

Camp and Conference Ministry
Emphasis Sunday
January 22, 2006

Prelude

Welcome

Call to Worship

Leader: Someone's singing Lord

People: Lord, come by here

Leader: Someone's crying Lord

People: Lord, come by here

Leader: Someone's praying Lord.

People: Lord, come by here

All: As we worship, Lord, Kum Ba Yah.

OR

From Proverbs 3: 19-20

Leader: The Lord by wisdom founded the earth;

People: by understanding he established the heavens;

Leader: By his knowledge the deeps broke open;

People: And the clouds drop down the dew.

Hymn/Camp Song (see suggestions at the end)

Call to Confession

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, when we come into the presence of God, we cannot help but realize how short we have fallen of the lives he has intended for us. We find that we sin in the things we do, the things we left undone, we find that we sin against God, neighbor, creation, and ourselves. Let us go to God to confess, so that we may receive the grace of forgiveness.

Prayer of Confession

Leader: God, you have created this world and all that is within it.

People: Too often we take it for granted.

Leader: You have entrusted us with the stewardship of the bounty of the earth.

People: Too often we have used the world's resources for our gain without thought of the consequences.

Leader: You have given us the opportunity to serve.

People: Too often we have chosen to be served.

Leader: You have asked us to raise children in the path that leads to you.

People: Too often our examples have led them astray and too seldom have we taught them of you.

Leader: You call to us again and again, asking that we open our hearts to you.

People: We confess that listening to your call is harder than we would like it to be.

All: Forgive us God, enable your voice to drown out all others that compete for our attention. Remind us to take time for retreat, fellowship, Sabbath and study. Help us to find those places where we can be still and know that you are God, and in that knowledge enliven us to go and lead lives worthy of your calling. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

The proof of God's amazing love is this, while we were sinners Christ was born for us, Christ lived for us, Christ worked for us, Christ suffered for us, Christ died for us, and Christ was raised for us. Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation, the old has gone, and the new has come. Know that when we confess our sin, God hears us, God loves us, and God forgives us. In the name of Christ, we are forgiven!

Gloria

Prayers of the Church (Adapted from John Newton's "Amazing Grace," 1779, and from John Knox's "A Prayer for the Whole Estate of Christ's Church," 1556)

To be read while "Amazing Grace" is being played on organ, piano, guitar, flute...

Leader: Let us pray. Almighty God,

**People: Author and Giver of amazing grace,
Of such a sweet sound,
Able to save human beings as we are,
Having been lost, now being found,
Blind, and now being able to see.**

Leader: To You, we give all thanks,

**People: For gifts so many we cannot count,
For wonders too magnificent to describe,
For blessings daily so ordinary we fail to notice,
For the ministry of camp and conference centers
across the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) denomination.**

Leader: Receive our gratitude,

**People: For the ministry of _____, our local camp ministry
For a heritage of faith so rich,
From the first ones long ago who heard your voice,
Perceived your call,
And set forth on a covenant journey through life with You:
Your people Israel, the faithful prophets, Jesus,
his disciples, apostles,
and those who came to be known as "church."**

Leader: O Great Steward of the universe,

**People: Grant that the seeds sown by your Word and Spirit
Take deep root among all your people, young and older,
So the burning heat of persecution cannot cause its withering,
So the thorny cares of this life cannot cause its choking,
But that the seeds You nourish bring forth thirty, sixty,
A hundred fold.**

Leader: For grace has taught the need to bow before and honor You,

**People: And grace has all our fears relieved,
Precious in its first appearing, precious still, and ever more.**

Leader: For all in dangers, toils, and snares, those we know and those to us unknown,

**People: We pray your love and strength and peace
To fill, heal, lead,
Enlighten, encourage,
Abide and enfold,
So that, how ever long before death
And how ever long after,
We, with others, are privileged to serve in your name
and sing your praise,
That we may do so according to your faithfulness,
Which is from everlasting to everlasting.
Amen.**

Children's Sermon

No "children's sermon" children at your church? Camp & Conference Sunday is the perfect time to have a children's sermon, *even* if you don't normally. Adapt the messages for your adults. They will appreciate the message too!

