

2022 Evangelism Sunday Resource

INTRODUCTION

JOHN 12:32-36

32 And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” 33 He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die. 34 The crowd answered him, “We have heard from the law that the Messiah remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?” 35 Jesus said to them, “The light is in you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness may not overtake you. If you walk in the darkness, you do not know where you are going. 36 While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become children of light.”

The work of evangelism is not solely the pastor’s job, nor is it unique to one ministry. All should be invited, trained, and encouraged to consistently be about the work of sharing the good news. And the good news is that God desires that all are well and that the needs of all are met. Physical, spiritual, and emotional needs.

Evangelism is the work of the entire congregation and the church universal. Evangelism is not about drawing people to church. Though it is wonderful to invite people to church and even better to have them join in the ongoing work of the church, the ultimate goal is that of building relationships that draw people to closer to God. The light that is in us is not simply for us to glow. It shines to illuminate and reveal evil/injustice wherever it chooses to hide.

A Seven-Day Cycle of Prayer

Based on Acts 16:25-34

SUNDAY - Prayer that God will raise and increase our voices against the transgressions of the church, the community, the country and the world

²⁵About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.

MONDAY – Prayers that God will empower us to follow the life of Jesus to set captives free (from physical and mental bondage)

²⁶Suddenly there was an earthquake so violent that the foundations of the prison were shaken, and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone’s chains were unfastened.

TUESDAY - Prayers for power to love unconditionally and beyond tradition. Also prayer for those who seek to harm others and harm themselves

²⁷When the jailer woke up and saw the prison doors wide open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, since he supposed that the prisoners had escaped. ²⁸But Paul shouted in a loud voice, “Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.”

WEDNESDAY – Prayers for illumination. Prayers that God will allow us to see the scriptures in new and enlivening ways. Prayers that God will shine the spotlight on our fears and the things that keep us

from pursuing God’s righteousness, so that we can begin to overcome them. Prayers that God also shine the light on the hidden needs and hidden illness in our world.

²⁹The jailer called for lights, and rushing in, he fell down trembling before Paul and Silas.

THURSDAY - Prayers for strength and perseverance. Prayers to believe when things seem impossible for ourselves and for those God has put in our care. Prayers for God’s rescuing power in these times of deep peril.

³⁰Then he brought them outside and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” ³¹They answered, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.”

FRIDAY - Prayers that God fills us with words of Love, Truth, and Justice.

³²They spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.

SATURDAY – Prayers to help us to best understand the Matthew 25 vision of the church and to seek to engage those in need.

³³At the same hour of the night he took them and washed their wounds; then he and his entire family were baptized without delay. ³⁴He brought them up into the house and set food before them, and he and his entire household rejoiced that he had become a believer in God.

Liturgical Resources for Evangelism Sunday

Gathering

Prayers for the Day (Prayed silently as worshipers gather)

1. Loving God, open new doors. Reopen doors that have been closed. Make our path clear. Help us to see the places you would have us go and heighten our attention so that we understand our purpose in each space. Charge us to speak of the examples of Christ and to live them openly. Make us your witnesses in words and in deeds. (*Colossians 4:2-4*)
2. Soften the ground and enhance the seeds given to us. Allow us to see a fraction of the fruits of our labor in our lifetime, knowing that the completed harvest is for your great glory. Encourage us in any way that you will, awesome God, and we will continue to do your blessed will. (*2 Thessalonians 3:1*).
3. Powerful God, fill our minds and hearts again and again with the wonder of your creation and your works. Give us the heart of an evangelist. As you provide us covering and provisions for your work, fill our mouths with words of peace, love and joy. (*Ephesians 6:17-20*)

Prelude

Call to Worship (*2 Timothy 2:22*)

Leader: This is the day the Lord has made.

People: Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Leader: Pursue the righteousness of God

People: We will also pursue faith, love, and peace,

Leader: Do so along with those who call on the Lord with a pure heart.

All: Thanks be unto God.

