



Worship Service Theme: Father's Day

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.

Happy Father's Day (today or coming up)! Who here is the child of a father? (Everyone!) In addition, who here has cared for children or been a father figure for someone during his life? We celebrate you today, and we make this a day of remembrance for our own family, our role in the family of God, and especially God as our good and heavenly Father.

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 understanding. Amen.

Opening Hymn: Doxology

Statement of Faith: Let us affirm our statement of faith by reciting Psalm 23, "The Lord is my shepherd," together:

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

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

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

⁴Yea, 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.

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

⁶Surely 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:

**Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us
For the Beauty of the Earth**

First reading: Proverbs 23:23, 24, 26

Listen to your father who gave you life,
and do not forget your mother when she is old. ...

²⁴The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice;
he who fathers a wise son will be glad in him. ...

²⁶My son, give me your heart,
and let your eyes observe my ways.

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

Suggested Hymns:

**Jesus Loves Me
Joyful Joyful, We Adore Thee**

Second reading: Matthew 7:7-11

Jesus said: ⁷“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. ⁹For which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask.”

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

Suggested Hymns:

Softy and Tenderly Leaning on the Everlasting Arms

Interactive Homily: Let's talk more about fathers and what they mean to us.

- What are some words you'd use to describe your father? Of course, no father is perfect; they are all human. But today, think about someone who acted as a good father in your life. Maybe it was an uncle, grandfather, friend, a friend's father, older brother, teacher, pastor, or counselor. What was that person like? List some qualities of a good father.
 - Consistent love, integrity, strength, hard work, providing for needs, guidance, discipline
- What did your father do for work? Around your home? In your community?
- What sorts of things did your father or father figure teach you?
 - Specific skills, such as fixing things (like my dad!).
 - Values, such as hard work, generosity, honesty.
- Did your dad or father figure ever tell you no? (Of course!) Why do fathers sometimes say no?
 - A good father knows when "no" is the best thing for a child's own good.
 - A good father says no to a child when saying yes would not serve the child well. For example, what would a father say if their 5-year-old asked for the car keys to take a spin?
 - "No" comes from a heart of love, what is good for the child.
- Now let's think about God. How do we typically talk about God—what do we call him?
 - Think of the Lord's Prayer, the way Jesus taught his followers to pray; how does it start? "Our Father."
- What is God the Father like? Even if our earthly father wasn't perfect (and they never are):
 - God is perfect: in love, patience, mercy, justice, and guidance.
 - God is close to us. Jesus calls God the Father "Abba," an Aramaic word that means "Daddy." What does that term imply? What's the picture you get of a daddy?
 - Close, intimate relationship; childlike trust
 - God is good. As Jesus said, "If earthly fathers give their kids good things, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask?" (Matt. 7:11)

- So, as God’s children, how should we approach our heavenly Father?
(repeat last part of v. 11)
 - “to those *who ask*.” It’s our role and privilege to *ask* for what we need from God.
 - Draw near to God in trust that God will give you all good things—even when sometimes the answer is no.

... Let’s take a moment to silently pray and reflect on blessing of father figures in our lives and to give thanks for God as our 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
Standing on the Promises

Third Reading: Lighthearted Stories about Fathers 😊 (mostly from Reader’s Digest)

On a brutally hot day I walked past a miniature golf course and saw a dad following three small children from hole to hole. “Who’s winning?” I shouted. “I am,” said one kid. “Me,” said another. “No, me,” yelled the third. Sweat dripping down his face, the dad gasped, “Their mother is.”

In the frozen-foods department of our local grocery store, I saw a man shopping with his son. As I walked by, the dad checked something off his list, then whispered conspiratorially to his son, “You know, if we really mess this up, we’ll never have to do it again.”

The Sunday school lesson for the day was about Noah’s Ark, so my dad decided to get his small pupils involved by playing a game in which they identified animals.

