



ALL-AGE WORSHIP

John 15

Welcome and introduction

Suggested points to cover

- In our worship today we are going to be thinking about calling, asking what God has planned for us as individuals and as a corps family. God's call is for everyone. But no two people are the same - there is no one-size mould that needs to be filled. We simply need a willingness to listen and respond.
- Every year in The Salvation Army we have Candidates Sunday, an opportunity for everyone, from the youngest to the oldest, to be provided with the space and the opportunity to listen and respond to God's call on their life right here, right now.
- We will be thinking about Christ's command that we love one another as he loves us. We hope to make a joyful noise (*maybe demonstrate this by asking some people to stand up shake or play an instrument at this point*) and enjoy being in God's house today and having a good time in his presence.

Suggested opening song - 'To God be the glory' (SASB 279)

Shake hands with people near you and exchange names with them if you haven't met before; or if you already know each other's name, share your middle name or family name instead. Ask everyone how many names they remember once they've gone back to their seats.

God knows everyone's name - not only here in this room, but in every room, in every building, in every county, in every country, and everywhere on the entire planet! He knows everyone's name and loves everyone for who they are. We are all special to God, we are all called by God and able to be used by him. We worship a great big God whom we can call Father.

Suggested song - 'Our God is a great big God' (SOF 2004)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=pgFT6beutEI

The song 'Our God is a great big God' has the line 'And he's known me and he's loved me since before the world began'. Today we think about how Jesus gives us all the command to love one another and to remain in his love. God's love to us is limitless.

Bubble Prayers

Ask some of the younger members of the congregation to blow bubbles throughout the following responsive prayer.

As we gather together, Lord, **help us to concentrate on you.**

As we try and put aside the things that distract us, Lord, **help us to concentrate on you.**

As we leave behind the things that worry us, Lord, **help us to concentrate on you.**

As we forget about ourselves, Lord, **help us to concentrate on you.**

As we worship you with songs of praise, Lord, **help us to concentrate on you.**

As we listen to stories from the Bible, Lord, **help us to concentrate on you.**

As we hear your teaching, Lord, **help us to concentrate on you. Amen.**

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Judith Merrell, *Ultimate Creative Prayer*

Tell the story

John 15:9-17 (The Voice)

(use two separate readers to emphasise the scene setting and the voice of Jesus)

Reader: At a time when all his disciples are feeling as if they are about to be uprooted, Jesus sketches a picture of this new life as a flourishing vineyard – a labyrinth of vines and strong branches, steeped in rich soil, with abundant grapes hanging from their vines ripening in the sun. Jesus sculpts a new garden of Eden in their imaginations – one that is bustling with fruit, sustenance and satisfying aromas. This is the Kingdom life. It is all about connection, sustenance and beauty. But within this promise of life is the warning that people must be in Christ or they will not experience these blessings.

Jesus: ⁹ 'I have loved you as the Father has loved me. Abide in my love. ¹⁰ Follow my example in obeying the Father's commandments and receiving his love. If you obey my commandments, you will stay in my love. ¹¹ I want you to know the delight I experience, to find ultimate satisfaction, which is why I am telling you all of this.

¹² 'My commandment to you is this: love others as I have loved you. ¹³ There is no greater way to love than to give your life for your friends. ¹⁴ You celebrate our friendship if you obey this command. ¹⁵ I don't call you servants any longer; servants don't know what the master is doing, but I have told you everything the Father has said to me. I call you friends. ¹⁶ You did not choose me. I chose you, and I orchestrated all of this so that you would be sent out and bear great and perpetual fruit. As you do this, anything you ask the Father in my name will be done. ¹⁷ This is my command to you: love one another.'

Illustration: Choose a sweet

Invite some people to choose a sweet from a selection you have on offer. Make note of how some people are a bit more choosy than others. Ask the congregation if they have ever thought about how we can be like that with other people and that it is easy to have our favourites. It is wonderful and comforting to know that God has no favourites; he loves allsorts! There are 7.7 billion people in the world and God knows each of us by name. God chooses each of us to be in relationship with him and can be used by him.

Adapted from ministry-to-children.com/new-candy-bible-object-lessons

Suggested song: 'He's got the whole world in his hands'

www.youtube.com/watch?v=T2y2u6BHKGU

Story

We have heard from our Bible reading that we didn't choose Jesus; he chooses us. We are all chosen by Jesus. He chooses us to be his followers – not because of our gifts or abilities, but because he loves us.

