

Giving Testimony and Witness



Workshop: Art

About this Rotation

Testimony involves recognizing God's action in our lives and finding ways to express it meaningfully with others. This can take as many forms as the gifts that God has given us. It takes courage to give witness because of the deeply personal nature of faith journeys. For some this comes easily, but for others it may be more difficult. To share our experiences in a public way involves the risk of becoming vulnerable. However, choosing to share our story creates opportunities for relationship and growth even in the face of resistance. Sharing our faith celebrates and honors encounters with the Holy and gives us a chance to deepen our awareness of God's work in our lives. Giving testimony invites others to do the same. Giving witness and listening to others' stories joins us to the universal story of God's ongoing transformative work in creation.

About Workshop Rotation

This method of education is informed by Dr. Howard Gardner's work on multiple intelligences, or the many individual ways learners apprehend and incorporate information into their own understandings and ways of being in the world.

For those new to Workshop Rotation, a little vocabulary:

- *Multiple intelligences*: ways of incorporating information, that is, visual/spatial, logical/mathematical, verbal/linguistic, bodily/kinesthetic, musical/rhythmic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalist.

- *Rotation*: the overarching story or concept that will be explored through a number of workshops focusing on different intelligences.
- *Workshop*: primary site of learning; workshop plans focus on one or two of the intelligences while incorporating others in a secondary way to give learners various experiential ways of understanding the rotation's overarching concept(s).
- *Workshop leader*: uses this curriculum to plan the workshop, adjusting each workshop to best meet the needs of learners, considering age range, size, disabilities, or any other special needs of the group.
- *Shepherd*: key relational component; these leaders travel with a specific group through all the workshops in any rotation as they develop relationships with the learners in which faith is shared.

Faith is learned experientially and in relationship. Shepherds are the key relational component, since they move through workshops with the learners. Workshop leaders can work with shepherds to gear each workshop to the particular group of learners they will have this week: age ranges, learning styles, and experiences in previous workshops within this rotation.

About this Workshop

Art invites children to experience the awe and mystery of God. The arts are powerful because they tap our unconscious, removing barriers and allowing us to hear, see, and feel God more intimately. Children form pictures in their minds. In a sense, they can see the unseen. They see form, color, shape, and texture in the world around them. Through art, children are invited to pay attention to God's activity in their lives and share God's love with others.

The focus story for this rotation is John 9:1–41. At least one activity in each workshop is developed around this story. Each workshop will also have activities based on other scriptures that help us understand the importance of giving testimony and witness.

BIBLE STORY:

John 9:1–41

SUPPLEMENTAL STORIES:

Genesis 24:34–67

Psalms 116

Mark 8:27–38

Leader Preparation

Remember that in art the process is more important than the final product. Providing a variety of art supplies is the key to an effective art workshop. Children need good supplies to be creative. Provide a choice of materials, including: paint, markers, pencils, crayons, chalk, pastels, poster board, construction paper, banner paper, fabric, clay, play dough, building materials, recycled items, and so on. A dollar store is an inexpensive place to buy art supplies such as glitter, foam, tissue paper, craft sticks, felt, and so forth. You may also ask people in your congregation for donations of specific art

Exploring & Engaging Activities



1 Noticing God (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Quietly reflect on the past week. When did you experience God's loving presence? It may have been in a conversation with someone or in a part of nature or in something you read. Be prepared to share a brief scenario with the children of encountering God. Your story will need to be specific, yet open-ended enough that the children will be able to tell their own story. Gather a variety of supplies, including recycled materials, that children can attach to banner paper. The banner becomes three-dimensional when children use art supplies other than just markers or paint on the banner. A dollar store or recycling box is a good place to find a variety of art supplies.

Supplies:

- banner paper
- strong glue
- scissors
- art supplies such as: paints and brushes, markers, foam, felt, construction paper, fabric, ribbon, wrapping paper, tissue paper, glitter, foil, craft sticks, plastic bottle caps, feathers, pine cones, twigs, and so on
- (optional) sidewalk chalk

Tell the children about a time during the past week when you experienced God's presence in your daily life. We don't always name our experiences as being in the presence of God, but when we think back, we can see that God was in the moment. Invite the children to tell their own stories. You might ask: *Where did you see, hear, or feel God? Maybe it was when you were at home, at school, with friends, watching a movie, outside in nature, listening to music, or playing a sport. Perhaps someone said or did something nice for you.* Provide banner paper and art supplies. Invite the chil-

materials. Think about your learning environment. Some children may be inspired to create by listening to music. Others may work best in a quiet place away from the group. Be mindful of the language you use, and always find a favorable comment to make to each child. Affirm everyone's artwork as you explore what it means to share God's love with others through word and action.

Prayer: God of beauty, thank you for the gift of art and imagination. Help me affirm this gift in the children I lead. May I be attentive to your loving presence and share your love in all I do and say. Amen.

Workshop Development

For each workshop leaders may choose from nine activities that help learners engage the practice of faith. It is best to select at least one activity from "Exploring and Engaging Activities," at least one from "Discerning and Deciding Activities," and at least one from "Sending and Serving Activities." The first activity in each category is designed for "easy preparation" (able to be done with minimal preparation with supplies normally found at the church). Using all nine activities could take 90–120 minutes.

- To plan a session of 30–45 minutes, choose three activities, using one activity from each category.
- To plan a session of 45–60 minutes, choose four or five activities, using at least one activity from each category.

children to create a three-dimensional banner showing where God is present in their lives. Post the banner where others will see it or invite the congregation to come to the area and view it.

Option: Go outside and create sidewalk art.

2 One Thing I Know

Leader preparation: Prayerfully read and reflect on John 9:1–41. Think about the things you know to be true about God in your life. Gather supplies. You might want to read seven-year-old Tarak McClain's list of "Thirty Things I Believe," <http://tinyurl.com/7771bj>. This list is inspiring and may open the discussion with the children about what they know about God.

Supplies:

- newsprint or whiteboard and markers
- scrap paper, pencils
- T-shirt for each child
- permanent markers or fabric paints

When the man who was blind was healed, it wasn't long before the good news spread to his neighbors. He declared, "One thing I know. I was blind, but now I see!" When we give witness and testimony, we tell others what we have discovered about God. Invite the children to think about what they know to be true about God in their lives. Ask: *What do you believe about God in your life and in the world?* Brainstorm ideas and list them on newsprint or a whiteboard, such as: "God loves everyone. Peace comes from God. God is always with us. God's ways are good." Then invite them to design a T-shirt with words or symbols to convey one message about God. They may each sketch their design on paper and then copy it onto their T-shirt using markers or paints. Keep the design simple so it can be completed in the workshop time. As they wear their T-shirts, they will give testimony to God at work in their life.



3 Loving God's Stories

Leader preparation: Carefully explore the art "The Adoration of the Kings" by Jan Brueghel, the Elder. Brueghel brings Jesus' birth to life in the sixteenth century through meticulous realism. Reflect on the many stories in this painting. Make frames out of construction paper.

Supplies:

- artwork: "The Adoration of the Kings" by Jan Brueghel, the Elder, www.tinyurl.com/fp-uCCR
- black construction paper frames (4" x 6")
- art supplies
- paper

Invite the children to sit quietly and study the poster. The story of Jesus' birth is one of the best known and most loved stories of our scripture. Reflect on how this artist tells the story. Explore and identify the many little stories that are part of the big story in this artwork. Invite the children to place a frame on the artwork highlighting their favorite part of the story on the poster. Then ask the group to imagine it is the next day, and they are telling their favorite part of the story to their friends. Which part of the story would they tell? Provide art supplies and ask them to depict that part of the story. When we witness, we tell others about God's stories we love most!

Discerning & Deciding Activities



4 Kind Words and Actions (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Sit quietly with the poster “The Blind Pedlar” by Robert Mcgregor. Imagine yourself as the blind peddler. When have you experienced God through the kind action of another? Imagine yourself as the child. How does God use your kind actions to help others experience God? Gather supplies.

Supplies:

- artwork: “The Blind Pedlar” by Robert Mcgregor, www.tinyurl.com/fp-aprm
- sticky notes in two colors
- (optional) pastels, paper

Invite the children to quietly reflect on “The Blind Pedlar” by Robert Mcgregor. Welcome their observations. Ask the children what they like best about the artwork. *What might the child and peddler be saying to each other?* Ask the children to create dialogue for the child and the blind peddler on sticky notes. Share ideas and add notes to the poster. Wonder together: *What might the blind peddler experience about God through the child? When have you felt God using your actions to help others experience God? What are the kindest words anyone ever spoke to you? How do kind words and loving actions help us experience God?*

Option: Have the learners draw a picture using pastels of a time when they have felt God using their actions to help others experience God.

5 My Story

Leader preparation: Reflect on Genesis 24:34–67. Think about your life story so far. Where has God been with you in both ordinary and extraordinary events of your life? Create a time line to show your journey. Gather supplies.

Supplies:

- Bible
- paper
- art supplies, including clay or play dough

In Genesis 24, especially verses 34–41, Abraham’s servant gives testimony to God’s work in Abraham’s long life. Rebekah’s family listens to the story and discovers how God has been with Abraham in both ordinary and extraordinary events. Invite the children to create a time line for the events of their life. Show them an example of a time line. Encourage them to create (with words or symbols) three or four big events where God was present and three or four everyday events where they remember feeling God was near. They may create a time line using paper and art supplies or play dough or clay. Reflect: *When have you felt closest to God? When is it hard to feel or see God’s presence? How do you tell others about God’s presence in your life?*



6 Passing on Our Faith

Leader preparation: Spend time reflecting on the artwork “Hopi Virgin Mother and Child” by John Giuliani. Traditional icons attempt to give a human face to the presence of God. In this piece, the image of America’s indigenous people reveals God in a new way. How is our understanding of God shaped by where

we come from? There are two generations in this artwork. Who has taught you about God? How do children and youth learn about God from older people? How do intergenerational relationships in your congregation give witness to God's action? Gather supplies.

Supplies:

- artwork: "Hopi Virgin Mother and Child" by John Giuliani, www.tinyurl.com/fp-uccr
- condensed milk (not evaporated milk)
- food coloring or paint
- paper
- brushes

Invite the children to sit quietly and reflect on the artwork. Tell them the title, and welcome their comments and questions. Then ask them what they like about this artwork. *What might these two people be learning from each other about God? Who has taught you about following God? What can we learn from each other, especially from people who are a different age than we are?* Invite the children to create their own artwork, perhaps of themselves with someone older who helps them know God. Explain that this artwork was done with egg tempera. Invite the children to paint with colored condensed milk to create a similar effect. Condensed milk paint has a glossy finish and needs to dry flat overnight.

Sending & Serving Activities



7 The Witness of Baptism (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Read Mark 8:27–38. Spend time reflecting on the artwork "Baptism" by Hullis Mavruk. Recall your baptism.

Supplies:

- artwork: "Baptism" by Hullis Mavruk, www.tinyurl.com/fp-aphm
- (optional) pastor or guest to talk about baptism in your congregation

Invite the children to sit quietly and reflect upon the artwork. Welcome the children's observations. Then ask them what they remember about their baptism or a baptism they have seen. Recall that baptism is a gift from God. Through baptism, a baby, child, youth, or adult becomes part of God's family. Baptism is a witness to others. The congregation also promises to help the person follow God's ways. Talk about how baptism is celebrated in your congregation. Explore how baptism in your church may be similar to or different from baptism in this artwork. Reflect: Sometimes the person being baptized gives a testimony or public statement about why he or she wants to follow Jesus. Invite the children to think about one or two sentences they could say about what it means to follow Jesus. Have those who want to share those testimonies.

8 What Do You See?

Leader preparation: Read John 9:1-41. Study the poster “Blind Feeling” by Diana Ong. Gather supplies.

Supplies:

- artwork: “Blind Feeling” by Diana Ong, www.tinyurl.com/fp-apdo
- white paper
- pencils
- colored cellophane
- glue

Invite the learners to sit quietly and study “Blind Feelings” by Diana Ong. Wonder together about the artwork. *How many faces are in this artwork? Who are these people? What are they looking at? Do they all see the same things? Why is one eye white?* Welcome the children’s questions and observations. Then invite the children to draw profiles on white paper. Cover the profiles with colored cellophane shapes. Introduce the word “testimony” and “witness.” We use these words to describe how everyone sees God from his or her own perspective and has a story to tell. Invite the children to think about how they see and understand God. Affirm that we all know God in unique and special ways, just as we are known and loved by God.

9 Prayer as Witness

Leader preparation: Read Psalm 116, a prayer of testimony to God’s action in one’s life. Gather supplies.

