



## **Worship Service Theme: Family**

**Helpful elements:**  
Green table covering (Ordinary Time)

**Welcome:** Welcome! It's so good to be together to celebrate faith and community today. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'll be leading our worship time. Our theme for today is **family**.

Please pray with me as we open our time together.

**Opening Prayer:** Great and loving God, we ask your Holy Spirit to bless our time together and to refresh us with your presence. In the midst of a world full of trouble and strife, we thank you for watching over us, guiding us, and as we confess our sins, for forgiving us. Enable us to enter your presence joyfully and reverently, and let us depart today with the assurance that our sins are forgiven. Fill us, O God, with the peace which passes all understanding. Amen.

## **Opening Hymn: Doxology**

**Statement of Faith:** Let us affirm our statement of faith by reciting Psalm 23 together:

1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

**Suggested Hymns:**

**For the Beauty of the Earth**

**Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us**

**Amazing Grace**

**First reading:** This is from the Old Testament book of Proverbs (6: 20-23):

<sup>20</sup> My child, keep your father's commandment,  
and forsake not your mother's teaching.

<sup>21</sup> Bind them on your heart always;  
tie them around your neck.

<sup>22</sup> When you walk, they will lead you;  
when you lie down, they will watch over you;  
and when you awake, they will talk with you.

<sup>23</sup> For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light,  
and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life.

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

**Suggested Hymns:**

**Holy, Holy, Holy**

**Jesus Loves Me**

**Second reading:** From the New Testament letter to the Galatians (4: 3-7):

This is the Apostle Paul, speaking to the early church at Galatia: <sup>3</sup> [We] also, when we were like children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world.

<sup>4</sup> But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law,<sup>5</sup> to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons and daughters. <sup>6</sup> And because you are sons and daughters, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, prompting us to cry out, "Abba! Father!" <sup>7</sup> Now you are no longer a slave but God's own child. And since you are his child, God has made you his heir.

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

**Suggested Hymns:**

**Softly and Tenderly**

## Leaning on the Everlasting Arms

**Interactive Homily:** Let's pause our singing for a moment and talk a bit more about family.

- What kind of family do you have? Who is in your family?
  - Biological (by birth) family and extended family; such as?
    - Children, siblings, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, etc.
  - Non-biological families; such as?
    - Adopted family: people, pets
    - A family of friends
    - The family of humankind
- There's another kind of family that relates to our lives of faith: The family of God. What makes someone part of God's family?
  - We are adopted by God!
  - Not dependent on our birth or goodness or anything we've done, but dependent on *faith*. We are united to God and to each other by God's own Spirit.
- Do all members of a family look alike? Act alike? Talk alike? Does everyone always agree?
  - No! Family is not defined by everyone looking, acting, or being the same as everyone else.
- What kinds of things cause problems and conflicts in families?
  - Disagreements over money, possessions, opinions, politics, habits, traditions, perceived favoritism; holding grudges
  - Different personalities, abilities, opportunities
- So conflicts happen; families often have troubles of some kind or another. What kinds of things help heal family problems? What helps you forgive family members?
  - The strong bond of biology ("blood is thicker than water").
  - Patience with one another; seeing the bigger picture, that we are all in the same boat and we all have faults.
  - Realizing that possessions (and most everything else) will all pass away someday.
  - God! God specializes in healing relationships. Through the Spirit, God gives us the vision that all of us are God's sons and daughters.

- *All* are created in the image of God, “male and female he created them.” We are all part of the family of humankind, God’s family – even in all our “messed-upness.”
- And who is the head of this crazy family of faith? God!
- How would you describe God as a parent? What qualities, both fatherly and motherly, does God embody as our heavenly parent?
  - Strong, able to save and heal
  - Comforting, nurturing, guiding
  - *Good*, always looking out for the children’s interests
  - Intimate and endearing! St. Paul talks about calling God “Abba,” which means “Daddy” – a sweet, personal term of closeness. That’s the God who calls us into his family.

