

Spring 2014

Sunday School Opening Assembly Suggestions

For use when all Sunday School members meet in a general assembly.

By Judi S. Hayes

March 2

Good Work

Hymn: “Make Me a Blessing” (hymn 380, *Baptist Hymnal*, 2008); “For the Fruit of All Creation” (hymn 643, *The Baptist Hymnal*, 1991)

Scripture: Genesis 1:28

Leader: For the next six weeks we are going to focus on work and on finding joy in what we do. In Genesis, we read that God created man and woman and put them to work, taking care of His creation. Work was not a post-fall punishment but a pre-fall gift. Just as God was creative in making the world and everything in it, part of being created in God’s image means that we have opportunities to use the physical gifts, talents, and strengths He has give us to work—to earn a living and to bless others.

Share: In advance enlist several adults to tell about the work they do, how they enjoy using the abilities and preferences God has given them, and how doing their work is a way of serving God.

Prayer: Thank God for the opportunity and rewards of working.

March 9

Whom We Work For

Hymn: “Make Me a Servant” (hymn 381, *Baptist Hymnal*, 2008); “To the Work” (hymn 615, *The Baptist Hymnal*, 1991)

Scripture: Ephesians 6:7

Leader: Whatever our work, regardless of our earthly boss, we work for God. And because we do, we should try hard to make our work pleasing to Him. This means not only working hard, fulfilling our responsibilities to earn our paycheck, but also having a good attitude about our work.

Share: Enlist someone, who at some point lost a job but now has one, to tell how rewarding it is to have a job and why having a job is a source of joy.

Prayer: Thank God for the joy of serving Him through the work we do.

March 16

What We Work For

Hymn: “Trust, Try, and Prove Me” (hymn 379, *Baptist Hymnal*, 2008); “Wonderful Grace of Jesus” (hymn 328, *The Baptist Hymnal*, 1991)

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 8:9

Leader: Which gives more joy—giving to help others who don’t have enough or receiving help when you are in need? Most people say the greater joy comes in being able to help others. Working to earn money and planning how to use financial resources well allow Christians to give freely, generously, and joyfully.

Share: In advance enlist someone to tell about the financial needs of your church, to introduce a special ministry project that all the church can unite in supporting financially,

or to tell about some of the ministries your church supports because of members' financial gifts.

Prayer: Thank God for the privilege of helping others.

March 23

Put Your Money to Work

Hymn: "Serve the Lord with Gladness" (hymn 382, *Baptist Hymnal*, 2008); "Because I Have Been Given Much" (hymn 605, *The Baptist Hymnal*, 1991)

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 8:14

Leader: Together our gifts can do so much more than what each of us can do individually. That's one of the great things about helping people through the church. By giving our financial gifts to the church, we not only support the work of our church, but our giving supports missionaries and schools around the world as well as ministries right here at home.

Share: In advance, invite everyone to bring change for a special project and to place it on a table or in a large, clear glass jar. Point out how large the gift is when everyone gives together, even though any one gift is small. Point out the joy of giving and working together.

Prayer: Thank God for the joy of Christian fellowship in giving.

March 30

Work Your Plan

Hymn: "Count Your Blessings" (hymn 585, *Baptist Hymnal*, 2008); "Praise and Thanksgiving" (hymn 645, *The Baptist Hymnal*, 1991)

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 9:7

Leader: When we plan our giving, the church and its ministries can plan their spending. When we budget our money, including saving part of what we earn, we can plan to go on mission trips or do other special things with our money. And as we give and go, we can thank God for His provision—for giving us the strength and ability and mind and desire to work.

Share: Enlist someone to tell about following a personal budget and the benefits of planned spending, saving, and giving.

Prayer: Thank God for the joy of giving because of planning and budgeting.

April 6

Give Work a Rest

Hymn: "Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me" (hymn 463, *Baptist Hymnal*, 2008); "Great Is the Lord" (hymn 12, *The Baptist Hymnal*, 1991)

Scripture: Exodus 31:12

Leader: God set the example by ceasing from His creative work and proclaiming the seventh day a day of rest. This principle from the beginning of time is so important that it is one of the Ten Commandments.

Share: Point out that a lot of attention has been focused on what people should not do on the Sabbath. Invite everyone to brainstorm ideas for what they should do on Sunday, the day they cease from their work. Write these on a board or large sheet of paper. Encourage everyone to choose something from the list for their Sunday afternoon.

Prayer: Thank God for making rest mandatory.