Supplies:

- Bibles
- newsprint and marker
- art supplies, including heavy card stock paper (approximately 8½” by 11” folded in half) for each learner, markers, gel pens, stickers, and so on
- (optional) copies of prayers used in your congregational worship

Recall with the learners how prayer is one way to give testimony to our faith in God. We can pray anytime. Praying before meals is a simple way to thank God for the gift of life God provides through food. Ask the children to share any prayers they say regularly with their family. Then invite each child to create a table prayer card to use with his or her family at meal times. Children may wish to write their own prayers, use a prayer from the psalms, or copy a prayer used in congregational worship (such as the prayer Jesus taught). You might lead the group in writing a prayer together that each child could then copy. The children may decorate their prayer cards with art supplies.

Reflect

How did art open windows into the mystery and wonder of God? Reflect upon your time together. What questions did the children ask? What images and words did they use to give expression to their stories of faith? Take a moment to pray for each child by name. Pray that God’s story might become their story.

Giving Testimony and Witness



Workshop: Computer

About this Rotation

Testimony involves recognizing God's action in our lives and finding ways to express it meaningfully with others. This can take as many forms as the gifts that God has given us. It takes courage to give witness because of the deeply personal nature of faith journeys. For some this comes easily but for others it may be more difficult. To share our experiences in a public way involves the risk of becoming vulnerable. However, choosing to share our story creates opportunities for relationship and growth even in the face of resistance. Sharing our faith celebrates and honors encounters with the Holy and gives us a chance to deepen our awareness of God's work in our lives. Giving testimony invites others to do the same. Giving witness and listening to others' stories joins us to the universal story of God's ongoing transformative work in creation.

About Workshop Rotation

This method of education is informed by Dr. Howard Gardner's work on multiple intelligences, or the many individual ways learners apprehend and incorporate information into their own understandings and ways of being in the world.

For those new to Workshop Rotation, a little vocabulary:

- *Multiple intelligences*: ways of incorporating information, that is, visual/spatial, logical/mathematical, verbal/linguistic, bodily/kinesthetic, musical/rhythmic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalist.

- *Rotation*: the overarching story or concept that will be explored through a number of workshops focusing on different intelligences.
- *Workshop*: primary site of learning; workshop plans focus on one or two of the intelligences while incorporating others in a secondary way to give learners various experiential ways of understanding the rotation's overarching concept(s).
- *Workshop leader*: uses this curriculum to plan the workshop, adjusting each workshop to best meet the needs of learners, considering age range, size, disabilities, or any other special needs of the group.
- *Shepherd*: key relational component; these leaders travel with a specific group through all the workshops in any rotation as they develop relationships with the learners in which faith is shared.

Faith is learned experientially and in relationship. Shepherds are the key relational component, since they move through workshops with the learners. Workshop leaders can work with shepherds to gear each workshop to the particular group of learners they will have this week: age ranges, learning styles, and experiences in previous workshops within this rotation.

About this Workshop

Technology can open new windows of discovery about our relationship with God and others. Most children at your workshop may be quite computer literate. This workshop invites them to use the computer to encounter the Holy and deepen their awareness of God's action in their lives.

The focus story for this rotation is John 9:1–41. At least one activity in each workshop is developed around this story. Each workshop will also have activities based on other scriptures that help us understand the importance of encountering scripture.

BIBLE STORY:

John 9:1–41

SUPPLEMENTAL STORIES:

Isaiah 52:7–10

2 Peter 1:16–21

Acts 16:16–34

Psalms 25:1–10

Mark 8:27–38

Exploring & Engaging Activities



1 A Blog for God (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Reflect on Isaiah 52:7–10, a message of hope and peace. Think about the messages you send to others over the Internet through e-mails, Facebook, Twitter, or blogs. How can your Internet interactions be a witness of peace and good news to others?

Supplies:

- computers
- <http://blog.com/> (This is a free space to blog. You can find others if you Google blog.)

Ponder with the children: *How do people use computers to communicate? What messages do people send to others over the Internet? What kinds of messages give witness to others of God's action in our lives? What kinds of messages bring peace and hope to others?* After the juices are flowing, invite participants to create a blog that reflects something about their relationship with God. Recall how a blog is like an online diary, where people keep a running account of their personal lives. Encourage them to choose one part of their day where they felt God's presence and create a blog about it.

2 Good Choices

Leader preparation: Reflect on 2 Peter 1:16–21. Think about the myriad of choices children face when using the computer. How can they be "like a lamp shining in dark places"? Learn about the website Free Rice, <http://www.freerice.com>.

Supplies:

- computers
- Free Rice, <http://www.freerice.com>

Leader Preparation

Make sure you have computers available for your use. Two learners at each computer are ideal, three is quite workable, and four should be the maximum. Computers provide a lot of information. It is up to workshop leaders and shepherds to guide learners to engage the information and make it part of their lives. Faith is formed in relationships. Take time during the workshop to discuss the information presented and to welcome questions and insights the learners might have.

Prayer: *Loving Guide, be with me as I open doors to discover you through technology. Give me insight and understanding to help children make faith connections through the Internet. May we encounter your Holy presence with us in surprising and unexpected ways. Amen.*

Workshop Development

For each workshop leaders may choose from nine activities that help learners engage the practice of faith. It is best to select at least one activity from “Exploring and Engaging Activities,” at least one from “Discerning and Deciding Activities,” and at least one from “Sending and Serving Activities.” The first activity in each category is designed for “easy preparation” (able to be done with minimal preparation with supplies normally found at the church). Using all nine activities could take 90–120 minutes.

- To plan a session of 30–45 minutes, choose three activities, using one activity from each category.
- To plan a session of 45–60 minutes, choose four or five activities, using at least one activity from each category.

Ask the children to think about the games people play on the computer and Internet. *How can we make good choices in the games we play? What games bring us closer to God and to others? What games are poor choices?* Invite the children to make a positive contribution to world hunger by playing a game at Free Rice, <http://www.freerice.com>. As they give correct answers, grains of rice are donated and hungry tummies are filled!

3 Heroes of Faith

Leader preparation: Read and reflect on the story of Paul and Silas in jail, Acts 16:16–34. How were these men “heroes of faith”? Who is your “hero of faith”? What quality do you admire in that person? Think about how children are motivated by heroes. The language of “heroes” may be more familiar to your group than words like “testimony” and “witness.” Visit <http://myhero.com> and become familiar with navigating to the essays by clicking on “Stories.”

Supplies:

- Bibles
- computers
- <http://myhero.com>

Invite the group members to share a story or a “testimony” about a person they find heroic. What do they admire most in that person? Reflect on how stories inspire us and we are influenced by what we see other people do. Then read the story of Paul and Silas in jail, Acts 16:16–34. *How were these men “heroes of faith”? How did their testimony impact others?* Invite the children to visit <http://myhero.com>. Click on “Stories” (half way down the page). Then click on an essay from “Directory of Stories” (such as angels, animals, artists). Then click on a photo to take you to the story. Invite the children to read the story and then share what impressed them most about the hero. Perhaps your group could write a story of a faith hero they know and post it on the website.

Discerning & Deciding Activities

4 Guide Dogs (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Reflect on John 9:1–41 and how the man who was blind testifies to healing and faith in God. Then watch a video clip on YouTube and learn about raising a puppy for guide dogs at <http://tinyurl.com/3lkmq8a> or another website on YouTube.

Supplies:

- Bibles
- computers
- <http://tinyurl.com/3lkmq8a>

Recall with the children the story of the person who was blind in John 9:1–41. *How did he give witness to God’s action in his life?* Then talk about people who raise puppies to become Guide Dogs for the blind. Invite the children to watch <http://tinyurl.com/3lkmq8a>. After the video invite the children’s reflections and questions. Reflect: *What inspired you in the video? Where did you see God’s love in action? Who is a witness in this video?*

5 Crossword Puzzle

Leader preparation: Reflect on Acts 16:16–34, the story of Paul and Silas in jail. Become familiar with <http://tinyurl.com/3jbl9rk>. Try creating a crossword puzzle for this Bible story. Have some clues/words selected in advance to help children who get stuck.

Supplies:

- Bibles
- paper, pencils
- computers, printer
- <http://tinyurl.com/3jbl9rk>

Invite the children to read the story of Paul and Silas in jail, Acts 16:16–34. This is an amazing story of how two people witnessed to others through their faithful actions. Their testimony led the jailer and his family to faith in God. *What words stand out for you in this story? What words remind you of testimony or witness? When is it difficult to be a witness? Who might help us become better witnesses?*

Invite the children to create a crossword puzzle based on this story and their discussion using <http://tinyurl.com/3jbl9rk>. Be sure to include their words in the puzzle. Print the puzzles and invite the children to exchange with a friend and complete.

6 Witness on Facebook

Leader preparation: Reflect on Mark 8:27–38, the cost of following Jesus, especially verse 38, “Don’t be ashamed of me and my message. . . .”(Contemporary English Version). If you are on Facebook, think about the kind of witness you give through your social interactions.

Supplies:

- computers

Ask the children what they know about Facebook. Talk about how Facebook is a way for friends to connect with one another. Do any of them have a Facebook page? Recall how you use Facebook: you sign up, create a profile, and add information about yourself, such as favorite music, current employment, schools attended, photos. You can also join groups that you are interested in or that you support. Invite the children to imagine they are creating a profile page for Facebook. What profile would they create about themselves? What groups might they support or be interested in? How might their Facebook information witness to their faith in God? If they created a group page for your congregation, what might it look like? What content would be posted?

Sending & Serving Activities



7 Word Search (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Reflect on Psalm 25:1–10. Read it slowly, noticing what words or phrases speak to you. Become familiar with <http://tinyurl.com/3jbl9rk>. Try creating a word search.

Supplies:

- Bibles
- paper, pencils
- computers, printer
- <http://tinyurl.com/3jbl9rk>

Invite the children to think of the many times and places they can pray, such as home, church, bedtime, mealtime, before taking a test. Talk about how praying is one way that we give a witness to our faith. When we pray before eating a meal in a public place, we witness to our belief in prayer, thanking God. Invite the children to share prayers that they use with their families.

Lectio Divina is an ancient way of praying with scripture. It is Latin for “holy reading” and involves reading and meditating on scripture. Invite the children to read Psalm 25:1–10, a prayer for guidance and help. Read the psalm a second time and invite the children to identify words that catch their attention. Create a word search with those words or words of other familiar prayers at <http://tinyurl.com/3jbl9rk>. Print the word searches and invite the children to exchange with a friend and complete.

⑧ Serving as a Witness

Leader preparation: Reflect on how serving others is a way of witnessing to God’s action in the world. Familiarize yourself with <http://tinyurl.com/5qh4z9> or other service organizations.

Supplies:

- computers
- <http://tinyurl.com/5qh4z9>

Invite the children to learn about service opportunities as a way of witnessing to God’s action in the world. Direct them to <http://www.churchworldservice.org>. Church World Service works with partners to eradicate hunger and poverty and to promote peace and justice around the world. Ask the children to learn about CROP Hunger Walks, the Blankets program, and the CWS Kits program. Invite them to share their findings with the rest of the group.



⑨ Seeing God

Leader preparation: Reflect on John 9:1–41. Study the artwork “Blind Feeling” by Diana Ong. Gather supplies.

Supplies:

- artwork: “Blind Feeling” by Diana Ong
- www.tinyurl.com/fp-apdo
- computers
- digital camera
- photo paper

Recall John 9:1–41 where Jesus heals the man who is blind. This person sees life and faith in new ways and becomes a witness to others. Show the children the artwork “Blind Feeling” by Diana Ong. Welcome their observations and questions. Then wonder together: *How many faces are in this picture? I wonder who these people are, and why they are so close together. I wonder which person the bright white eye belongs to. I wonder what these people can see. I wonder if they see the same things.* Then talk about “testimony” and “witness,” words the church uses to describe

how each person sees God from his or her own perspective and has a story to tell. Ask the children to think about how they see God. What words would they use to describe God to someone who wants to get to know God?

Take digital images of your group, full faced or in profile. Photoshop them in various colors or effects and print them (multiple images per page). Create a collage, or cut and paste the images on a projected screen, moving them as desired by the children to create a class project, and then replicate the poster. Print when finished. Come up with some phrases that describe how the group sees God.

Reflect

Review your time together. Think of specific occasions when you noticed God at work in the stories the children shared. What did you learn about your group through their words and actions? Thank God for the holy moments of this workshop. Hold each child in prayer as you recall his or her face and voice.

Giving Testimony and Witness



Workshop: Drama

About this Rotation

Testimony involves recognizing God's action in our lives and finding ways to express it meaningfully with others. This can take as many forms as the gifts that God has given us. It takes courage to give witness because of the deeply personal nature of faith journeys. For some this comes easily, but for others it may be more difficult. To share our experiences in a public way involves the risk of becoming vulnerable. However, choosing to share our story creates opportunities for relationship and growth even in the face of resistance. Sharing our faith celebrates and honors encounters with the Holy and gives us a chance to deepen our awareness of God's work in our lives. Giving testimony invites others to do the same. Giving witness and listening to others' stories joins us to the universal story of God's ongoing transformative work in creation.