Let’s silently thank God for the gift of family and for being our good Father.

**(Silent Prayer)** ... Lord, hear our prayers. Now let us pray the Lord’s prayer together:

**Lord’s Prayer:** Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever, Amen.

**Suggested Hymns:**

**This is My Father’s World**

**It is Well with My Soul**

**Standing on the Promises**

**Third Reading:** From “Meet the Family of God,” by author Trillia Newbell<sup>1</sup>

Maybe the best news about our adoption into God’s family is that it is not dependent on us, [on our “being good”]. God doesn’t call the righteous; God redeems sinners. God also doesn’t look at our outward appearance to determine whether to adopt us. God’s concern is the heart. ...

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/meet-the-family-of-god>

We know this is true, and yet so often we allow the differences in the color of our skin to dictate whether or not we accept people. God doesn't discriminate in his family... Those who trust in Christ for their salvation are adopted, and therefore *we are all brothers and sisters in Christ*. As a result, we should be united in Christ. God's got a colorful family, and therefore *so do we*.

**Suggested Hymns:**

**Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing**

**Shall We Gather at the River**

**Fourth Reading:** Lighthearted Stories about Family ☺

A married couple was celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary. At the party everybody wanted to know how this couple managed to stay married so long in this day and age. The husband responded, "When we were first married we came to an agreement. I would make all the major decisions and my wife would make all the minor decisions. And in 60 years of marriage we have never needed to make a major decision."<sup>2</sup>

One person said to his friend: "I have the perfect son."

The friend asked, "Does your son smoke?"

"No, he doesn't," answered the parent.

"Does he drink whiskey?" asked the friend.

"No, he doesn't," replied the parent.

"Does he ever come home late?"

"No, he doesn't."

The friend concluded, "Wow, I guess you really do have the perfect son. How old is he?"

The parent answered proudly, "He will be six months old next Wednesday."<sup>3</sup>

A child asked her father, "How were people born?" Her father said, "Adam and Eve made babies, and then their babies became adults and made babies, and so on." The child then went to her mother and asked the same question: "Mommy, how were people born?" She told her daughter, "We were monkeys then we evolved to become like we are now." The child ran back to her father and said,

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.grandparents.com/food-and-leisure/entertainment-and-books/family-jokes>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.laughfactory.com/jokes/family-jokes>

“You didn’t tell me the truth!” Her father replied, “Oh, your mom was talking about her side of the family.”<sup>4</sup>

Families are like fudge: mostly sweet with a few nuts.<sup>5</sup>

**Suggested Hymns:**

**Blest Be the Tie that Binds**

**I Need Thee Every Hour**

**Closing Blessing:** (Strike bell as you say the word “Lord”)

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and grant you peace. In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Closing Hymn: Doxology (Reprise)**

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**Extra Material:**

**1 Corinthians 12: 12-20, 26**

<sup>12</sup> For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup> For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

<sup>14</sup> For the body does not consist of one member but of many. <sup>15</sup> If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>16</sup> And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>17</sup> If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell?

<sup>18</sup> But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. <sup>19</sup> If all were a single member, where would the body be? <sup>20</sup> As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. ... <sup>26</sup> If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.laughfactory.com/jokes/family-jokes>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.grandparents.com/food-and-leisure/entertainment-and-books/family-jokes>

From “Oneness,” by Jeffrey Moses

This book talks about shared principles in religions around the world. On the topic of family, the author writes: “Since we are all children of God, ... we are related in a very fundamental way. Why, then, should we harm one another?” Here are what major religions say about being part of God’s family of humankind:

- “God hath made of one blood all nations of men.” –Christianity
- “Have we not all one father? Hath not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother?” –Judaism
- “All creatures are the family of God; and he is the most beloved of God who does most good to His family.” –Islam
- “God is the Father, Earth the Mother. With all things and in all things, we are relatives.” –Sioux Native American