Option 1: Going to Camp

Materials: Backpack, camp attire (hat, t-shirt, boots, etc.), "camp things" specific to your camps program, songbook, Bible

Bible Passage: Genesis 1:1-2:3 The Story of Creation (Peace Talks Curriculum Passage)

Message: Being in God's creation at camp.

Person leading the Children's Sermon is dressed ready to go to camp. Camp hat, t-shirt, hiking boots, etc. with a backpack full of "camp things" (ex. Archery bow and arrow, Bible, canoe paddle, dance shoes, musical instrument, songbook, etc.) Camp person is on route to camp, ready for a summer of fun, walks into sanctuary needing help finding camp. Asks children if they are at camp? Ask children how many have been there? Ask children can you help me find my way? It's a long way, so the camp person sits down to take a break and unpacks some of the "camp things" from the backpack. Ask children what they might need this for at camp...Go through several items, Can bring out songbook and teach camp song, Last item out of backpack is the Bible. Share the Bible passage. Talk with children about God's creation of the earth and everything on it. What better place to enjoy God's creation then at camp. Close with prayer.

Option 2: Want S'more?

Materials: Graham crackers (one whole cracker per child), Regular-sized marshmallows (two per child), Chocolate bars (1/4 per child), Foil squares

Bible Passage: Colossians 3:12-14

Message: God melts us all together.

Background information: One of our favorite parts of camping is s'mores. It can even be said that s'mores are a part of our Presbyterian camping heritage since the graham cracker was

invented by Rev. Dr. Sylvester Graham, a Presbyterian minister. The world would have no s'mores without a Presbyterian!

Ask the group: What activities do you think are at camp?
What is your favorite part of going to camp/camping with your family?
What is the best food to have at camp?
What do you like to eat while you're camping?
Maybe someone will mention it/or you can bring up "your favorite:" s'mores!
What are the ingredients in a s'more? (get them out as they say them).

Place the Graham crackers, chocolate and marshmallows out for the children. Have the children examine and describe each of the ingredients. 1. Graham Crackers: rough, light brown, holes, poky edges. 2. Marshmallows: powdery, sticky, white, squooshy, no real edges. 3. Chocolate Bars: smooth, melty, dark brown, writing, broken edges. We are going to put all the ingredients together. Go through the process for making s'mores. Then, ask them to tell you how to make one as you follow their instructions and put them together. But it won't stay together—see, it falls apart.

We need something to hold it together—what?

How does a "camping" s'more stay together? Roasted marshmallow to stick it together.

How can we get our s'more to stick together here? If we put it in the oven and melt it then all these different ingredients will stick and taste good together.

Here is one that has already been in the oven. It worked! Either have enough made ahead of time for each child or have the children make one and take them home with directions or have the children make one and have someone bake them so they are ready by the end of church or do a s'more bar after church for everyone to make one.

How is a s'more like camp? Camp is like this s'more. A group of different people coming together to do all kinds of fun and zany activities, joined together by God's love. Share the Bible passage. Close with prayer

Maybe, Camp and Conference Sunday could become "S'mores Sunday" and you can make them every year!

Option 3: Follow the Leader

Materials: Bible Passage

Bible Passage: Mark 1:14-20 Jesus Call Four Fishermen (Lectionary Passage)

Message: God calls us to follow.

Start by playing "Follow the Leader". Children sit in a circle. Have one child leave the circle to be the person who guesses the leader. With the one child away from the group, have one child be the leader. The leader will do an action the rest of the group will do it to (ex. pat knees, pat head, rub tummy, clap hands, etc.). Once the leader has got the group going with an action the child who left the circle comes back and stands in the middle of the circle. This child tries to guess the leader. Meanwhile, the leader will continue to change actions and the group follows. The child in the center has three guesses. If they guess the leader, that person goes out of the group for the next round. If not, have a child leave the circle and the game continues. Play a few rounds.