About Workshop Rotation

This method of education is informed by Dr. Howard Gardner's work on multiple intelligences, or the many individual ways learners apprehend and incorporate information into their own understandings and ways of being in the world.

For those new to Workshop Rotation, a little vocabulary:

- *Multiple intelligences*: ways of incorporating information, that is, visual/spatial, logical/mathematical, verbal/linguistic, bodily/kinesthetic, musical/rhythmic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalist.
- *Rotation*: the overarching story or concept that will be explored through a number of workshops focusing on different intelligences.

- *Workshop*: primary site of learning; workshop plans focus on one or two of the intelligences while incorporating others in a secondary way to give learners various experiential ways of understanding the rotation's overarching concept(s).
- *Workshop leader*: uses this curriculum to plan the workshop, adjusting each workshop to best meet the needs of learners, considering age range, size, disabilities, or any other special needs of the group.
- *Shepherd*: key relational component; these leaders travel with a specific group through all the workshops in any rotation as they develop relationships with the learners in which faith is shared.

Faith is learned experientially and in relationship. Shepherds are the key relational component, since they move through workshops with the learners. Workshop leaders can work with shepherds to gear each workshop to the particular group of learners they will have this week: age ranges, learning styles, and experiences in previous workshops within this rotation.

About this Workshop

Drama is a powerful way to help learners understand what it means to give testimony or voice to God's work in their lives. Some people learn best when they participate in active, whole-body activities. Drama stimulates the imagination, builds self-confidence, and develops awareness of others. Through drama, learners are invited to recognize God's presence and share God's good news with others.

The focus story for this rotation is John 9:1–41. At least one activity in each workshop is developed around this story. Each workshop will also have activities based on other scriptures that help us understand the importance of encountering scripture.

BIBLE STORY:

John 9:1–41

SUPPLEMENTAL STORIES:

Acts 16:16–34

Psalms 25:1–10

Matthew 5:13–20

Exploring & Engaging Activities



1 Actions that Testify (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Review Acts 16:16–34, especially verse 25.

Supplies:

- Bible

Acts 16:16–34 tells the story of Paul and Silas in jail because of their witness to faith. While they are in prison, they pray and sing praises to God. Other prisoners listen to the testimony of Paul and Silas as they sing and pray. The actions of these two men testify to their strong faith in God. Invite the children to work in small groups to create tableaus (body poses) to show an action that testifies to their faith in God, such as praying, singing, giving, doing acts of kindness, and so on.



2 Now I See (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Prayerfully read and reflect on John 9:1–41. Prepare to retell it to the children. Gather props and simple costumes.

Supplies:

- Bible or children's Bible storybook, such as *The Pilgrim Book of Bible Stories* (Pilgrim Press, Cleveland, USA, 2003) or *The Family Story Bible* by Ralph Milton (Northstone, Kelowna BC, 1996)
- props and costumes

Have learners close their eyes and imagine what it might be like to be blind from birth. Tell John 9:1–41 to the children from the Bible or a Bible storybook. Then invite them to dramatize the story as you retell it. Invite them to provide narration for their characters. Recruit these volunteers: man who is blind, parents of man who is blind, Jesus, Jesus' disciples (any number), neighbors (any number), Pharisees/religious leaders (any number). Provide props and costumes. Tell the story

Leader Preparation

Remember that in drama the process is more important than the final product. The goal of this workshop is not a polished performance. Plan well, but don't become enslaved to your plans. Watch for sacred moments, those times when spontaneous things happen that are very important to the learners. Use those moments to deepen the children's awareness of God's work in their lives. Create a costume box with a variety of hats, scarves, jackets, and other items of clothing. Shop at secondhand stores or ask people in your congregation for donations of dress-up clothes. Props help children enter into the spirit of the drama. Change the choice of props to

add variety and maintain interest. Collect puppets or make your own from clean, old socks. Cover a small table with a quilt to make a house or tent. Begin your activity time with warm-up exercises. Set ground rules before you begin. Affirm everyone's contribution as you explore what it means to share God's love with others by what we say and do.

Prayer: Creative God, thank you for the gift of imagination and creativity. Open my eyes to see your love and grace at work in my life. As I lead these children, may I represent you through my words and actions. May we learn more about your saving power from one another. Amen.

Workshop Development

For each workshop leaders may choose from nine activities that help learners engage the practice of faith. It is best to select at least one activity from "Exploring and Engaging Activities," at least one from "Discerning and Deciding Activities," and at least one from "Sending and Serving Activities." The first activity in each category is designed for "easy preparation" (able to be done with minimal preparation with supplies normally found at the church). Using all nine activities could take 90–120 minutes.

- To plan a session of 30–45 minutes, choose three activities, using one activity from each category.
- To plan a session of 45–60 minutes, choose four or five activities, using at least one activity from each category.

slowly. If time permits, retell the story, inviting the children to switch characters. After the story, use these reflecting questions or your own:

- What part of this story do you find most amazing?
- I wonder how the man who was blind was changed because of Jesus. What do you wonder?
- How did his healing touch other people, such as the neighbors, his parents, and the Pharisees?
- I wonder how Jesus changes us. What do you wonder?
- I wonder how we see differently when we get to know Jesus. What do you wonder?
- How might we share the amazing things God does in our life with others?

3 Using My Abilities

Leader preparation: On small slips of paper, print an activity learners in your group are likely to be good at, such as: sports, drama, art, music, dance, computers, math, building/construction, caring for creation, cooking, babysitting younger children, being a leader, reading, writing, sharing money, visiting with seniors, fixing things, helping others, and so forth.

Supplies:

- props and costumes
- slips of paper with "gifts" on it as suggested above

God gifts us each in unique ways. When we use our gifts and abilities to serve others we give witness and testimony to God at work in our lives. Pass out slips of papers prepared ahead of time. Invite the learners to take a few minutes to prepare a short pantomime about the activity on their paper. The activity may not be one of their strengths, but this is a good opportunity to "try on" a new skill. They will each present a pantomime to the group, and the group will try to guess the activity. After the pantomimes, talk about how we can use our gifts and abilities to show others the way to God. For example, when we care for younger children, we show God's patient love and care. Ask what abilities make it easier to share how God is at work. Which activities might be more difficult to use as a witness for God? What else is required—perhaps courage or patience? Which of these abilities do learners in your group have? What activities would they be willing to try this week?

Discerning & Deciding Activities



4 People and Places (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Gather supplies.

Supplies:

- props and costumes
- slips of paper
- two baskets

Invite the learners to brainstorm people they might meet and places they might go in a typical week. As they share ideas, print each idea on a separate slip of paper. Place the papers in two baskets: "people" and "places." Recall that wherever we go and whomever we meet, we have opportunities to share the good news of

God with others. Ask the children to take a slip of paper from each basket. Invite the children to work with a partner to create a skit about being a witness for God using the people and places on their slips of paper. Give the learners time to prepare their skits and then present to the group.



5 Everyone Sees God's Power

Leader preparation: Prayerfully read and reflect on John 9:1–41. Make copies of “Readers Theater,” Attachment: Activity 5.

Supplies:

- “Readers Theater,” Attachment: Activity 5

Invite the learners to participate in a Readers Theater to tell John 9:1–41. Recruit these readers: Narrator, Jesus, Man, Neighbor 1, Neighbor 2, Neighbor 3, Phari-sees (any number), Parents. Invite beginning readers to read with more confident readers. After the readers theater, pose these reflection questions or questions of your own:

- What new discoveries did you make as your character?
- What phrase do you remember most from the readers theatre?
- What is the most amazing thing God has done in our life?
- What is hardest about sharing God’s good news with others?
- How does God give us courage as we share the good news?



6 Making the Right Choice

Leader preparation: Print and cut apart the scenarios on the attachment. Fold them and place them in a basket or other container. If you know of other choices children in your group are facing, add a few of your own scenarios.

Supplies:

- props and costumes
- “Witness Scenarios,” Attachment: Activity 6
- basket or other container

In Acts 16:16–34, Paul and Silas could have escaped prison, but they chose to stay. This couldn’t have been an easy choice for Paul and Silas, but by making the right choice they were able to save the guard’s life, and the guard witnessed the love of Jesus Christ. We, too, are faced with tough choices. By making the right choice, we give witness to faith in God. In most situations, there can be more than one right choice.

Divide the group into smaller groups of three or four. Have someone draw a scenario from the container. Each small group is to role play the situation. How many different ways can they demonstrate making a good choice? Each good choice is a way to witness to your faith, to following Jesus. Talk about how each witness’s testimony and choice affected different people. After each role play, consider who saw Christ’s love in this choice and what kind of witness was given by the choice made. If time permits, invite the children to come up with their own scenarios to role play.

Sending & Serving Activities



7 Being God's Light (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Prayerfully read and reflect on Matthew 5:14–16. Gather props and simple costumes.

Supplies:

- Bible, such as *The Message*
- props and costumes

Invite someone to read Matthew 5:14–16 in a modern translation such as *The Message*. Recall how Jesus taught his followers to be like a light to the world so others would see the goodness of God. Invite the children to brainstorm how they might testify by bringing God's light to their world. What does God's light bring? (Love, joy, peace, comfort, hope, patience, kindness, and so on) Encourage the learners to think about how they might let God's light and love shine in their homes, at school, with their friends, in their neighborhoods, and in the global community. Ask them to work in small groups to create a skit. Assign each group a place such as at home, at school, with friends, and so on. Give them time to rehearse their skits and then present the skits to the rest of the group. Encourage the learners to put their skits into action in the coming week.

8 God Is with Us

Leader preparation: Gather supplies. Read Acts 16:16–34.

Supplies:

- puppets

Recall how God was with Paul and Silas when they were thrown in jail. God protected them and kept them safe even though they were in a scary situation. God is with us when we are alone or afraid. Invite the children to think of a difficult or scary situation they might face, such as being in a severe storm, getting lost, getting sick, or moving to a new school. Ask them to create a puppet play to show how God is present and how God protects and keeps them safe. Provide opportunity for them to share their skits with others (other rotation groups or the congregation).

9 God's Paths

Leader preparation: Read Psalm 25, especially verses 4–5.

Supplies:

- Bible

Psalm 25 is a prayer of trust in God. As we live and witness to God's ways, we can ask God for guidance and help. God's paths refer to the faithful way, that is, living and worshiping according to God's call. This psalm invites us to be open to God's teaching as we follow God's paths of peace and love. Ask one learner to read Psalm 25:4–5 while the rest of the learners create movements or choreograph these verses. The children may wish to present their creative movement during worship or share with another group. Creating movements for scripture is also a good way to internalize scripture.

Reflect

Take time to think back over this workshop. What new discoveries were made? Where did you recognize God's love and grace in action? What gifts and abilities did you affirm in the children? How was their awareness of God's work in their lives deepened? Take a moment to recall the face of each child. Pray that God's courage might go with them as they give witness and testimony to God's love.

Attachment: Activity 5

Readers Theater: John 9:1-41

Cast:

Narrator, Jesus, Man, Neighbor 1, Neighbor 2, Religious leaders (any number), Parent

Narrator: As Jesus walked along, he saw a man who was born blind. Jesus' disciples wondered whose fault it was that the man was blind.

Jesus: His blindness is a chance for God's power to be shown in his life. I came to do the work of the One who sent me. I am the light of the world.

Narrator: Then Jesus spit on the ground, made mud with his saliva, and put it on the man's eyes.

Jesus (to the man who was blind): Go and wash in the pool of Siloam.

Narrator: The man went and washed himself. Then he squinted his eyes.

Man: I can see! I can see!! I can see!!!

Neighbor 1: Is this the man who used to sit here and beg?

Neighbor 2: Yes, it is!

Neighbor 2: No, it can't be!

Man: Yes, it is! I am that man!

Narrator: The neighbors took the man to see the Pharisees, or religious leaders. They were concerned. They asked a lot of questions. Then they asked the man's parents to come in.

Pharisees: Is this your son?

Parents: This is our son who was born blind.

Pharisees: How can he now see?

Parents: We don't know who opened his eyes. Ask him!

Narrator: So the Pharisees called the man to come to them again.

Pharisees: We don't understand. How were your eyes opened?

Man: I told you already, but you would not listen. I was blind, but now I see. Do you also want to become his disciples?

Pharisees: We follow Moses! We don't know where this man named Jesus comes from.

Man: If Jesus did not come from God, he could not have healed me.

Pharisees: Are you trying to tell us what to believe?

Narrator: Then the leaders took the man by the arm and forced him out of the temple. Jesus heard what had happened. He went to find the man.

Jesus: Do you believe in the Son of man?

Man: Who is the Son of man?

Jesus: You have seen him. The Son of Man is the person speaking to you now.

Man: Yes, Lord, I believe.

