard what they whispered under their breath about “that woman,” she is a sinner and Jesus shouldn’t let her touch him. But Jesus says to her, “Your sins are forgiven... Your faith has saved you; go in peace.” Those who are forgiven much, love much and rejoice when God declares:

This is my daughter, my beloved, with whom I am well pleased.

You have heard the disciples ask as they passed the blind man, “Who sinned? This man or his parents, that he was born blind?” But Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him.” Gifted with sight he is hauled in and questioned and derided but still bears witness to the Son of the One who has proclaimed:

This is my child, my beloved, with whom I am well pleased.

You have heard the criticisms of those who said to Peter, “Why did you go to Gentiles and eat with them? What gave you the right to baptize them? We don’t associate with their kind!” But with the coming of Jesus Christ Peter knew everything was different and he said, “The Spirit told me to go with them and not to make a distinction between them and us.” Who are we to hinder God when he sent his Son so that all who believe in his name can hear booming from the heavens:

These are my children, my beloved, with whom I am well pleased.

No matter what we hear, the Word of God reveals: There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. Amen.

Reaffirmation of the Baptismal Covenant or Celebration of the Lord’s Supper

It would be appropriate to have a reaffirmation of the baptismal covenant during this worship service. The liturgy for the reaffirmation of the baptismal covenant can be found in the *Book of Common Worship*. The celebration of the Lord’s Supper could also follow the proclamation with an emphasis on our being made one in Christ perhaps using the words from I Corinthians 10:17, “Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.”

Presentation of Tithes and Offerings *A portion of the offering could be designated for your local camp and conference center.*

Hymn suggestions: #343 Called As Partners in Christ’s Service or #358 Help Us Accept Each Other or #367 Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love

***Charge and Benediction**

Following the service offer a time of fellowship, perhaps setting up the fellowship hall or other space with a “camp fire” while playing or having some people sing camp songs. Serve smores and hot chocolate, gather around the camp fire for stories and singing. Scatter pictures around the room of church retreats or photos of the youth from camp. Invite members to bring in any pictures they have from times they have spent on retreat or at church camp.