Ask the group: Was it easy to follow the leader? Why or why not?
Was it easy to figure out who the leader was? Why or why not?
Where else do you follow a leader? (school, sports, church, etc.)

Everyday we make choices about what leaders we follow. Our hope is that they are leaders who make good decisions/choices. God calls us each day to follow just as Jesus called Simon, Andrew, James and John to follow him. Share the Bible passage. Close with Prayer.

Option 4: Aloha-Welcome and Hospitality (based on Peace Talks Christian Resources for the Outdoors this is the curriculum for some of your camps)

Materials: leis, Welcome Mat, Poster Board or Large Piece of Paper (write a large Aloha in the middle), Markers or Crayons

Bible Passage: Genesis 18:1-8 (Peace Talks Curriculum Passage)

Message: God's gift of hospitality.

Place the welcome mat out where the children will be sitting. Call the children forward. As the children come forward, welcome them by saying Aloha (child's name) and putting a lei around their neck.

Ask the group: What does Aloha mean? Aloha, a Hawaiian word is used as a greeting on both arrival and departure. It means peace and emphasizes a welcoming spirit. It also has that sense of intimacy in face to face relationships – the breath of life that connects host and guest. When the word aloha is spoken, the barriers that separate strangers are broken down.

When have you felt welcomed?

What did the people do that helped you to feel welcomed?

When have you welcomed others?

What are some of the things you did to welcome others?

Share the Bible passage.

What do Abraham and Sarah do to make the strangers feel welcome?

As they welcomed the strangers they invited God into their midst.

Hospitality is a gift from God!

How will you continue to share God's gift of hospitality with others?

Place the Poster Board in the middle of the children. Have each child trace their hand. On each finger have them write how they will share God's gift of hospitality with others. (This can be hung up in the church as a reminder) Remind the children that camp is a place where God's gift of hospitality is shared. Close with prayer.

Option 5: Canoe Journey

Materials: Imagination or Canoe, Paddles, and Lifejackets or create a river in a small container with land, water winding through, and a boat for the water

Bible Passage: Psalm 139:1-5

Message: God is with us and protects us every turn of our journey.

Ask the group: Have you ever been on a boat, canoe, kayak?

How did it feel?

Where were you going?

Get the children to use their imagination. Guide them through a journey on a river. (At this point you could have the children use their imagination or sit in the canoe or watch as you take the boat along the river)

What do you know about a river?

Does the water in a river stand still or move?

Does the river flow straight or curvy?

What do you think you would see while on a river?

Once the children have a good understanding of the river, compare this experience to their journey with God. Our journey with God is always moving forward. However, there are many bends in the river and sometimes even small channels that rejoin downstream. Each of these bends and channels are the choices that we make in our lives. Our journey is not a straight line. The hope is that we don't run into anything that's too dangerous. Each new set of rapids and each rock in our river help to shape who we are. Throughout the whole journey we have our lifejacket with us to protect us on our journey. Just like God is with us every step of the way. Share the Bible passage. Close with prayer.

Option 6: Hitting/Missing the Mark

Materials: bow, arrow and target (If you would like the children to be able to try and shoot, there are children's suction cup toy bow and arrow sets available) If you would like to add a video clip, there are good ones in Robin Hood with Kevin Costner about being on target/off mark because of distractions.

Bible Passage: Romans 3:22-25

Message: God wants us to hit the mark, but it's not easy to stay on target.

Ask the group: Does anyone know what these are? (hold up the bow, arrow and target)

What is the object of this activity? To hit the bullseye. (center of the target)

If you have a toy one, let the children try to hit the target.

Do you think it's easy to hit the bullseye all of the time? Why or why not?

How do we get better at archery? Practice!!

