



JOURNEY WITH GOD



A WORSHIP CELEBRATION FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION SUNDAY

*September 11, 2005, Seventh Sunday after Pentecost, Proper 19
Christian Education Sunday*

In many churches throughout the United Church of Christ, resuming educational programs in the fall offers a unique opportunity to celebrate and lift up the importance of Christian education in the life of the church. The story of the Hebrew people crossing the Red Sea provides the background for a celebration—trusting that God leads us to safety, following God through the parted waters, believing that God sends miracles, and celebrating all God has done for us.

A celebration of Christian education lends itself to storytelling, artistic expression, and the use of the arts—incorporating as many of the five senses as possible. By utilizing visual and word images, as well as engaging a wide variety of people as worship leaders, are effective ways for guiding and inspiring worshippers of all ages. We encourage you to use this service of worship to celebrate the life-long journeys of every member of your congregation on the path of Christian education.

Call to Worship

One: Come with tambourines! Come with dancing! Come and praise our God!

People: **We will sing to God who has triumphed gloriously!**

One: Who is like you, O God? You are majestic in holiness, awesome in splendor, doing wonders.

People: **We will sing to God who has triumphed gloriously!**

One: Let us praise our God, trusting, following, believing, and celebrating!

People: Let us sing to God who has triumphed gloriously!

Hymn

“Enter, Rejoice, and Come In”

TNCH 73

Unison Prayer of Confession

O God, we come before you with praise on our lips. Sometimes, however, we don't feel praise and joy in our hearts. When times are difficult, it is easy to forget that you are near. Help us to remember that you journey with us. Remind us that you travel with us through the waters and through the desert where there is rejoicing on the other side. Help us to remember you are with us. Remembering you, there is joy, there is love, and there is celebrating. Hear our prayers, O God. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

- One: How great is God's love for you?
- People: **Greater than the distance between heaven and earth!**
- One: How far has God taken our sins from us?
- People: **Farther than the distance from east to west!**
- One: Just as parents are kind to their children, God is kind to all of God's children. You are forgiven children of God.

Readings for the Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

Exodus 14:19–31 and Psalm 114 or Exodus 15:1b–11, 20–21
and Psalm 103: (1–7), 8–13

Romans 14:1–12

Matthew 18:21–35

Hymn

“I Will Sing, I Will Sing” in *Seasons of the Spirit Songbook*, Volume 3,
“Heaven Is Singing/El Cielo Canta Alegria” in *Seasons of the Spirit
Songbook*, Volume 3, or “In the Midst of New Dimensions” in *The New
Century Hymnal*, # 391

A Litany of Commitment

- One: As the Israelites danced, sang, and celebrated God's wondrous works at the Red Sea, we celebrate giving thanks for the educational ministries in our church. Our faith and beliefs come from moving forward with God through parted waters, across barren desert, and toward land flowing with milk and honey. God is with us every step of the way. We respond to each new experience by learning more about our ever-changing relationship with God. God welcomes everyone to learn together, to journey together, and to discover new ways to go with God in love and service.
- Child: I want to discover how to worship God. I want to know how to pray. It's hard to talk to someone I can't see.
- Youth: I want to learn who I am and who God is. I need to talk with someone who has been through this already and learn how to trust that God is really with me, even when I find that hard to believe sometimes.

- Young Adult: I want to learn how to defend my faith out in the world. There are still so many things I question. I need to share my questions and discuss my discoveries with others on this journey.
- Adult: I want to learn how to read the Bible again. I have lived enough of my life to know that there is more to the Bible stories than what I learned as a child. I want to connect Bible with my life and our world. I need to look at them again with new eyes.
- One: We all need to keep learning and growing. We all need to be spiritually fed. At the same time, every one of us has something to teach another.
- Child: I can teach you how to worship God with clapping hands and dancing feet. I can teach you about God and Jesus because I know that Jesus loves me.
- Youth: I can teach you how to reach out to others in need. I am young and strong and ready to help. I want to give what I have to people who are less fortunate than I am.
- Young Adult: I can teach you how to question. I'm convinced that we're never finished asking questions. If you aren't sure what to ask, I can help!
- Adult: I can teach you how to meet God at each new turn in the journey. I figure I've been through them all! I want to share my faith experiences with those who are on this path with me.
- One: God's relationship with the Israelites changed dramatically after they crossed the Red Sea. Our relationship with God changes and grows with every new life experience. Children and people of all ages need to see and be engaged with other Christians from all walks and stages of life. Each one here is able to serve as a Christian role model to another. Please join me in affirming our love and support for each other as we engage in the ministry of Christian education as a community of Christ.
- People: We believe that the educational ministry of this church is our opportunity, our responsibility, and our joy. We will share our faith with each other—children, youth, and adults alike. We will make this church a community where all can experience the love of God. We will support the staff of the educational programs of this church in their various ministries. We make this promise with God and with each other for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Teacher. Amen.**

Hymn

"Jesus Loves Me"

TNCH 327

Sermon

Prayers of the People

The Prayer of Our Savior

Offering

Celebration of Holy Communion

An order for a service of Holy Communion may be found in *The New Century Hymnal*, pages 16–20.

Hymn	“In Egypt under Pharaoh”	TNCH 574
	or	
	“Go, My Children, with My Blessing”	TNCH 82

Benediction

- One:** Go from this place dancing a new dance and singing a new song.
- People:** **Let us go from this place spreading the love of the God who leads us to safety.**
- One:** Go from this place rejoicing in God’s presence in our lives.
- People:** **Let us go out into the world as learners and as teachers, celebrating the wonder of being God’s children.**
- One:** May the God of Aaron, Miriam, and Moses and of Jesus our Teacher bless you and keep you. Amen.
- People:** **Amen.**

TNCH refers to hymns or resources from *The New Century Hymnal* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1995). Similar resources may be found in other hymnals.



This service was prepared by Deborah Gline Allen, a commissioned minister of Christian education, an experienced curriculum resource writer, and a certified specialist in church education in the United Church of Christ, serving in the New Hampshire Conference.

Copyright 2005, Worship and Education Ministries Team, Local Church Ministries, UCC, Cleveland. Permission is granted to reproduce or adapt for use in services of worship or church education. All publishing rights reserved.