Narrator: Then the man bowed down and worshiped Jesus.

Jesus: I came into the world so that those who are blind may see. But some of those who think they see are really blind.

Attachment: Activity 6

Witness Scenarios

You are invited to a friend's house for a sleepover with other friends from your class at school. One of the friends brings a scary movie to watch. You notice that another friend looks uncomfortable. What do you do?

Your teacher asks everyone to hand in his or her math homework before lunch. A friend who sits next to you realizes she doesn't have her assignment done and asks to quickly copy your answers. You know she forgot the last assignment and she'll be in trouble this time without her homework. What do you do?

You are playing with three friends at recess. Two of your friends begin teasing the other friend. You can also see that the teased friend is getting upset even though the other friends are just joking. What do you do?

Your friends are complaining about one of your teachers. One friend starts talking about how "retarded" the teacher is. Even though you don't like the teacher much, you don't like the friend's language. What do you do?

Giving Testimony and Witness



Workshop: Food

About this Rotation

Testimony involves recognizing God’s action in our lives and finding ways to express it meaningfully with others. This can take as many forms as the gifts that God has given us. It takes courage to give witness because of the deeply personal nature of faith journeys. For some this comes easily, but for others it may be more difficult. To share our experiences in a public way involves the risk of becoming vulnerable. However, choosing to share our story creates opportunities for relationship and growth even in the face of resistance. Sharing our faith celebrates and honors encounters with the Holy and gives us a chance to deepen our awareness of God’s work in our lives. Giving testimony invites others to do the same. Giving witness and listening to others’ stories joins us to the universal story of God’s ongoing transformative work in creation.

About Workshop Rotation

This method of education is informed by Dr. Howard Gardner’s work on multiple intelligences, or the many individual ways learners apprehend and incorporate information into their own understandings and ways of being in the world.

For those new to Workshop Rotation, a little vocabulary:

- *Multiple intelligences*: ways of incorporating information, that is, visual/spatial, logical/mathematical, verbal/linguistic, bodily/kinesthetic, musical/rhythmic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalist.
- *Rotation*: the overarching story or concept that will be explored through a number of workshops focusing on different intelligences.

- *Workshop*: primary site of learning; workshop plans focus on one or two of the intelligences while incorporating others in a secondary way to give learners various experiential ways of understanding the rotation's overarching concept(s).
- *Workshop leader*: uses this curriculum to plan the workshop, adjusting each workshop to best meet the needs of learners, considering age range, size, disabilities, or any other special needs of the group.
- *Shepherd*: key relational component; these leaders travel with a specific group through all the workshops in any rotation as they develop relationships with the learners in which faith is shared.

Faith is learned experientially and in relationship. Shepherds are the key relational component, since they move through workshops with the learners. Workshop leaders can work with shepherds to gear each workshop to the particular group of learners they will have this week: age ranges, learning styles, and experiences in previous workshops within this rotation.

About this Workshop

Food is present in many Bible stories. Throughout time, food has brought people together. Food is used in celebrations all over the world. Giving and receiving hospitality continues to be a powerful way to experience God's love and care. Food nourishes the body, soul, and spirit. Children enjoy using their senses to taste, touch, and smell different ingredients. Through the preparation and sharing of food, learners are invited to give witness to God's loving presence in their lives.

The focus story for this rotation is John 9:1–41. At least one activity in each workshop is developed around this story. Each workshop will also have activities based on other scriptures that help us understand the importance of encountering scripture.

BIBLE FOCUS STORY:

John 9:1–41

SUPPLEMENTAL STORIES:

Matthew 5:13–20

Isaiah 52:7–10

Genesis 24:34–67

Leader Preparation

Some activities in this workshop require the use of a kitchen. Make arrangements if necessary. Be sure children wash their hands properly before preparing and serving food. Practice safety when working in the kitchen. Check for any allergies among the learners you will have in this workshop.

Take time to prepare yourself. Hold a piece of bread in your hand. Quietly reflect upon how God nourishes you. Bring to mind a meal shared with

Exploring & Engaging Activities



1 Stories of Food (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Gather supplies. Think about a special meal you shared with others.

Supplies:

- loaf of unsliced bread
- a sleeve or towel of some sort to put around the bread so not everyone is handling the bread

Invite the children to gather together in a circle. Ask them to think quietly about a time when they enjoyed a special meal. *Who was at the meal? What did you eat? What made the meal special? How did you experience God's loving presence in that meal?* Then pass around a loaf of bread. As the bread comes around, invite each to break off a piece of bread and share his or her memory of a special meal. Stories connect us to one another and to God. When we share our stories with others, we are giving testimony to God's presence in our lives. After everyone has shared, offer a prayer of thanksgiving for the stories shared and a prayer of blessing for the bread. Eat together.



2 Stained Glass Cookies

Leader preparation: Make copies of the attachment with the instructions for stained glass cookies. Gather supplies and ingredients for making cookies. Reflect on Matthew 5:14–16.

Supplies:

- sugar cookie dough
- cookie sheets
- parchment paper

friends or family. How did you experience God in that gathering? Eat the bread as you thank God for the gift of food and for the way it nourishes your spirit and soul.

Prayer: *Bread of Life, thank you for the gift of food. Nourish me so I may lead these learners into a deeper awareness of you. Amen.*

Workshop Development

For each workshop leaders may choose from nine activities that help learners engage the practice of faith. It is best to select at least one activity from “Exploring and Engaging Activities,” at least one from “Discerning and Deciding Activities,” and at least one from “Sending and Serving Activities.” The first activity in each category is designed for “easy preparation” (able to be done with minimal preparation with supplies normally found at the church). Using all nine activities could take 90–120 minutes.

- To plan a session of 30–45 minutes, choose three activities, using one activity from each category.
- To plan a session of 45–60 minutes, choose four or five activities, using at least one activity from each category.

- thirty hard candies in different colors, such as Life Savers
- plastic bags
- wooden mallet or hammer
- “star” cookie cutters
- plastic knives
- oven
- “Stained Glass Cookies,” Attachment: Activity 2
- (optional) pictures of stained glass windows

We give witness to faith in God when others see God at work in us. We are like stained glass windows reflecting the light and love of God. Invite learners to make stained glass cookies using the directions on the attachment. As they work ask: *How can we let our light shine and show others the way to God? What behaviors help others see God? Where are the places in our neighborhood and world that need the light of God? What might prevent us from letting our light shine?*

Make plans to serve the cookies at a fellowship time with the congregation, or take the cookies to church members who are ill or homebound or in a nursing home. Perhaps there are some who have not been to church recently. A gift of freshly baked cookies is a way to tell them they are missed—a way to witness!



3 Sowing Seeds

Leader preparation: Spend time reflecting on the artwork “The Sower” by Vincent van Gogh. Display it where your group can see it. Gather supplies.

Supplies:

- artwork: “The Sower” by Vincent van Gogh www.tinyurl.com/fp-uocr2
- washed fruit such as apples, melons, oranges, bananas, pears, kiwis, grapes, blueberries, and strawberries
- knives to cut fruit (with adult supervision)
- (optional) utensils to make melon balls
- cups, small bowls, or plates and spoons for each child

Invite the children to quietly reflect on the artwork. Welcome their observations. Ask: *What kind of seeds might the sower be scattering? What might the seeds grow into? How might seeds be like the word of God? Ponder what the poster might tell us about sharing God’s word with others. Then show the children various kinds of fruit. Find the seeds in each fruit (some seeds are easier to find than others). Imagine what each seed might grow into. Then invite the children to make their own fruit salad in a bowl or arrange their fruit on a plate in an interesting design. Eat together and celebrate the way we can share God’s word with others.*

Discerning & Deciding Activities



4 The Best Food (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Gather supplies. Review Genesis 24:34–67, especially verses 10, 17–20, and 32–33.

Supplies:

- card stock paper cut into long, thin strips for menus
- fine-tipped markers or gel pens
- (optional) magazines with pictures of food

Recall Genesis 24:34–67, the story of Rebekah being chosen as a wife for Isaac. Hospitality is an important part of this story. The servant loaded the camels with valuable gifts, including gold, clothing, and food (Genesis 24:10). Rebekah offers water to Abraham’s servant and camels (Genesis 24:17–20). Then later, Laban, Rebekah’s brother, invites the servant into his home and brings him and his camels food (Genesis 24:32–33). When we share food with others, we give witness and testimony to faith in God. Invite the children to pretend they are creating the best meal they can imagine for Rebekah, Abraham’s servant, and the ten camels. What would be on the menu? Provide paper and markers or pens. When everyone has created a menu, read them to the group.

5 Sweet and Salty Treats

Leader preparation: Gather ingredients and supplies. Reflect on Matthew 5:13–16.

Supplies:

- pretzels, chocolate (white and/or dark), waxed paper, cellophane gift bags, ribbon, note cards, markers
- microwave oven
- bowl for melting chocolate
- spoon

Followers of Jesus are like “salt and light” in the world. We bring God’s “flavor” or goodness to others through our kind words and loving actions. Invite the learners to make a sweet and salty treat to share with someone who is going through a difficult time. Follow these steps:

1. Place the chocolate in a microwave safe bowl. Melt the chocolate in a microwave oven.
2. Dip pretzels in the chocolate.
3. Place the chocolate coated pretzels on waxed paper to cool.

When the pretzels are cool, put them in cellophane gift bags to give away. Write a note of encouragement about God’s love and care and attach to the bag with ribbon. Invite the children to give the treat to someone who needs encouragement.

6 Jesus Made Mud

Leader preparation: Make chocolate finger paint according to directions on the instant pudding and pie filling package. If you have a large group, double the recipe. Let pudding set in a refrigerator until it thickens and you are ready to use it. Reflect on John 9:1–41.

Supplies:

- 1 (4 oz) pkg. instant chocolate pudding/pie filling
- 2 cups cold milk
- white construction paper for each child
- Bible

Retell the story of John 9:1–41. Then invite the children to finger paint on white construction paper using chocolate finger paint. Ask the children to close their eyes while they paint. Imagine they are the man who was blind in John 9:1–41.

Reflect on how Jesus put mud on the man's eyes and the man could see again. Have the learners imagine what he was most excited about seeing and paint this on the paper. Ask them to imagine what he told others about his encounter with Jesus. Ponder: *How does Jesus help us see differently when we follow God's ways? What might we want to tell others about Jesus?* Be sure to let the artwork dry for several hours before hanging it up.

Sending & Serving Activities

7 Serving Others (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Review John 9:1–41. Make arrangements for the children to serve during a congregational fellowship time.

Supplies:

- refreshments for fellowship time
- newsprint or whiteboard and markers

Recall the story of Jesus healing a man born blind. Focus on the beginning of the story where the disciples wondered why the man was blind. Jesus said his blindness was an opportunity for God's works to be revealed or shown to others. One way we show God to others is by acts of service. Invite the children to serve beverages or refreshments to the congregation during a fellowship time. Talk about the importance of serving as a way to show God's love and care. You could serve stained glass cookies (Activity #2), fresh fruit (Activity #3), chocolate-dipped pretzels (Activity #5), popcorn (Activity #8), and beverages. If you use the food from one of the activities, write a brief summary of the children's discussion and the scripture text from that activity to display with the food. This is a way for the group to tell—witness to—the rest of the congregation about their discoveries related to giving testimony and witness.

8 You Are Like Salt

Leader preparation: Gather supplies and make popcorn. Reflect on Matthew 5:13.

Supplies:

- Bible
- large container of unsalted popcorn
- salt and other popcorn toppings (available at grocery or bulk food stores)
- bowls for each child
- water and cups

Read Matthew 5:13 and ponder what Jesus means when he says; "You are like salt for everyone on earth." Give each child a bowl of unsalted popcorn. Invite the children to taste the popcorn. Then pass out salt and other popcorn toppings for the children to add to their popcorn. *How does the salt and seasoning change the taste of the popcorn?* As followers of Jesus, we each bring our own "seasoning" to the world. Invite the children to name ways they can add seasoning to their world in the coming week. Have each child name one way. Provide drinks.

9 Messengers of Peace and Good News

Leader preparation: Gather supplies. Reflect on Isaiah 52:7–10. Locate information about a food bank in your community.

Supplies:

- poster board, banner paper, markers, scissors, glue
- large cardboard box, magazines, grocery flyers
- information about hunger in your community

We give witness to our faith by acts of peace and justice. Talk about hunger in your community and share information about a local food bank. Invite the children to organize a food drive in your congregation to collect food for the hungry. Make a large banner and posters listing the kind of items needed by the food bank. Decorate a box to receive food items. Place the food box and posters in the foyer of your church. Make arrangements to deliver the food after it is collected.

Reflect

As you reflect upon this session, think about the moments you experienced God's holy presence in food and in one another. Thank God for the seeds of faith growing in learners. Take time to visualize each learner and see the face of God in each one. Pray for them by name as they go out into their world to share Jesus, the bread of life.