Talk about meaning of "sin" in archery (if you miss the target entirely, the term is "sin", to miss the mark)

How does this relate to our own lives? (missing the mark, falling short of what God wants of us)

Are we always on target with how God calls us to live? (there is no perfect person, we have all fallen short and missed the mark)

What are some things that get us off course?

How do we get better at living as God wants us to?

Share the Bible passage. Close with Prayer.

Prayer of Illumination

Open our hearts and minds, O Lord, by your Word and Spirit, that we may see your light. Send out your truth to light our path, O God, and lead us, through Jesus Christ, your Son in whom we pray. Amen

Sermon Reflections

Lectionary Texts for the 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jonah 3:1-5; 10; Psalm 62:5-12; I Corinthians 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-20

The Intersection of Immediacy and Trust

The work of a trip leader on a whitewater river adventure through summer camp can clearly demonstrate the needed intersection of immediacy (or urgency) and trust. The simple, but demanding, and even, potentially, destructive immediacy of a Class III rapid for a less experienced young paddler comes face to face with that same young paddler's trust in his or her trip leader, who he believes has more whitewater boating experience.

If the camper trusts the trip leader—her “read” of the river, her judgment of the young paddler's skills to navigate the particular rapid, or even her judgment on leading a group through the rapid at all—then the question of whether or not to negotiate the foamy waves of a Class III is irrelevant. With trust as the foundation of this scenario, the operational questions are, “What will it be like as I go through the rapid?”, and “How much fun will it be?!” Although fear is a part of the equation, it is trumped by the confidence a young paddler feels when he or she has learned the fundamentals, has gained some experience before paddling the big water, and has an intrinsic trust in the trip leader's judgment and capability—her very authority.

Trust in the “Divine Trip Leader” (please pardon the obvious metaphor for a camp director) is not a lost concept for the Psalmist. “[God] alone is my rock and my salvation...” (Ps. 62:6a). “Alone” is repeated four times in this particular Psalm (vss. 1,2,5, and 6), and vss 1 and 2 are virtually repeated word for word in vss. 5 and 6. The implication from the Psalmist clearly calls for trust in God alone (See J. Clinton McCann, *THE NEW INTERPRETER'S BIBLE*, pg. 923).

It is this same trust in God alone that motivated the first disciples to drop their nets and leave the family business behind. But what created that trust? How can men with what would have been considered successful family businesses leave their families and their success behind? And, with a sense of immediacy at that? It is possible these fishermen knew of Jesus. Jesus had begun his ministry in Galilee, but we do not know how well known Jesus was by Simon, Andrew, James, and John. Though Mark's call narrative is typically verses 16-20, the inclusion of 14 and 15 provides a preface, if you will, to understanding how these men can immediately leave behind all that they know for the unknown. Jesus called the fishermen with the full authority of God: “the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near. Vss. 14 and 15 serve notice to the reader: Now that Jesus has been baptized and the Spirit (Vss 9-11) has descended upon him, Jesus begins his ministry—the proclamation of the Good News of God—and begins it with authority (that authority is clearly indicated in vs. 22). Bracketed as it is by 14 and 15, and by clear indications of Jesus' authority in vss. 21-28, the call of the fishermen is about the authority of God in the lives of people. The new disciples trusted Jesus because he had authority—the authority of God. They didn't respond because they liked how Jesus talked or because the sunlight reflecting off the water illuminated Jesus in a certain way. They responded because Jesus was the Son of God, and they trusted that.

But how does all this preach? Trust in God alone is a key component for following the call of God, but in what environment is that trust created? A sermon may explore elements of how it is we learn to trust God enough to respond to God's call. Does the setting in which we hear the call of God deepen our trust to heed that call? Quite often, ministers recall that their own calls to ministry were heard at camp settings. Is the natural setting of God's creation at a

church camp the key component? Are the circumstances surrounding the call to discipleship the key component? Is it something we heard in a sermon? Was that call heard through a mentor? Or was it heard through a life changing experience? Perhaps all these components are peripheral to the fact that it is Jesus' authority as the Son of God that compels us to respond to the call of God.

