

RESPONDING TO GOD

This is a good Sunday to extend an invitation for salvation.

Song of response: SJ 92 *Just as I am* (Or play “Change my heart O God” from the Gather 'Round CD.)

Prayers of the people

SENDING

Song: SS 57 *Go, my friends, in grace*

Benediction:

Luke 1:50, followed by a simple phrase like, “God’s love be with you” in several languages.

Session Nine

Jeremiah’s call



Text: Jeremiah 1:1-10

Focus statement: God knows and blesses us.

Visuals: Bible (This is a good Sunday to involve a variety of ages in the worship service. You may also want to consider having a parent/child dedication or blessing of mentors and youth mentees.)

GATHERING

Welcome

Call to worship:

God has called us here, just as he has called each of us to follow him. God has called us with the loving promise to forgive, bless, and empower us to live faithfully. Praise the God who knows each of us intimately and meets us here in this time of worship.

Prayer: *Words for Worship 2, 29*

PRAISING

Song suggestions:

SJ 38 *Beloved, God’s chosen*

SJ 34 *Loving Spirit*

SS 37 *Firstborn of Mary*

SS 39 *Will you come and follow me*

HWB 389 *Take my life*

OFFERING

LISTENING TO GOD

Affirmation of faith

Children's time:

Give some examples of family rituals of blessing—notes in lunches, prayers or special words at the start of the day or at bedtime, or for birthdays. Refer to Jeremiah 29:11. Assure the children that they are special. Perhaps you could make simple bookmarks with Jeremiah's words for each child.

If possible, invite a parent or grandparent to come with the child. Ask them to tell one thing that is special about their child. Remind the group that God created us to be unique, different, and God loves us because we are all special in our own way.

Offer a blessing to each child, by touching them lightly on the shoulder or head, naming them, and telling that God knows them by name, loves them so much, and will be with them in a special way every day, all day long, even when they are as old as their parents and grandparents.

Song: SS 114 *God has chosen me*

Scripture reading:

Jeremiah 1:1-10 (See the Reader's Theater in *Together*, p. 38, or use an excerpt from *Are you Joking, Jeremiah?* by Norman C. Habel, Concordia Publishing House.)

Sermon seeds: (See *Connect* and *Youth* for additional inspiration.)

God still calls young people. Do you believe that? Have someone tell their story of hearing God's call when they were young or you tell the story of someone your congregation knows. We are all called to use our gifts to honor God. Encourage your congregation to tap young people, giving them opportunity to use their gifts for God and the church. Being a prophet is not a popular vocation, but our calling can carry us through adversity.

When the task seems daunting, remember that God knows you intimately. "The leap of faith is not over a canyon or into a fire. It does not necessitate a mindless transference of my logic or my trust into the unknown. This leap of faith is into the strong arms of a loving God. There is no safer place."—Ellie Lofaro (quoted in *Connect* p. 79).

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Song of response: HWB 395 *Here I am, Lord*

Prayers of the people

SENDING

Song: SJ 57 *The Lord bless you and keep you*

Benediction:

"May God's ways fill your mind (*touch your head*), may your words be kind and true (*touch your lips*), may you see beauty in yourself and others (*touch your eyes*), and may you hear Jesus' voice and follow (*touch your ears*). Conclude with SS 145.