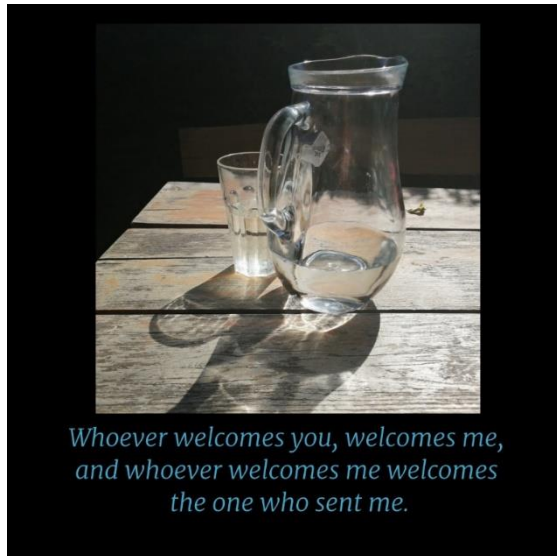


Holy Welcome

Downloadable packet for Intergenerational Worship and Faith Formation for July 2, 2023

Scripture: Matthew 10: 40-42



Supplies to gather:

- Assorted tableware to create place settings, plain paper plates
- Blank cards and plastic name badge holders or lanyards
- Rainbow stickers, your congregation's Open and Affirming Statement
- Bibles or printed Scripture passages for Matthew 10:40-42
- Large pitcher of water and cups

Create a simple focal point or altarscape similar to the picture above. Choose from a few of the gathering activities and then look at scripture. Feel free to adapt, depending on the makeup of your group and your own inclinations. These can be used in a classroom gathering or incorporated into an intergenerational worship experience.

Opening the Conversation

- **Set the table**

Gather assorted items (cutlery, napkins, plain paper plates, cups, placemats, etc)

Let each child select some items and create a place setting.

Ask them to think of a time when they hosted a family gathering, a house guest, or a special dinner party.

What were the elements of preparation?

What was your task?

How do you like to help?

Invite them to draw favorite foods on the paper plate.

Reflect on how all these efforts help to make your guest feel comfortable and loved.

- **Welcomed by name**

Distribute blank name cards and markers and invite each person to create a name tag.

What is your given name and what do you prefer to be called?

Have you ever been called the wrong name, or had your name mispronounced?

How does that feel? How does it feel to have someone greet you by name?

Can you return the gesture of kindness here at church?

Try role playing to practice introducing yourself, then try this out at coffee hour. Look for one person who is wearing a name tag and greet them by name. Tell them your name and one thing about yourself.

- **Practice hospitality**

Think about your church building and your worship, what signs, words, or practices express welcome? How are visitors treated?

Examples: Outdoor signs, Greeters at the door, Name tags, Words of welcome by pastor or other leaders, Statement of inclusion in the bulletin. Passing the peace. Fellowship time following worship.

Have you ever heard this phrase in worship?

“No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.”

Why are these efforts important? What else could you do to welcome visitors?

- **Open and Affirming**

If your congregation is Open and Affirming, share your covenant and ask children to reflect on who it seeks to include.

Are there any symbols or signs in the building which acknowledge LGBTQ community?
(Rainbow flags, gender neutral rest room signs, etc.)

Reflecting on the word

- **What does Jesus say about welcome?**

Read Matthew 10: 40-42

Look at v 40 and reread. Ask what Jesus means by “the one who sent me.”

Each of us is connected to God. When we welcome one another, we are welcoming God.

Explain the word Prophet- *A messenger of God.*

Offer some examples of prophets, either modern day or from the Bible.

Moses or Jeremiah / MLK or Greta Thunberg

Give some examples of that prophet’s message.

*Stop oppression and injustice, Love one another,
Feed my sheep, change your ways, care for creation.*

Explore how prophets are received.

Sometimes the words are challenging and prophets are ridiculed, dismissed, or rejected.

What does Jesus say?

*We will be rewarded if we welcome prophets.
It is as simple as offering a cup of cool water.*

Responding in faith

- **Water ritual**

Place a pitcher of water and cups on a table and then stand around the table.

Reread v. 42 whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.

Invite children to prepare a cup for the person on their right.

Remind the children how this is a simple gesture of inclusion and hospitality.

As each person passes a small glass of water, you might say “Welcome [name]” and offer a word of appreciation.

Something to consider: Jesus says we should show hospitality with simple gestures, like a “cup of kindness.” How else can you do that in your home, or with others?

- **Prayer**

Invite children to share prayer requests.

Create a prayer together or offer a repeat after me prayer.

Loving God, you are always near to us.

You welcome everyone at your table and ask us to do the same.

Help me to notice those who are left out and then offer them a cup of kindness. Amen.

The song lyrics below may be also used as a simple prayer.

- **Learn a song**

[God Welcomes All](#)

God Welcomes All, strangers and friends.

God’s love is strong, and it never ends.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8VLbV52-xyo>

Matthew 10:40-42		
New Revised Standard Version	Common English Bible	The Message
<p>“Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous, and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.”</p>	<p>“Those who receive you are also receiving me, and those who receive me are receiving the one who sent me. Those who receive a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward. Those who receive a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person’s reward. I assure you that everybody who gives even a cup of cold water to these little ones because they are my disciples will certainly be rewarded.”</p>	<p>“We are intimately linked in this harvest work. Anyone who accepts what you do, accepts me, the One who sent you. Anyone who accepts what I do accepts my Father, who sent me. Accepting a messenger of God is as good as being God’s messenger. Accepting someone’s help is as good as giving someone help. This is a large work I’ve called you into, but don’t be overwhelmed by it. It’s best to start small. Give a cool cup of water to someone who is thirsty, for instance. The smallest act of giving or receiving makes you a true apprentice. You won’t lose out on a thing.”</p>

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