Attachment: Activity 2

Stained Glass Cookies

You will need:

- refrigerated sugar cookie dough
- cookie sheets
- parchment paper
- thirty hard candies in different colors, such as Life Savers
- plastic bags
- wooden mallet or hammer
- “star” cookie cutters-plastic knives

What to do:

1. Preheat oven to 375° F (190° C). Line cookie sheets with parchment paper.
2. Remove candy wrappers and separate the candies by color into plastic bags. Use a mallet or hammer to crush the candies.
3. Roll refrigerated cookie dough to ¼ in (1 cm) thick. Cut into star shapes with cookie cutters.
4. Put unbaked cookies onto baking sheets. Cut out a small section from the middle with a plastic knife. Sprinkle some of the crushed candies into the empty section you made. It is best to use one color so the colors don't mix. Try not to let any candy specks fall on the rest of the cookie.
5. Bake 8–10 minutes. Let the cookies cool in the pan so the candy middle has time to harden.
6. Hold the finished cookies up to the light before you eat them.

Giving Testimony and Witness



Workshop: Games

About this Rotation

Testimony involves recognizing God's action in our lives and finding ways to express it meaningfully with others. This can take as many forms as the gifts that God has given us. It takes courage to give witness because of the deeply personal nature of faith journeys. For some this comes easily, but for others it may be more difficult. To share our experiences in a public way involves the risk of becoming vulnerable. However, choosing to share our story creates opportunities for relationship and growth even in the face of resistance. Sharing our faith celebrates and honors encounters with the Holy and gives us a chance to deepen our awareness of God's work in our lives. Giving testimony invites others to do the same. Giving witness and listening to others' stories joins us to the universal story of God's ongoing transformative work in creation.

About Workshop Rotation

This method of education is informed by Dr. Howard Gardner's work on multiple intelligences, or the many individual ways learners apprehend and incorporate information into their own understandings and ways of being in the world.

For those new to Workshop Rotation, a little vocabulary:

- *Multiple intelligences*: ways of incorporating information, that is, visual/spatial, logical/mathematical, verbal/linguistic, bodily/kinesthetic, musical/rhythmic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalist.
- *Rotation*: the overarching story or concept that will be explored through a number of workshops focusing on different intelligences.

- *Workshop*: primary site of learning; workshop plans focus on one or two of the intelligences while incorporating others in a secondary way to give learners various experiential ways of understanding the rotation's overarching concept(s).
- *Workshop leader*: uses this curriculum to plan the workshop, adjusting each workshop to best meet the needs of learners, considering age range, size, disabilities, or any other special needs of the group.
- *Shepherd*: key relational component; these leaders travel with a specific group through all the workshops in any rotation as they develop relationships with the learners in which faith is shared.

Faith is learned experientially and in relationship. Shepherds are the key relational component, since they move through workshops with the learners. Workshop leaders can work with shepherds to gear each workshop to the particular group of learners they will have this week: age ranges, learning styles, and experiences in previous workshops within this rotation.

About this Workshop

Games have many positive benefits. They are fun to play, they boost self-esteem, and they build interpersonal skills. Games can encourage cooperation. Children who keep active are better able to handle physical and emotional challenges. Games engage the body and brain. This workshop invites children to use their whole bodies to put faith into action.

The focus story for this rotation is John 9:1–41. At least one activity in each workshop is developed around this story. Each workshop will also have activities based on other scriptures that help us understand the importance of encountering scripture.

BIBLE FOCUS STORY:

John 9:1–41

SUPPLEMENTAL STORIES:

Isaiah 52:7–10

Psalms 25:1–10

***2 Timothy 4:6–8
and 16–18***

Leader Preparation

As you prepare to lead this workshop, find a large open playing space. Whenever possible, play outdoors. If the weather does not permit you to be outdoors, play inside in a space that allows children to move around. You may wish to begin your time with favorite warm-up games such as "Duck, Duck, Goose," "Red Light, Green Light," or "Simon Says." When playing workshop games, clearly explain the rules of the games. Offer positive support and affirmation to all players. Take time to debrief after a game is played, making connections between the game and what it means to live a life of testimony for God. Provide water and healthy

Exploring & Engaging Activities

① The Gift of Sight

Leader preparation: Reflect on John 9:1–41. Gather supplies.

Supplies:

- blindfolds, one for each learner

Review the story of the man born blind in John 9:1–41. Imagine what life was like before Jesus healed him. Invite the children to be blindfolded. Ask for a volunteer to be the leader, who is not blindfolded. The leader chooses the path, moving around the open area. The other children form a train by putting their hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them. If your group is careful with this activity, it is also possible to blindfold the leader. The blindfolded leader will need to move slowly and rely on his or her senses of touch and sound to find the way. Reflect: *How does Jesus change us when we say yes to following God's ways? How do we see life differently? How is our life a witness to others?*

② Acts of Kindness

Leader preparation: Think about who has shown you God's love through acts of kindness. We witness through both our words and actions. Gather supplies.

Supplies:

- CD player, CD
- chairs (one less than number of players)

snacks if the game is strenuous. Encourage children to use their energy in a positive way.

Prayer: Creator God, you have given us amazing bodies to love and serve you. Fill us with your energy for living. May we glorify you in all our activity. Amen.

Workshop Development

For each workshop leaders may choose from nine activities that help learners engage the practice of faith. It is best to select at least one activity from “Exploring and Engaging Activities,” at least one from “Discerning and Deciding Activities,” and at least one from “Sending and Serving Activities.” The first activity in each category is designed for “easy preparation” (able to be done with minimal preparation with supplies normally found at the church). Using all nine activities could take 90–120 minutes.

- To plan a session of 30–45 minutes, choose three activities, using one activity from each category.
- To plan a session of 45–60 minutes, choose four or five activities, using at least one activity from each category.

One way we show others that we are followers of Jesus is through acts of kindness. We witness to God’s action in our lives through words and kind deeds. Invite the children to think about acts of kindness they can do for others. Then play “musical chairs” (without the elimination of a chair each time). When the music stops, the child standing names one act of kindness he or she can do for someone in the coming week.

③ God’s Messengers

Leader preparation: Reflect on Isaiah 52:7–10. Gather enough supplies for two teams.

Supplies (for each team):

- marker (rope, tape)
- pair of big shoes
- scroll with the message “Good news! You are saved. There will be peace.”
- chair

Like the prophet Isaiah, God calls us to be messengers of peace. When we bring peace to people and places of conflict, we give testimony to God’s action in our world. Invite the learners to play a relay game to practice being God’s messengers of peace. Roll up the two scrolls and place one on each chair at the far end of the playing space. Divide the learners into equal teams. Explain the relay:

- Team lines up behind a marker.
- The first person on each team puts on “shoes of peace” and runs to the chair at the other end of playing area.
- The person unrolls the scroll with the message of peace, climbs up on the chair, and proclaims the message.
- The person then rolls up the scroll, places it back on the chair, and returns to the next person on the team, who repeats the sequence, and so on.

The game is finished when each team has completed the relay and is sitting down. After the game, talk about how we share messages of peace today through our words and actions.

Discerning & Deciding Activities

④ God Stands by Me and Gives Me Strength (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Reflect on 2 Timothy 4:16–18. Recall a time in your life when God stood by you and gave you strength.

Supplies:

- Bible

Read 2 Timothy 4:16–18. Paul says, “The Lord stood by me and gave me strength.” These words are good to remember especially in difficult times when we feel afraid, alone, or discouraged. Sometimes we stand alone or need courage when we give witness or testimony to our faith. Sometimes we stand with others who are giving witness to God. Sometimes others stand with us. Invite the children to play a game. Explain the rules: Everyone runs around in the playing area. The

leader gives instructions, such as “three people linking arms.” Everyone forms groups and follows the instructions. The leader continues with instructions, such as “four people together doing jumping jacks,” “two people sitting back to back,” “one person running on the spot,” and so on.

5 Show Me God’s Path

Leader preparation: Familiarize yourself with labyrinths or walking prayers. Reflect on Psalm 25:4–5. Gather supplies.

Supplies:

- Bible
- yarn in different colors, one ball for each child
- quiet meditative music
- scissors, in case of tangles

Give each learner a ball of yarn. Make sure each child has a different color. Invite them to create paths with their yarn. They may lay down the yarn behind them as they walk around. Encourage them to make a path around obstacles (under tables, around chairs, between pews) and over other learners’ yarn. The finished result will be a colorful web of yarn. Have them exchange balls of yarn and follow it back, so that each child is following a path laid by someone else. Turn on quiet music, and walk silently through the exercise. Suggest that they repeat the phrase “show me your path” as they walk through their labyrinth. Explain that many cultures use forms of walking meditation to connect to the Divine. Walking while praying is a way of focusing the mind. Reflect upon Psalm 25:4–5. The psalmist is asking for help finding God’s path, but has the patience and trust to wait to find it.

6 Beautiful Feet

Leader preparation: Reflect on Isaiah 52:7–10. Gather supplies.

Supplies:

- Bible
- balls
- pieces of rope or fabric

Invite a learner to read Isaiah 52:7–10. In this passage, our feet are called “beautiful.” Invite the children to play some favorite games involving feet. Choose from their favorite games or use some of these games as time allows: wheelbarrow race, two-legged race, or dodge ball (kick ball instead of throwing it). Take time to debrief: *How can we use our feet and other parts of our body to share God’s peace and good news with others?*

Sending & Serving Activities



7 God’s Love Spreads (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Gather supplies and the snack. Familiarize yourself with the rules of this game. It is played like “octopus tag” and best played in a large open space. Mark off a playing area. At both ends of the playing area, mark off an area large enough to hold the players.

Supplies:

- rope or masking tape
- snack (be sensitive to any food allergies in the group)

When we give witness and testimony, we share God's love with others. There is no limit to how far and wide God's love can spread. Invite the learners to play "God's Love Spreads" tag. Point out the boundary lines. Choose one child to be "It." This child stands in the middle of the playing area. The other children gather at one end of the playing area. When the child in the middle yells "Good News!" all the others run as fast as they can to the other end of the field. "It" attempts to touch them. If they are tagged, they link arms with "It." They then act as additional "arms" and assist "It" in tagging others. Continue playing until everyone is connected to one another. The last person to be tagged may begin a new game. Serve a snack and talk about ways to include everyone at school or play.

8 Stomp Out Injustice

Leader preparation: Reflect on Isaiah 57:7–10. Blow up one or two balloons per child in your group. Tie a string to the balloon. The string must be long enough to fit around a child's ankle with about 12" to spare.

Supplies:

- Bible
- newsprint or whiteboard and markers
- balloons (two per child)
- string cut in 24" lengths

Invite a learner to read Isaiah 57:7–10. As God's messengers, we use all parts of our body to serve God, including our feet. Isaiah talks about using our feet to bring peace and good news to others. Some people use their feet in marches or protests as they speak out against issues of injustice. Brainstorm with the children some justice issues in their community they could help to "stomp out." Record their ideas on newsprint or a whiteboard. Then pass out balloons and ask learners to print on each balloon one injustice that they would like to take a stand against. Tie the balloons to ankles. Designate a playing area to play the game "balloon break." Children may use their feet to try to break one another's balloons. Everyone is a winner when all the balloons (or injustices) are stomped out.

9 Reaching the Goal

Leader preparation: Read and reflect on 2 Timothy 4:6–8. Gather supplies. Determine a playing area.

Supplies:

- Bible
- Frisbees (outdoor playing) or mini-disks (indoor playing)

Paul reminds us that following Jesus is like running a race. We keep our goal in mind so we stay on track and remain faithful. We are promised a "crown of righteousness" as we look toward the future. Invite the children to play "Frisbee golf." Ask one player to pick a spot you can see, such as a tree trunk or a table leg. This is the goal. Each player takes turns throwing a disk at the goal. After everyone has taken a turn, the player whose disk is furthest from the goal gets to try again, and then the player whose disk is next furthest, and so on, until all the disks have

hit the goal. Use the old goal as your starting place, and have a new player pick a new goal. Play a few rounds. Then reflect: *What are some goals we might have as followers of Jesus? How often do you hit those goals on the first shot? In the game, what happens when you feel frustrated that you aren't hitting the goal? How can other people support and encourage you? When you miss God's goals, how do you feel? Where do you find encouragement? How can you witness by hitting God's goals? How can you witness even when you miss? How can you witness to other people who are trying?*

Reflect

This session engaged the learners' bodies, minds, and spirits as they explored what it means to give witness to their faith. What activities connected with the children? How did the children interact with one another? What new insights did they make? Take time to pray for each child. Hold them before our faithful God in grateful thanks.