April 13

Hope Needed

Hymn: “In Christ Alone (My Hope Is Found)” (hymn 506, *Baptist Hymnal*, 2008); “Out of My Bondage, Sorrow, and Night” (hymn 310, *The Baptist Hymnal*, 1991)

Scripture: 2 Samuel 9:8

Leader: Explain that this is the first of six weeks when the topic will be hope. Write the word HOPE vertically on the board. Invite everyone to suggest words beginning with each of the four letters that relate to hope. Possibilities include home, hero, happiness, heaven, opportunity, openness, overcoming, possibilities, passion, praise, Person, evidence, everlasting, eternal.

Share: Enlist someone in advance to tell the story of Mephibosheth or to tell his story in a dramatic monologue.

Prayer: Pray that those who feel despair will find hope in Christ alone.

April 20

But Now . . . Victory (Easter)

Hymn: “Alleluia! Alleluia!” (hymn 272, *Baptist Hymnal*, 2008); “Christ the Lord Is Risen Today” (hymn 159, *The Baptist Hymnal*, 1991)

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15:20

Leader: Jesus’ resurrection provides hope for all of life because believers have the promise of God’s presence, beginning with salvation and lasting throughout eternity where they will live forever in heaven with Him.

Share: Enlist a senior adult to give a testimony about the persistent hope found in the assurance of salvation and life with Christ.

Prayer: Thank God for salvation through Jesus Christ.

April 27

Hope Found

Hymn: “God So Loved the World” (hymn 467, *Baptist Hymnal*, 2008); “And Can It Be” (hymn 147, *The Baptist Hymnal*, 1991)

Scripture: Matthew 8:2

Leader: The beginning of hope is trusting Jesus. We must have faith in Him in order to have genuine hope.

Share: Enlist someone in advance to tell the story of the two healings in Matthew 8:1-13 or to tell these stories in a dramatic monologue, perhaps from the viewpoint of a disciple who witnessed these two events.

Prayer: Ask God to increase our faith.

May 4

Hope Personified

Hymn: “My Faith Has Found a Resting Place” (hymn 454, *Baptist Hymnal*, 2008); “Lord, I’m Coming Home” (hymn 54, *The Baptist Hymnal*, 1991)

Scripture: Luke 15:32

Leader: The prodigal son returned home because he trusted his father. Jesus told this story to help people understand that we can always return to God when we have sinned and ask for forgiveness. Faith in Christ means a relationship with God the Father.

Share: In advance, enlist four teenagers to read Luke 15:11-31, taking these parts: narrator, older son, younger son, and father. Or enlist children to act out the drama as you read it. With children you may want to add parts for pigs and servants. Rehearse in advance.

Prayer: Thank God for forgiving our sins and giving us hope.

May 11

Hope Expressed (Mother's Day)

Hymn: "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" (hymn 96, *Baptist Hymnal*, 2008); "Glorify Thy Name" (hymn 249, *The Baptist Hymnal*, 1991)

Scripture: Psalm 138:2

Leader: We express the hope we feel in praise to God. Because God sent His Son to save us, we now have a relationship with God, and that gives us eternal hope regardless of what we experience in our daily lives.

Share: Recognize all the mothers. Let children give all the mothers a flower or sing a song for them. Suggest that mothers are often the ones who teach children about Jesus, who begin to help them understand faith, hope, and praise.

Prayer: Thank God for mothers and others who teach us about Jesus.

May 18

Hope Renewed

Hymn: "You Are My Hiding Place" (hymn 125, *Baptist Hymnal*, 2008); "The Solid Rock" (hymn 406, *The Baptist Hymnal*, 1991)

Scripture: John 21:17

Leader: Peter denied knowing Jesus. He probably wouldn't have believed he could do such a thing. In fact, that's what he said to Jesus at their Passover meal. Yet he did the very thing he thought he wouldn't do. Sin is like that. Peter was sorry for what he did. He still loved Jesus, and Jesus still loved him. Jesus forgave him, and Peter continued to serve Christ until his own death.

Share: Enlist someone to tell the story of Peter's denying Christ and then renewing his relationship with Him. Or enlist someone to give a personal testimony about having a right relationship with Christ after being forgiven for sin.

Prayer: Thank God for renewing our hope when we seek forgiveness.

May 25

Hope Shared

Hymn: "I'll Live for Him" (hymn 549, *Baptist Hymnal*, 2008); "O Christ, Our Hope, Our Heart's Desire" (hymn 414, *The Baptist Hymnal*, 1991)

Scripture: Acts 3:6

Leader: Peter and John didn't have money to give the crippled man, but they gave him something even better. They gave him the ability to walk, and in doing so they gave him dignity and hope.

Share: In advance, enlist someone to prepare and present a dramatic monologue of the lame man who was healed in Acts 3.

Prayer: Thank God for people who are willing to give us what we really need.

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