“I’m going to describe something to you. Let’s see if you can guess what it is. First: I’m furry with a bushy tail and I like to climb trees.”

The children looked at him blankly. “I also like to eat nuts, especially acorns.” No response. “I’m usually brown or grey, but sometimes I can be black or red.” Nothing.

Desperate, my dad turned to a perky four-year-old who was usually good about coming up with the answers. “Michelle, what do you think?”

Michelle looked hesitantly at her classmates and replied, “Well, I know the answer has to be Jesus — but it sure sounds like a squirrel to me!”

My dad got a speeding ticket and went to pay the fine. The police clerk issued a receipt for payment. My dad, annoyed, said, “What am I supposed to do with this?”

“Keep it,” the clerk advised. “If you collect enough of them, you get a bicycle!”

Dad Jokes:

- I traded my rooster for a duck. Now I get up at the quack of dawn.
- Why didn’t anyone want to fight Goliath? It seemed like a giant ordeal.
- Why do crabs never volunteer? Because they’re shellfish.
- I went to the aquarium this weekend, but I didn’t stay long. There’s something fishy about that place.
- I gave my handyman a to-do list, but he only did jobs 1, 3, and 5. Turns out he only does odd jobs.
- Who won the neck decorating contest? It was a tie.

Suggested Hymns:

Shall We Gather at the River

Faith of Our Fathers

Fourth Reading: Dad’s Hands¹ by Melinda Clements

This is an essay about a dad and his daughter.

“Have you ever looked at your hands?” a dad asked his daughter. “I mean really looked at your hands?”

¹ <http://www.barefootsworld.net/grandpashands.html>

“Stop and think for a moment about the hands you have, how they have served you well throughout your years. My hands, though wrinkled and weak, have been the tools I have used all my life to reach out and grab and embrace life.

“My hands braced and caught my fall when as a toddler I crashed upon the floor. My hands put food in my mouth and clothes on my back. As a child, my mother taught me to fold my hands in prayer. These hands tied my shoes and pulled on my boots. These hands dried the tears of my children and caressed the love of my life. These hands wiped my tears when my son went off to war.

“These hands have been dirty, scraped and raw, swollen and bent. They were uneasy and clumsy when I tried to hold my newborn daughter. Decorated with my wedding band, my hand showed the world that I was married and loved someone special.

“My hands have been sticky and wet, bent and broken, dried and raw. And to this day when not much of anything else on me works very well, these hands hold me up, lay me down, and again continue to fold in prayer. These hands are the mark of where I’ve been and the ruggedness of my life.

“But more importantly, it will be these hands that God will reach out and take when He leads me home.”

Suggested Hymns:

He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands

Amazing Grace

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)

Extra material:

“What Do Fathers Do?” by Erma Bombeck²

When my dad died when I was 9, I was raised by my mother, giving rise to the question, “What do fathers do?” As far as I could see, fathers brought around the car when it rained so everyone else could stay dry.

² <https://ermabombeckcollection.com>

It wasn't until my husband and I had children that I was able to observe firsthand what a father contributed to a child's life.

What did I see a father do?

If I had to tell someone's son what a father really does that is important, it would be that a father shows up for the job in good times and bad times. A father is a man who is constantly being observed by his children. The children learn from their father how to handle hardship, anger, disappointment and success.

A father won't laugh at his kids' dreams no matter how impossible they might seem. A father will dig out at 1 a.m. when one of his children runs out of gas. A father will make unpopular decisions and stand by them. When a father is wrong and makes a mistake, he will admit it. The father sets the tone for how family members treat one another, members of the opposite sex, and people who are different than they are. By example, a father can instill a desire to give something back to the community when its needs are greater than theirs.

But mostly, a good father involves himself in his kids' lives. The more responsibility a father has for a child, the harder it is to walk out of the child's life. A father has the potential to be a powerful force in the life of a child. If you have this chance, grab it! Maybe you'll get a greeting card for your efforts. Maybe not. But it's steady work.