Giving Testimony and Witness



Workshop: Music

About this Rotation

Testimony involves recognizing God's action in our lives and finding ways to express it meaningfully with others. This can take as many forms as the gifts that God has given us. It takes courage to give witness because of the deeply personal nature of faith journeys. For some this comes easily, but for others it may be more difficult. To share our experiences in a public way involves the risk of becoming vulnerable. However, choosing to share our story creates opportunities for relationship and growth even in the face of resistance. Sharing our faith celebrates and honors encounters with the Holy and gives us a chance to deepen our awareness of God's work in our lives. Giving testimony invites others to do the same. Giving witness and listening to others' stories joins us to the universal story of God's ongoing transformative work in creation.

About Workshop Rotation

This method of education is informed by Dr. Howard Gardner's work on multiple intelligences, or the many individual ways learners apprehend and incorporate information into their own understandings and ways of being in the world.

For those new to Workshop Rotation, a little vocabulary:

- *Multiple intelligences*: ways of incorporating information, that is, visual/spatial, logical/mathematical, verbal/linguistic, bodily/kinesthetic, musical/rhythmic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalist.
- *Rotation*: the overarching story or concept that will be explored through a number of workshops focusing on different intelligences.

- *Workshop*: primary site of learning; workshop plans focus on one or two of the intelligences while incorporating others in a secondary way to give learners various experiential ways of understanding the rotation's overarching concept(s).
- *Workshop leader*: uses this curriculum to plan the workshop, adjusting each workshop to best meet the needs of learners, considering age range, size, disabilities, or any other special needs of the group.
- *Shepherd*: key relational component; these leaders travel with a specific group through all the workshops in any rotation as they develop relationships with the learners in which faith is shared.

Faith is learned experientially and in relationship. Shepherds are the key relational component, since they move through workshops with the learners. Workshop leaders can work with shepherds to gear each workshop to the particular group of learners they will have this week: age ranges, learning styles, and experiences in previous workshops within this rotation.

About this Workshop

Music connects us to the Divine. Where words fail, music speaks. Musical activities help us get in touch with the rich and diverse symphony that is God's kingdom. Musical/rhythmic learners have the ability to produce and appreciate music and think in terms of sounds, rhythms, and patterns. Through music and rhythm, children are invited to discover what it means to give testimony and witness to God's work in their lives. Some attribute St. Augustine with the saying, "One who sings prays twice."

The focus story for this rotation is John 9:1–41. At least one activity in each workshop is developed around this story. Each workshop will also have activities based on other scriptures that help us understand the importance of encountering scripture.

BIBLE FOCUS STORY:

John 9:1–41

SUPPLEMENTAL STORIES:

Psalms 116

Matthew 5:13–20

Mark 8:27–38

Leader Preparation

"Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come into his presence with singing."

—Psalm 100:1–2

Be brave and enthusiastic as you lead this workshop. Let the children see that you enjoy the rhythm and melody of music. Model joyful celebration. You don't have to be a great musician to invite learners into a worshipful music experience. Your positive, enthusiastic attitude, not your musical talent, is the key to getting learners involved in music.

Exploring & Engaging Activities



1 The Rhythm of Prayer (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Read and reflect on Psalm 116, a prayer of thanksgiving for God's action in our lives. Gather supplies.

Supplies:

- drums or other rhythm instruments, one per child
- candles, as many as children in your group

Prayer is an important part of giving testimony and witness. Through prayer, we hear God speaking to us. Through prayer we give testimony to God's action in our lives. Through prayer, God gives us courage to share our faith with others. Invite children to pray by being a part of a "drumming circle." Begin by lighting candles, one by one. As each candle is lit, a child begins drumming. There are no rules about drumming; allow it to happen freely from the heart. Ask the group to send prayers of healing or peace for others, aloud or quietly as they drum. Let the drumming and the rhythm slowly die out as you end your prayer time and drumming circle.

2 Come to the Lakeshore

Leader preparation: Read and reflect on Mark 8:27–38, "The Cost of Following Jesus." Learn the song and print the lyrics to "You Have Come Down to the Lakeshore" on newsprint. Decorate your room to convey a fishing theme.

Collect the following supplies: musical and rhythm instruments (including instruments from other cultures and instruments made from recycled household materials) such as drums, cymbals, chimes, tambourines, xylophone, kazoos, horns, and bells. Collect scarves, streamers, or ribbons for liturgical dance and creative movement. If possible, have someone present in your workshops that can play a simple accompaniment, perhaps on piano or guitar, and/or lead singing. If such a person is not available, find recordings of the songs either on CD or from the Internet or record your church musician playing them. Print on newsprint the lyrics to the songs you will be learning. Use large print so the children can easily read the words, or consider having children learn the lyrics by echoing you as you sing them. Decorate your gathering space with colorful pieces of fabric or music decorations. Check out school supply stores for three-dimensional music notes, bulletin board borders, and music posters. Play music as the children gather. This adds life to the gathering, sets the tone for your workshop, and helps children learn songs.

Prayer: Gracious Spirit of God, I rejoice in your love. I know it is because of your presence that your good news is being woven into the fabric of my life. I love you and give you thanks. Amen.

Supplies:

- song “Tú has venido a la orilla” (tune: Pescador de Hombres, 8.10.10 with refrain) www.tinyurl.com/fp-orilla
- newsprint or whiteboard and markers
- decorations: fishing pole, net, rope, life jacket, paddle, anchor, tackle box
- (optional) recording of song (YouTube is a good source for recordings of this song, such as <http://tinyurl.com/2bgafff>)

Learn and sing the song “Tú has venido a la orilla.” Ask: *What do we discover about a fisher’s life from this song? What does the fisher leave behind? How is this fisher a disciple? What testimony do we hear in this song?* The third verse begins with the words “You need my hands . . .” Write a new verse or verses of what God needs from your group. Create dance or liturgical movement to go with the verses. Then present the verses in congregational worship or to another group.

③ Let God’s Light Shine

Leader preparation: Review the song “This Little Light of Mine,” including its history (it was an anthem of the United States’ civil rights struggle of the 1960s). Reflect on Matthew 5:13–20, being salt and light for the world. Gather supplies and check Internet for instructions for making beeswax candles, such as <http://tinyurl.com/3vks3z7>.

Supplies:

- candle, matches, and candle snuffer or battery-operated tea light
- newsprint or whiteboard and markers
- sheets of beeswax, candle wicking, hair dryer, scissors
- musical instruments such as drums, cymbals, horns, tambourines, bells, and so on

Music is a powerful way to give testimony to God’s action in our lives. Gather the children together and light a candle in the middle of the gathering space. Sit quietly and invite the children to watch the light for a few minutes. End the silence with a short prayer and put out the candle with the snuffer. As you extinguish the candle, slowly raise the snuffer to allow the smoke to rise. You might say, “The light of God was in one place and now it is in all places.” Recall that the light of God is within each of us as followers of God. God wants us to let our light shine. One way we do this is by using our gifts and abilities to show others the way to God. Introduce the song, “This Little Light of Mine,” and sing it together using motions and instruments if desired. Invite the children to make a candle as a reminder to let their light shine in the coming week.

Workshop Development

For each workshop leaders may choose from nine activities that help learners engage the practice of faith. It is best to select at least one activity from “Exploring and Engaging Activities,” at least one from “Discerning and Deciding Activities,” and at least one from “Sending and Serving Activities.” The first activity in each category is

Discerning & Deciding Activities



④ Sing a Scene (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Read John 9:1–41. Gather supplies. If you are not gifted musically, invite someone to join you to help with this workshop.

Supplies:

- Bibles
- musical instruments

designed for “easy preparation” (able to be done with minimal preparation with supplies normally found at the church). Using all nine activities could take 90–120 minutes.

- To plan a session of 30–45 minutes, choose three activities, using one activity from each category.
- To plan a session of 45–60 minutes, choose four or five activities, using at least one activity from each category.

Invite the children to read John 9:1–41. Choose one scene from the story to sing. Decide who will play which part, and then instruct the actors to sing their parts. Provide musical instruments as well. The children may set the words to a melody of their own or to the tune of a familiar song, such as “Row, Row, Row Your Boat,” “Three Blind Mice,” “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star,” “God Is So Good,” and so on.

5 City of God

Leader preparation: Learn the song “You Are Salt for the Earth, O People.” Reflect on Matthew 5:13–20, being salt and light for the world. Gather supplies.

Supplies:

- song “You Are Salt for the Earth, O People” (tune: Bring Forth, irr. with refrain) www.tinyurl.com/fp-salt
- cardboard boxes
- glue
- paint
- Legos® or wooden blocks

Sing or listen to the song. This song describes the “City of God” as a reign of mercy, peace, and justice. Imagine your group was hired to build God’s city. What would it look like? Invite the children to work together to construct the city using various building materials. As you work, listen to the music and talk about what kind of activities might go on in God’s city.

6 Guide My Feet

Leader preparation: Reflect on 2 Timothy 4:6–8, especially verse 7. Learn the song “Guide My Feet.” Gather supplies.

Supplies:

- Bible
- art paper
- paint
- brushes
- song: “Guide My Feet, Lord” <http://tinyurl.com/2bzwbnh>

Read 2 Timothy 4:6–8, especially verse 7. Sometimes our faith journey is compared to running a race. As we share the good news with others, we trust God to guide us. God gives us strength and courage for the challenges we face. Teach the children the song “Guide My Feet” and sing it together. You can find the lyrics and hear the tune at the website listed in the supply list.

Set out art supplies and invite the children to paint what they heard God saying to them in the music. Invite them to share their artwork when they are done.

Sending & Serving Activities

7 I Love the Lord (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Choose a favorite praise song or hymn such as “This Is the Day” or “I Come with Joy.” Write the lyrics on newsprint or a whiteboard. Gather supplies.

Supplies:

- newsprint or whiteboard and marker
- ribbons, streamers, or strips of fabric

With the psalmist we can proclaim “I love the Lord!” When we praise God, we are giving witness and testimony to God’s goodness and encouraging others to do the same. Invite the learners to sing a favorite song of praise. They may create actions for the key phrases or choreograph the song with ribbons, streamers, or strips of fabric. Share the song with the congregation during worship or with another group such as senior adults.

Option: Listen to Whitney Houston singing “I Love the Lord,” <http://tinyurl.com/3s8zfnf>.

8 Marching Fingers

Leader preparation: Learn the song “Siyahamb’ ekukhanyen’ kwenkhos’.” Reflect on Matthew 5:13–20, being salt and light for the world. Gather supplies.

Supplies:

- song: “Siyahamb’ ekukhanyen’ kwenkhos’” (tune: Siyahambra, irr. South African song), www.tinyurl.com/fp-siyahamb
- old gloves, one for each child
- buttons
- needles
- thread or glue

Invite the children to sew or glue a button onto each finger of the glove. Then put on the gloves as you play the song “Siyahamb’ ekukhanyen’ kwenkhos’.” Invite the children to move their fingers along with the music, as if marching. Then talk about what God might be saying to them about witness through this song.

9 Marching in God’s Light

Leader preparation: Learn the song “Siyahamb’ ekukhanyen’ kwenkhos’.” Reflect on Matthew 5:13–20, being salt and light for the world. Gather supplies.

Supplies:

- song “Siyahamb’ ekukhanyen’ kwenkhos’” (tune: Siyahambra, irr. South African song), www.tinyurl.com/fp-siyahamb
- bottles
- electrical tape
- dried beans, barley, or rice
- (optional) book: *Praying with Our Feet* by Lisa D. Weaver

Part of the tradition of testimony includes giving witness through song. The song

“Siyahamba” (“We Are Marching in the Light of God”) was used as a freedom song in South Africa. This song tells the story of freedom from apartheid. Everyone is marching in God’s light regardless of the color of their skin. Invite children to sing this song and create new verses. Ask: *What else gives witness in the light of God?* Ideas might include: pray, sing, help, care, give, share, speak up, and so on. Make shakers by filling empty containers with dried beans or rice and use the shakers as you sing. As you sing, march around the church building, inside and outside if possible. The children may also use their body as a drum to make various sounds (hand clapping, open-mouth cheek patting, snapping fingers, stamping feet, slapping thighs).

Option: Read the book *Praying with Our Feet* by Lisa D. Weaver, a story about a group of friends who go on a peace march in the light of God.

Reflect

Take time to think back over the session. What were the highlights as you explored music and rhythm together? What new understandings and experiences of testimony and witness did the children have today? Thank God for the gift of children in our world. Take a moment to name each child in prayer. Imagine them using their gifts to share God’s love with others.

Giving Testimony and Witness



Workshop: Science

About this Rotation

Testimony involves recognizing God's action in our lives and finding ways to express it meaningfully with others. This can take as many forms as the gifts that God has given us. It takes courage to give witness because of the deeply personal nature of faith journeys. For some this comes easily, but for others it may be more difficult. To share our experiences in a public way involves the risk of becoming vulnerable. However, choosing to share our story creates opportunities for relationship and growth even in the face of resistance. Sharing our faith celebrates and honors encounters with the Holy and gives us a chance to deepen our awareness of God's work in our lives. Giving testimony invites others to do the same. Giving witness and listening to others' stories joins us to the universal story of God's ongoing transformative work in creation.