I want you to imagine that next Saturday afternoon we will be having a football match against a nearby Salvation Army corps. As we put our football team together, we have the opportunity to choose either Lionel Messi or Ariana Grande to come and make up our team. Who would you choose to come and be part of our football team? Why would you choose them?

It is obvious, isn't it, that we would choose Messi to be part of our football team because he has the gift of being a great footballer. When we choose someone to be part of a sports team, we tend to choose someone who is good at that sport. Now that's great if we are the one who is chosen, but it is hard if we are not chosen because we aren't considered good enough for the team.

Imagine now that we need to put together a small choir to enter a singing competition amongst all the local churches. Who would you choose to come and be part of that choir? Would you be more likely to choose Messi or Ariana Grande this time?

It is amazing when we are chosen and included, isn't it? But it can be pretty crushing when we're not.

When we choose someone to be part of a team, be it a sports team or a choir or something else altogether, we usually choose people who have got the right skills or gifts. We don't tend to choose the people who on the surface have nothing to offer.

Now Jesus, too, has a team, who are needed to share the good news of his love with others. I wonder who he chooses to be part of his team today. Does Jesus only choose the people who are really good, who hardly ever do anything wrong? Does Jesus only choose the really brainy people, the ones who are most able to speak out his message of love to others? Does Jesus only choose the beautiful people, who look so good that everyone is attracted to them? Does Jesus only choose the people who seem to have really got life sorted out, who don't seem to have any problems?

Listen to what he says: **'You didn't choose me, remember; I chose you, and put you in the world to bear fruit, fruit that won't spoil'** (John 15:16 *The Message*).

The good news for us is that Jesus chooses each one of us to be part of his team. Jesus chooses each one of us to be part of his team just because he loves us. So today, receive the wonderful truth that Jesus chooses you simply because he loves you.

Further suggested song options

🎵 SASB 29 'Have you ever stopped to think'

🎵 SASB 401 'We want to see Jesus lifted high'

Challenge: Are we a friend of Jesus? Do we listen to him when he speaks to us, or do we only want him to listen to us? Do we want to know what's on his heart and mind, or do we only want to tell him what's on ours? Being a true friend of Jesus means listening to what he wants to tell us and then joining in with him just where he has placed us. When Jesus is our friend, we are called into his service. Let us ask ourselves what that means for us individually and as a church.

Jigsaw piece prayers

Jigsaw pieces are needed for this next illustration, so it might be worth visiting a charity to shop to see if you can get some from there. Alternatively you can purchase blank jigsaw pieces relatively cheaply online.

Hold the jigsaw piece in your hand and pray for yourself.

Ask God to help you. Thank him for the good things in your life. Ask him to help you see the big picture of the plan he has for your life.

Look at the parts of your piece that reach outwards (the 'tabs').

Pray for people who reach out and help and show love to others. Thank God for the people who help and show love to you.

Look at the parts of your piece that have hollows waiting to be filled.

Pray for people who have lost something or someone or who feel that they have something missing in their lives. Ask God to help them to know that they are loved by him.

Try to fit your piece into the piece of the person next to you (it probably won't fit!)

Pray for people who find it hard to fit in, people who have moved to a new place, people who feel they

have no friends, people who are being bullied. Pray that they will find peace, friends and happiness.

Hold your piece and think of someone from your community, your friends or family that you would like to pray for.

Thank God for that person and ask God to bless and help them.

Adapted from flamecreativekids.blogspot.com/search?q=Jigsaw

Response

While singing a song as a congregation, or alternatively with some music playing, invite people to place their jigsaw puzzle pieces on the Mercy Seat as a reflective act for all that has been thought about and prayed for today.

Leader: Dear Lord, we lift our prayers to you, our heavenly Father. We thank you for these people and places that we have thought of and ask that you pour your blessings out upon these, our prayers that are laid here. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Suggested closing song: 'Shine from the inside out' by Nick Jackson

www.youtube.com/watch?v=W2xc-w8Zcbo

Final blessing (with actions):

God the Father, watch over us (*hands reaching up high above the body*)
God the Son, walk with us (*hands reaching out wide either side of the body*)
God the Spirit, work through us (*hands crossed over the body*)
Until we meet again (*shake hands or 'high-five' each other*)

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www.barnabasinchurches.org.uk/celebrate-trinity