Affirmation of Faith

Offering

Prayers of the People (Adapted from the Prayers of the People in the Book of Common Worship)
Almighty God, who taught us to pray not only for ourselves but for people everywhere, hear us as we pray.

Let us pray for creation.

(Silent prayer)

Creator of all, we thank you for the beauty of creation that surrounds us everyday. We give you thanks for the water that refreshes us, the land that we inhabit, and the air that we breathe. Forgive us for overlooking the blessing that is our world and for abusing the resources with which you have trusted us. Help us to be better caretakers of all your creation.

Let us pray for the church.

(Silent prayer)

Gracious God, you have called us to be the church of Jesus Christ. Keep us one in faith and service, breaking bread together, and proclaiming the good news to the world, that all may believe you are love, turn to your ways, and live in the light of your truth.

Let us pray for our camp and conference centers

(Silent prayer)

Eternal God, we thank you for the unique ministry that takes place at our camp and conference centers across the country. We lift up all those servants who minister in your name at these sites: directors, counselors, office staff, cooks, maintenance staff, hosts and all those who volunteer their time and talents. May all those guests, summer campers or retreat participants, encounter you, your creation, and your everlasting love in these special places.

Let us pray for our community.

(Silent prayer)

Merciful God, we live in a world that is hurt and broken. Be with those who suffer and grant them peace. Watch over our community that it may be a place where we can live in relationship with one another as you modeled for us in the life of Jesus Christ. Strengthen parents to be responsible and loving that their children may know security and joy. Guide children to honor and cherish their parents with compassion. May all people discover your parental care by the respect, grace, and love given them by others.

Let us pray for peace.

(Silent prayer)

Bringer of Peace, our world is riddled with strife, conflict, and anger. Guide those with power to seek your will in resolving differences. Comfort and relieve all those who suffer and are

oppressed. Strengthen those who work for peace around the world. May your world come to know the love, peace, and justice, which can only be found in you.

Holy God, as a potter fashions a vessel from humble clay, you form us into a new creation. Shape us, day by day, through the cross of Christ your Son, until we pray as continually as we breathe. May we glorify your name in all that we say or do; through Jesus Christ and in the mystery of the Holy Spirit, we pray. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn/Camp Song (see suggestions at the end)

Benediction

Go forth into the world with the peace that creation brings, faith in God the creator and the joy that we share as a community of love.

Postlude

Hymn Suggestions (numbers are taken from the Blue Presbyterian Hymnal)

#377 Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore

#435 We All Are One in Mission

#369 I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me

#467 How Great Thou Art

Alternate Gloria Patri #577 Glory Be to the Father

Alternate Doxology #593 Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow

Benediction Response #435 Song of Hope

Camp Song Suggestions

Oh God You Are My God

As The Deer

Breathe

Come Fly

Shine Jesus Shine

Sanctuary

Morning Has Broken

Awesome God

Amazing Grace to the tune of "Peaceful Easy Feeling"

Other Ideas

*Campers wear camp shirts to church.

*Campers put together a collage of their own camp pictures and memories to display.

*Show of hands of how many people in the congregation has ever been a camper.

*Kids teach adults how to make s'mores' after church as dessert for potluck lunch.

*Display a list of names of camp staff and have members choose one to pray for over the next year.

*Make a camp bulletin board to stay up all year to display summer campers, family camp, church's history at camp, etc.

*Invite camp staff to speak at your church on this Sunday or anytime through the year.

*Play guitar with songs to give service a more "camp" feel.

*Plan a church-wide campfire for Sunday night worship, complete with hotdogs, s'mores, and worship around the fire.

*Award a camper scholarship to a deserving child in your congregation or community.

*Plan a workday at camp. This can be for everyone, no matter your age or physical ability! Contact your local camp to see how you can use your gifts.