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Aug

Sing Praises

Praise Break

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, YEAR A

This week centers on remembering as an act of praise, highlighting how singing helps us tell the story of God's faithfulness. Drawing from the psalms and the tradition of hymn-singing, it invites congregations to use music as a way to share personal and collective stories—turning worship into a participatory expression of gratitude, memory, and praise.

REFERENCES

Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28

Psalms 105: 1-6, 16-22, 45b

Romans 10:5-15

Matthew 14:22-33

COLORS

Green

Worship Planning Notes

Focus text: **Psalm 105:1-6, 16-22, 45b**

When I was growing up, the first book I associated with church was the hymnal. Now, hear me out. I knew Bible stories. I understood they came from a book called the Bible, and I had a couple of different children's Bibles. But when I came to worship on Sunday mornings with my family, I didn't immediately reach for the Bible. I reached for the hymnal. I used to love flipping through the pages, reading the words I was learning at school, and practicing my newfound skills by reading the notes on the staves. But more than anything, the hymnal was my favorite book at church

because the hymnal equaled singing! And boy, did I love to sing! So, imagine my surprise and delight when, one day, I opened the United Methodist Hymnal and found a page titled “Directions for Singing.” Now, to tell the truth, as a second or third grader, these instructions from John Wesley didn’t make a ton of sense. Who uses the word “lustily,” and what does it mean, anyway? But those instructions did reinforce a core message for me in my early faith formation: singing is important for my faith.

In Psalm 105, I daresay the psalmist agrees. Singing is an act of faith and faith formation. But more than that, singing is an important way that we give God praise by remembering. If last week’s theme was about cultivating awareness, this week’s theme is about remembering, about telling the stories of God’s wondrous love and acts in our lives through song. This week, consider how you can use music to remember. Perhaps you begin or end the service with a hymn sing of all your congregation’s heart songs. Maybe you select a few key hymns and tell their stories—both the stories of how they were written and how those stories connect to your community.

If you’re feeling particularly adventurous, invite your congregation to think of one sentence about something that God has done in their lives. Sing a hymn chorus like “I Love to Tell the Story” or “Blessed Assurance”; then, while the music plays, invite people to call out their sentences, or have some volunteers ready to take microphones around the room so people can share their sentences. After two or three people speak, sing the chorus again. Repeat this pattern three or four times. While it may feel complicated and awkward, it’s a wonderful opportunity for congregants to be part of collaborative music-making and storytelling together. If this doesn’t work for your congregation, consider how you can help people tell their stories through song during gathered worship. These are not just our individual stories; they are our collective stories that we offer to God in praise of all that God has done, is doing, and will do among us.

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