About Workshop Rotation

This method of education is informed by Dr. Howard Gardner's work on multiple intelligences, or the many individual ways learners apprehend and incorporate information into their own understandings and ways of being in the world.

For those new to Workshop Rotation, a little vocabulary:

- *Multiple intelligences*: ways of incorporating information, that is, visual/spatial, logical/mathematical, verbal/linguistic, bodily/kinesthetic, musical/rhythmic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalist.
- *Rotation*: the overarching story or concept that will be explored through a number of workshops focusing on different intelligences.

- *Workshop*: primary site of learning; workshop plans focus on one or two of the intelligences while incorporating others in a secondary way to give learners various experiential ways of understanding the rotation's overarching concept(s).
- *Workshop leader*: uses this curriculum to plan the workshop, adjusting each workshop to best meet the needs of learners, considering age range, size, disabilities, or any other special needs of the group.
- *Shepherd*: key relational component; these leaders travel with a specific group through all the workshops in any rotation as they develop relationships with the learners in which faith is shared.

Faith is learned experientially and in relationship. Shepherds are the key relational component, since they move through workshops with the learners. Workshop leaders can work with shepherds to gear each workshop to the particular group of learners they will have this week: age ranges, learning styles, and experiences in previous workshops within this rotation.

About this Workshop

Naturalist learners are able to see larger systems in microcosms and enjoy identifying patterns and classifying the natural world. They have a fascination with plants and animals. They enjoy observing, collecting, and categorizing objects. They like to ask questions and do scientific experiments. Structure and order are important not only to our daily life, but to our faith as well. This workshop invites children to explore God's presence in their lives and the world around them.

The focus story for this rotation is John 9:1–41. At least one activity in each workshop is developed around this story. Each workshop will also have activities based on other scriptures that help us understand the importance of encountering scripture.

BIBLE FOCUS STORY:

John 9:1–41

SUPPLEMENTAL STORIES:

Matthew 5:13–20

Romans 8:31–39

Psalms 25:1–10

Genesis 24:34–67

Leader Preparation

Sharing our faith celebrates and honors encounters with the Holy. For some, the Holy is encountered best through nature. St. Francis of Assisi is an example of someone who did great things for God because of his encounters with the Holy in nature. St. Francis was truly an instrument of God's peace to others. The children you guide can also bear great witness to the power and wonder of God through nature. This workshop validates those children.

Exploring & Engaging Activities



1 Discovering God in Nature (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Take a walk outside your church. Find a good path for your group to follow. Ponder how everything in creation is part of God's transformative story.

Supplies:

- a place where children can observe nature

God's works are revealed to us in nature. Invite children to discover God's presence as they go for a walk outdoors. Divide the group into partners. Invite them to go on a walk and look for things that remind them of God. Ask them to walk in silence, taking turns to stop and point to the things that remind them of God's presence and love. *How does nature help us deepen our awareness of God's work in our lives? How can we share that awareness with others?* At the end of the walk, gather together and share what creation reveals to us about God.

Option: If you can't go outdoors, go to different rooms in the church and look out the windows. *What do you see from each window?* Look around the church for ways nature is brought into the building. Perhaps there are flowers in the sanctuary.

Or, as an alternative, bring a variety of nature objects and nature pictures to the group. Calendars are a good source for such pictures. Place the nature objects in different places around the room. Post the pictures around your gathering space and have the children take an indoors walk around the room.

As you prepare to lead this workshop, find a quiet place where you can experience the Holy in creation. Calm your body. Breathe in God's Spirit. Let go of all the distractions that are not peaceful. Allow the Divine to speak to you through some part of creation like the song of a bird, clouds in the sky, or a majestic tree. Reflect on all that God has created.

If possible, plan to meet outdoors for this workshop. Find a place ahead of time where you can walk. If you are not able to meet outdoors, bring nature into your gathering space. Collect supplies including a magnifying glass, resource books about nature, and nature items for children to explore. Create a learning environment that mirrors creation.

Prayer: Marvelous God, all creation declares your wonder and majesty. Open my ears and eyes to receive the miracles you have created in the world around me. Guide me as I discover your love with the children I lead. Amen.

Workshop Development

For each workshop leaders may choose from nine activities that help learners engage the practice of faith. It is best to select at least one activity from "Exploring and Engaging Activities," at least one from "Discerning and Deciding Activities," and at least one from "Sending and Serving Activities." The first activity in each category is designed for "easy preparation" (able to be done with minimal preparation with supplies normally found at the church). Using all nine activities could take 90–120 minutes.

- To plan a session of 30–45 minutes, choose three activities, using one activity from each category.

② Let Your Light Shine

Leader preparation: Reflect on Matthew 5:13–20. Gather supplies. Try the experiment. Ponder how you are a light to others you encounter in your community and world.

Supplies:

- baking pan
- water
- small mirror
- sheet of white paper

As followers of Jesus, we are to be like a light for the whole world. When we let our light shine, others see and praise God. When our lives reflect God, we give testimony to God at work in us. Experiment with rays of sunlight to think about how we can reflect God to others. Follow these instructions: Pour about 1 in (2.5 cm) of water into a baking pan. Place the pan of water where the sunlight shines directly on it, either outdoors or inside. Lean a small mirror against one edge of the pan. Half of the mirror will be in the water and the other half will be leaning on the edge of the pan. Direct the mirror's reflection onto a white ceiling or wall or sheet of white paper. If you are outside, use the paper as a viewing screen. You'll see a rainbow of colors, starting with red and ending with violet. Talk about how we see objects as having color depending upon which light rays they reflect. *What do our lives reflect about God? What color of the rainbow best describes you? What characteristics of God do others see in us? How are we a light to others?*

③ Nothing Separates Us from God

Leader preparation: Reflect on Romans 8:31–39. Try some experiments with magnets and steel wool filings on paper. Think about a time in your life when you experienced the closeness of God's love. Be prepared for someone in the group who has experienced a tragedy, death, move of a friend, or being picked on at school and who may not feel God is with them. Reflect on how we experience God even when we are feeling sad or left behind.

Supplies:

- two magnets
- fine steel wool
- stiff paper or light cardboard
- old scissors
- metal objects such as paper clips, nails, and so on

Reflect on Romans 8:31–39, especially the phrase "I am sure that nothing can separate us from God's love." Invite the children to experiment with magnets to ponder how God is always with them. Follow these instructions: Cut the steel wool into tiny pieces with scissors. Put the magnet on a table and place a sheet of paper over it. Generously sprinkle some steel wool filings on the paper. The filings will collect in a pattern. Gently tap the paper to change the pattern or move the paper over the magnet to create new patterns. Try using two magnets under the paper and see what happens. Place other metal objects under the paper and see what happens. Reflect: *How is God's love always with us? How do we experience God with us when we are going through a difficult time like a tragedy, death, move of a friend, or being picked on at school? How do we know God is with us even when we don't feel God's presence? How is God like a magnet always drawing us close to God's self? How can we give testimony to God's love for us always and everywhere?*

- To plan a session of 45–60 minutes, choose four or five activities, using at least one activity from each category.

Discerning & Deciding Activities



④ Endangered Animals (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Make a list of endangered animals, such as black bear, dolphin, gray wolf, sea or river otter, Asian elephant, whale. If possible, gather pictures of endangered wildlife.

Supplies:

- list of endangered species, <http://tinyurl.com/2uktgt>
- (optional) wildlife pictures from the Internet, magazines, or recycled calendars (one per child)

As caretakers of creation, God calls us to give testimony and witness to parts of creation that have no voice, such as endangered animals. Recall with the children the meaning of “endangered.” Read the list of endangered animals. If available, look together at pictures of endangered wildlife. Then invite each child to imagine he or she is one of those animals. Conduct an interview and allow each child to voice concerns from the perspective of the endangered animal. You might ask questions such as: *What do you need to live? What hurts or endangers your life? What can people do to preserve your life?* Then brainstorm ways to care for all creation, especially endangered wildlife. Conclude with a prayer of dedication to care for all creation, especially those that are endangered.

⑤ Making Soil

Leader preparation: Reflect on John 9:1–41. Gather supplies.

Supplies:

- cheesecloth or old cotton tea towels
- very small stones (limestone or sandstone work best) or a brick (not asphalt)
- hammer
- peat moss (buy at a garden or hardware store)
- plant leftovers (tea bags, coffee grounds, vegetable or fruit skins)
- broken or crushed egg shells
- water

Invite the children to make soil and recall how Jesus used soil from the earth to heal a man who was blind. Follow these instructions: Wrap the rocks in cheesecloth or tea towels. Place the wrapped rocks on a very solid surface, such as a paved parking lot or cement basement floor. Pound the rocks with a hammer until they are smashed into tiny bits about the size of a grain of sugar (for about 5–10 min). Children may take turns pounding. Then add an equal amount of peat moss to them. Add plant leftovers and broken egg shells. Add some water and mix together. Ponder: *Jesus used earth and spit to heal the man who was blind. What does God use in our lives to speak to us? How can we give witness and testimony to God’s work in our lives?*

6 Planting Seeds of Faith

Leader preparation: Quietly reflect on the artwork “The Sower” by Van Gogh. Think about who has planted seeds of faith in your life. What seeds of faith are you sowing? Gather supplies.

Supplies:

- artwork: “The Sower” by Vincent van Gogh, www.tinyurl.com/fp-uccr2
- seeds or small plants
- flowerpots
- spoons
- soil
- water

Invite the children to look at the poster. Wonder what kind of seeds the sower is planting. Reflect how seeds hold immeasurable power. Seeds grow into plants that may grow into more plants. Sometimes we talk about sharing our faith as planting seeds. When we give testimony or tell our faith stories, through words or acts of kindness, our stories can inspire and encourage others. We plant seeds of faith and God cares for them. Invite the learners to plant a seed or plant in a flowerpot. Ask them to share a short testimony or statement about their faith in God. As they water and care for their plant, encourage them to think about seeds of faith.

Sending & Serving Activities

7 Experimenting with Salt (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Reflect on Matthew 5:13–20. Gather supplies.

Supplies:

- watercolor paint
- watercolor paper, 5" x 7"
- water
- paint brushes
- salt

Read Matthew 5:13. Salt, in the time Jesus lived, had common uses related to seasoning and preservation. When Jesus compared his followers to salt, he may have had either of those uses in mind. The seasoning sense of salt suggests that disciples will give a desirable “flavor” to their surroundings. Salt as preservative points to discipleship that conserves what is good in society.

Wet a piece of 5" x 7" watercolor paper with clear water. Place the paper on a flat surface. Paint a picture of your choice. While the paint is still damp, take some salt in your fingers and sprinkle the salt on the artwork. Talk about what happens. The texture of the artwork changes. It increases as the salt absorbs the water around it, but leaves the pigment behind. The chemical reaction leaves light spots where the salt grains landed.

As Jesus’ followers, we make a difference in the world by the way we live. When we serve others and live God’s way, God’s realm grows. We witness to God at work in our world.

Tip: You may work on one large group banner or children may work on individual pieces of artwork. Make sure the salt is added when the paint is still wet for the best effect.

8 Our Story of Faith

Leader preparation: Read Genesis 24:34–67. Reflect on how God was with Abraham and Rebekah. Ponder your faith journey. Where have you felt God’s presence? What have been your greatest joys and sorrows? How does God walk with you? Find a tree branch about 3–4” in diameter. Cut it into pieces about ½” thick, one piece for each child. Drill a hole in the top to make a necklace. Make a sample. If you cannot find a tree branch, purchase wooden medallions at a craft or dollar store.

Supplies:

- a cross section of a tree trunk showing the rings of growth
- small pieces of tree branch for each child
- jute or plastic lacing
- markers

As trees age, they grow in height and width. Observing a cross section of a tree you will see growth rings. You can tell the age of a tree by counting these rings. The width of the rings varies, depending on several factors, including amount of rainfall, available light, and length of growing season. Show the children the cross section of a tree trunk.

Invite them to observe the rings. *What do you notice? How many rings do you see? What story do the rings tell us about the life of the tree?* Reflect: Our life is an ongoing story. God is with us in every experience, both the happy and the sad. Invite the children to make a necklace to remind them of their story of faith and God’s presence with them. They may wish to draw a symbol on the wood to represent their faith. Thread jute or lacing through the hole to make a necklace. Invite them to wear the necklace as a witness and testimony to God’s presence at work in their lives. Give opportunity for children to explain the symbol they chose and why.



9 Show Me Your Path

Leader preparation: Reflect on Psalm 25:1–10. Make play dough from recipe in the attachment, or purchase clay at an art supply store. Gather extra items from nature for table pieces. Find a path for children to walk where there are nature items on the ground.