Hymn of Praise

Spirit, Open My Heart

GTG 692

Here I Am, Lord

GTG 69; PH 525

The Church of Christ in Every Age

GTG 320; PH 421

We All Are One in Mission

GTG 733

Confession and Pardon

We have been idle far more than we have been active around the things that concern you most. We have allowed ourselves to focus on our own thirsts and greed, while neglecting those who hunger and thirst for you. We are sorry. Forgive us now for the times when you sent us and we did not obey. Give us courage and wisdom to follow you in the days ahead as we confess our transgressions now....

(Offer a moment of silence for personal confession and reflection.)

Assurance of Pardon

Leader: Cry out, all who stand for righteousness, and the Lord will hear. Know that the Lord will deliver you from trouble.

People: The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and rescues the crushed in spirit. Amen!

Hymn Response

Lord, You Give the Great Commission

GTG 298; PH 429

(You may select a particular verse or choose to sing the whole hymn.)

Passing of the Peace

Leader: May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: In the grace of God, let us offer peace to one another. And as you pass that peace, we invite you to share one way in which you will demonstrate the love of Christ to a neighbor this week.

The Word

Prayer for Illumination

Lord of Light, the One to whom we belong, open our ears, our minds and our hearts, so that we may understand how to win others to you. Teach us to become like you. Show us where your people are in need. Teach us humility. Open our eyes that we may see the needs of our brothers and sisters and, for the sake of the gospel, do all things that you require and share in its blessings. Amen.

First Reading Jeremiah 32:1-3a, 6-15

Second Reading Luke 16:19-31

Sermon

Hymn (Select one of the following:)

Listen, God Is Calling	GTG 456
Spirit, Open My Heart	GTG 692

Affirmation of Faith (from "The Confession of Belhar")

We believe

- *that God has revealed himself as the one who wishes to bring about justice and true peace among people;*
- *that God, in a world full of injustice and enmity, is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged*
- *that God calls the church to follow him in this; for God brings justice to the oppressed and gives bread to the hungry;*
- *that God frees the prisoner and restores sight to the blind;*
- *that God supports the downtrodden, protects the stranger, helps orphans and widows and blocks the path of the ungodly;*
- *that for God pure and undefiled religion is to visit the orphans and the widows in their suffering;*
- *that God wishes to teach the church to do what is good and to seek the right;*
- *that the church must therefore stand by people in any form of suffering and need, which implies, among other things, that the church must witness against and strive against any form of injustice, so that justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream;*
- *that the church as the possession of God must stand where the Lord stands, namely against injustice and with the wronged; that in following Christ the church must witness against all the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own interests and thus control and harm others.*

Prayers of the People

(This time should be an opportunity for people to share their stories, to tell where their lives hunger and thirst for peace, justice, and compassion. If meeting virtually, use the chat feature. If in person, suggest writing prayer concerns or joys to be placed in a basket for the pastor or person designated for prayer. Pastors and worship leaders may even prompt people to name prayers aloud. It's important that, if

people name themselves or others, that these names be written and spoken aloud during the prayer. It is important that worshippers understand that they are important and that their concerns are important to God and that God knows them and their loved ones by name.)

The Eucharist

Offering

(Offering our gifts, our tithes, and our service to God is a sacred time; a chance to give a portion back to our Lord for all Christ has done. The offering is a chance to witness, give testimony, rejoice, and offer our gratitude in service to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Invite the congregation to offer incarnational ways they might love and serve the Lord, and invite them into a time of prayerfully offering monetary gifts, or papers that give thanks for all God has done and the ways they are called to give back in service to the Lord; whether physically putting them in an offering plate, making donation via online giving tools or prayerfully naming those before the Lord.)

Leader: God who creates and gives, we praise you! You have blessed us with resources and opportunities. We share these gifts that they may be used wherever there is need among our siblings in this church, in this community and throughout the world. Multiply them so that they may be used for the bringing about of Your reign-dom in Your time. Amen

Doxology

Invitation to the Lord's Table

Leader: We come to the Lord's Table to reaffirm our commitment to Christ. Here, God renews us with grace. We do not come to the Lord's Table because we must, but because we may. No one is more worthy than another and no one may be denied. Here we experience the wonder of God's love and mercy. Come just as you are. It does not matter where you have been or where you are going, it does not matter what you have done or what you have left undone, it does not matter what others see, only what God sees. And God sees that you are beautiful, complete, fearfully and wonderfully made. So come.