Supplies:

- items from nature such as twigs, leaves, bark, pine cones, feathers, acorns, and so on
- play dough or clay
- “Recipe for Play Dough,” Attachment: Activity 9

With the psalmist, we invite God to show us God’s path to walk. We can ask God for guidance and direction. God will help as we seek to choose and follow God’s ways. Invite the children to go for a walk and gather items from nature. Ask them to pick up items they see on the ground. Have them bring the items back and create a table piece to use at home with their families. Supplement what they collect with items you have gathered ahead of time. Use play dough or clay for the base of their creation. Encourage them to use their table piece as a reminder to follow God’s paths of peace, love, and justice.

Reflect

Take quiet time to reflect on your group experience. How did the children experience God through the natural world? What discoveries did they make about giving witness and testimony to their faith? Thank God for the wonder experienced and holy moments shared. Pray that the seeds of faith might continue to grow in each child.

Attachment: Activity 9

Recipe for Play Dough

1 cup (250 ml) flour (not self-rising)
1 tablespoon (15 ml) vegetable oil
½ cup (125 ml) salt
1½ teaspoon (7 ml) cream of tartar
1 cup (250 ml) water

Mix all ingredients in a saucepan and heat briefly over low heat. Dough is ready when it rolls into a ball. Keep dough fresh in an airtight container. To make different colors, add food coloring to the water. In a pot the recipe takes about 15 minutes on low heat.

For a microwave recipe for play dough, use the same ingredients as above. Heat the water and some of the salt (about 1/8 of a cup) in the microwave on high for 2 minutes, or until very hot to the touch. Meanwhile, mix the rest of the salt and the other ingredients in another bowl. Remove water/salt mixture from microwave, add food coloring, stir vigorously, and immediately pour over the other ingredients. Mix immediately. Heat the dough for one more minute on high. For best results, flatten and fold it a few times while hot.

Giving Testimony and Witness



Workshop: Video

About this Rotation

Testimony involves recognizing God's action in our lives and finding ways to express it meaningfully with others. This can take as many forms as the gifts that God has given us. It takes courage to give witness because of the deeply personal nature of faith journeys. For some this comes easily, but for others it may be more difficult. To share our experiences in a public way involves the risk of becoming vulnerable. However, choosing to share our story creates opportunities for relationship and growth even in the face of resistance. Sharing our faith celebrates and honors encounters with the Holy and gives us a chance to deepen our awareness of God's work in our lives. Giving testimony invites others to do the same. Giving witness and listening to others' stories joins us to the universal story of God's ongoing transformative work in creation.

About Workshop Rotation

This method of education is informed by Dr. Howard Gardner's work on multiple intelligences, or the many individual ways learners apprehend and incorporate information into their own understandings and ways of being in the world.

For those new to Workshop Rotation, a little vocabulary:

- *Multiple intelligences*: ways of incorporating information, that is, visual/spatial, logical/mathematical, verbal/linguistic, bodily/kinesthetic, musical/rhythmic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalist.
- *Rotation*: the overarching story or concept that will be explored through a number of workshops focusing on different intelligences.

- *Workshop*: primary site of learning; workshop plans focus on one or two of the intelligences while incorporating others in a secondary way to give learners various experiential ways of understanding the rotation's overarching concept(s).
- *Workshop leader*: uses this curriculum to plan the workshop, adjusting each workshop to best meet the needs of learners, considering age range, size, disabilities, or any other special needs of the group.
- *Shepherd*: key relational component; these leaders travel with a specific group through all the workshops in any rotation as they develop relationships with the learners in which faith is shared.

Faith is learned experientially and in relationship. Shepherds are the key relational component, since they move through workshops with the learners. Workshop leaders can work with shepherds to gear each workshop to the particular group of learners they will have this week: age ranges, learning styles, and experiences in previous workshops within this rotation.

About this Workshop

In this workshop children are invited to create their own videos and watch videos others have created. As they hear the stories of God's presence in the lives of others, they will be encouraged to pay attention to the Holy at work in their life.

The focus story for this rotation is John 9:1–41. At least one activity in each workshop is developed around this story. Each workshop will also have activities based on other scriptures that help us understand the importance of encountering scripture.

BIBLE FOCUS STORY:

John 9:1–41

SUPPLEMENTAL STORIES:

Genesis 24:34–67

Matthew 5:13–20

Psalms 116

Mark 8:27–38

Exploring & Engaging Activities



1 Our Church, a Witness (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Invite a member from your congregation's Witness and Service Committee (or Mission, Outreach, or similar committee) to talk about how your church is involved in witness and service both locally and globally. Gather supplies.

Supplies:

- guest
- video camera, screen, and projector for viewing video
- newsprint or whiteboard and markers

Gather the materials you need to lead this workshop, including video cameras, Internet access, and screens for watching the videos you make. Bring pillows or blankets for the children to sit on during the video viewing. If you wish to serve a snack such as popcorn, be sure to check for food allergies.

Prayer: Faithful God, as we hear and share stories, we know you are journeying with us. May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable to you. Amen.

Talk to the children about the various committees of your congregation, including your Witness and Service Committee or Mission and Outreach Committee. Brainstorm with the children some questions they could ask a guest from this committee. List their questions on newsprint or a whiteboard. Decide who will ask which questions. Then welcome your guest and invite the children to take turns interviewing the guest. Make a video of the interview. Present the video during a fellowship time to the rest of the congregation. Celebrate how your congregation is a witness both locally and globally.

2 God in Our Life

Leader preparation: Reflect on Genesis 24:34–41. Arrange for a senior adult to join your group and reflect on God's work in his or her long life. Gather supplies.

Supplies:

- Bible
- guest
- video camera

Workshop Development

For each workshop leaders may choose from nine activities that help learners engage the practice of faith. It is best to select at least one activity from “Exploring and Engaging Activities,” at least one from “Discerning and Deciding Activities,” and at least one from “Sending and Serving Activities.” The first activity in each category is designed for “easy preparation” (able to be done with minimal preparation with supplies normally found at the church). Using all nine activities could take 90–120 minutes.

- To plan a session of 30–45 minutes, choose three activities, using one activity from each category.
- To plan a session of 45–60 minutes, choose four or five activities, using at least one activity from each category.

Recall with the children Genesis 24:34–41, where Abraham’s servant gives testimony to God’s work in Abraham’s long life. Invite a senior adult to share how God has been with him or her through the years, in both ordinary and extraordinary events. Make a video of the conversation. Invite the children to ask questions of the senior. Write a group note of thanks to the senior after the visit.

③ The Greatest Thing about Knowing God

Leader preparation: Reflect on the greatest thing about knowing God. Gather supplies.

Supplies:

- newsprint or whiteboard and markers
- video camera

Commercials are created to convince us about the value of a product. Ask the children to recall their favorite commercial. What makes it so appealing and convincing? Why do they like the commercial? Then invite the children to brainstorm the greatest thing about knowing God. Record their ideas on newsprint or a whiteboard. Divide the group into small groups. Ask each small group to choose one idea on the list and create a commercial. Here are some tips for creating an effective commercial.

- Identify your audience. Will this commercial be for people in your church or people in the public?
- Use short sentences.
- Choose some effective visuals.
- Repeat the name of the product (knowing God) as many times as possible.
- Be clear about what you are selling so that if a person hears the commercial but doesn’t see it, it’s clear what the product (knowing God) is.
- End with a call to action.
- Direct your audience to a place where more information can be found, such as your church’s website, the church directory, or the church newsletter.

Make videos of the commercials and view them together.

Discerning & Deciding Activities



④ Marching in God’s Light (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Reflect on Matthew 5:13–20 and how you are God’s light to the group you lead. Gather supplies.

Supplies:

- video camera
- song: “Siyahamb’ ekukhanyen’ kwenkhos’” (tune: Siyahambra, irr. South African song), <http://tinyurl.com/fp-siyahamb>

Invite the children to sing or listen to the song “Siyahamb’ ekukhanyen’ kwenkhos’.” Ask: *How are you God’s light to others?* Then invite them to create movement for the song as you sing or listen to the song. When they are ready, Make a video of the group. Share the video with shut-ins from the congregation as a way of bringing God’s light to others.

5 God Save the People!

Leader preparation: Being a public witness is difficult for some people because it feels “embarrassing.” Paul and Silas were a public witness in Acts where they were freed from jail but chose to stay to save the jailer. In Philemon Paul risks public humiliation once again as he writes to Philemon and his community about accepting Onesimus as a friend rather than a slave. This exercise will open an opportunity to talk to the learners about what it means to be very public in our witness. Read Philemon and Acts 16:16–34 and be prepared to retell these stories to your learners.

Supplies:

- Bibles
- computer
- artwork: “Baptism” by Hullis Mavruk <http://tinyurl.com/fp-aphm>
- clip from *Godspell*, <http://tinyurl.com/3rotleo>

Share the background of the stories of Paul and Silas in jail and Paul writing to Philemon asking for him to free Onesimus from being a slave. Ask the learners if they would be comfortable making a public witness that “everybody” could hear. Why would they or would they not feel comfortable doing that?

Show the clip from *Godspell*. You may need to explain that the person singing “Prepare Ye the Way” is John the Baptist and the person being baptized near the end of the clip is Jesus. After watching the clip talk about what it might have been like for the people running through the city to find the voice (John the Baptist).

View the painting by Hullis. Look at all the people witnessing the baptism. Compare the painting to the video. Ask: *What do they have in common? What does it mean to be a witness to a baptism? What does it mean to be a witness by being baptized? In our tradition we believe that baptism should be a public event so all can be witnesses in this event.* Talk about this as a true witness and testimony to our faith.

6 Going on a Gift Hunt

Leader preparation: Think about the unique gifts shared in your congregation. Let the minister know you will be walking through the church and looking for gifts in action! Gather supplies.

Supplies:

- video cameras (one camera for each small group of children is ideal)

Invite the children to think about how God gives God’s people many different gifts. Some of these gifts are used in the church so that others may grow in God’s ways. Invite the children to go on a “gift hunt.” Ask them to form small groups, with a video camera for each group. Send them through the church building and ask them to Make videos of people using their gifts to serve God. Come back together and view the videos.

Sending & Serving Activities



7 The Testimony of Psalm 116 (Easy Preparation)

Leader preparation: Make copies of Psalm 116 for each child in your group. Use <http://tinyurl.com/3h3p8rr>. Gather supplies.

Supplies:

- copies of Psalm 116 (Contemporary English Version or *The Message*)
- video camera

Scripture gives testimony to God’s action in our lives. Invite the children to make a video recording of Psalm 116. Talk about how to read scripture in public. Distribute copies of Psalm 116 and assign verses to each child. Let them practice reading the scripture before you record them. You may pair beginning readers with stronger readers.

Some children are hesitant readers. They may prefer to act out the verses rather than read them. Encourage them to strike a pose to illustrate a word in each verse, such as listened, begged, called out, and so forth.

Share the video recording with people who need encouragement in your community or congregation.

8 Who Is Jesus?

Leader preparation: Reflect on Mark 8:27–38, especially verses 27–30. Ponder who Jesus is to you. Gather supplies.

Supplies:

- Bibles
- video cameras
- pens, paper

Invite the children to read Mark 8:27–30. Jesus asks his followers, “What do people say about me?” Ask the children to think about this question as they reflect on their own lives. What do people say about them? (She is a good basketball player; he is kind to his sister; she is generous.) They may wish to make notes or a list of descriptions on paper. Then ask them to reflect: *What do you say about Jesus? Who is Jesus to you? What does Jesus mean to you?* Ask the children to form small groups, depending on how many video cameras are available, and record a brief video segment for each of these questions: *What do people say about YOU?* and *What do YOU say about Jesus?*

9 Eyewitness News

Leader preparation: Read Genesis 24:34–67. Gather supplies.

Supplies:

- Bible
- children’s story Bible
- video camera
- (optional) Bible-times costumes

The word “witness” means “someone who has firsthand knowledge about a crime

or significant event through their senses” (for example, seeing, hearing, smelling, touching) and can help certify important considerations to the crime or event. A witness who has seen the event firsthand is known as an eyewitness. Children will be familiar with eyewitness reports on the news. The story of Abraham’s servant finding a wife for Isaac (Genesis 24:34–67) contains many characters with different viewpoints. Tell your group they will record a segment on “Finding a Wife for Isaac” for a local news station. Recall the story of Genesis 24:34–67 from the Bible or children’s story Bible. Assign characters and reporters. Brainstorm a list of questions before you start video recording or let the conversation between reporters and witnesses unfold as you go. Either way, encourage the children to tell what each character witnessed and where God was at work in his or her life. Share your video with another group or with parents.

Reflect

As you recall your time together, what insights did you gain into the lives of the children? What opportunities were created for relationship and growth? How did the children testify to God’s action in their lives? Remember each child in your prayers. Thank God for what they are teaching you about giving witness and testimony.