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

(from "The 8 Habits of Evangelism")

Leader: God of grace and grand invitation, we give you thanks for you have set a table before us filled with love, joy and peace.

People: You invite us to be nourished by your presence, purpose and power. Give us the strength to taste and see that you are good.

Leader: Help us to know that you have declared that we are good and good enough.

People: We give you thanks for the waters of baptism wherein you have named us and claimed us as your own.

Leader: Through your sacred waters, we have been sealed and set apart to reflect your goodness and your mercy.

People: We are yours, children of the covenant, people of faith.

This day and always, let the waters of peace wash over us again.

Let the waters of renewal revive us again.

Leader: Let the waters of justice and courageous compassion fill our cups till they overflow to the lives of all we meet.

People: For the daily bread and cup that touch our lips and fill our bellies, nourish and nurture us throughout the day.

Leader: For the moments when we see water and feel water, may we remember our baptism and know that we are beautiful, whole, complete and wholly thine.

All: For those who cannot find daily bread and cup, for those who cannot feel and find water that renews, may we work, fight and pray until all may have their fill and be at peace.

In the name of Jesus we pray,

Amen

Lord's Prayer

Breaking of the Bread

Communion of the People

Anthem

(Select one of the following:)

For Everyone Born

GTG 769

The Church of Christ Cannot Be Bound

GTG 766

Sending

(Select one of the following:)

We Will Go Out with Joy

GTG 539

The Lord Now Sends Us Forth

GTG 747

Charge and Blessing

Siblings in Christ, you have heard the Word proclaimed. We have shared in grace again at the Lord's Table. We are agents of God for righteousness and justice in the world. God is doing a new thing, do you not perceive it? This new thing is happening through us. As you are going, let God's light emanate from you, be a beacon and refuge wherever you go. May the God of peace, love and liberation be with you now and until the end of time. Amen.

Do not be afraid to try new things to ritualize the sending and blessing. In order to join Christ in service, and to learn how to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in sharing the Good News, we must first know our neighborhood, and who are our neighbors? We encourage churches who are able to offer a Neighborhood Exegesis after worship for all who are interested in exploring further who their "neighbor" truly is, and the ways in which we can experience Christ already at work, gathering people, working in peoples' lives in the community. We encourage intergenerational groups to meet together and share in this neighborhood experience. If your church isn't able to offer a Neighborhood Exegesis experience, perhaps you plan a "Dwelling in the Word" fellowship gathering outside the church building: in someone's home, caravan to a local park, join with another worshipping community over a meal.

Neighborhood Analysis Exercise

Group Preparation

1. Lead **Dwelling in the Word** on Luke 10:1-11 (*attached*)
2. Introduce the idea of a neighborhood visit. Emphasize that the goal is to get to know more about the neighborhood and its people. We do this by using all 5 senses. We are not going out to teach anything, to convert anyone, or to change the neighborhood, just to learn from the people who know more about it than we do.
3. Ask participants if they have any ideas how they can learn about the neighborhood. They will probably mention looking at the houses and businesses, observing what kind of services are available, listening to what languages are spoken, talking to people, etc. Press them to come up with as many ideas as possible by asking, "what else?"
4. Explain parameters:
 - They will be going out 2 by 2 just as Jesus sent the disciples (3 is OK if you have an uneven number)
 - What time they need to return
 - Pray with your partner before leaving the building – that you will find the right people to talk to, that you would be observant and respectful.
5. Give three assignments:
 1. Buy something to eat or drink (I often send them out over lunch and ask them to buy their lunch in the community)
 2. Talk to at least one person
 3. Bring back a token
6. Give the list of things to look for (*attached*)

Dwelling in the Word

Ephesians 2:4-10

⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us

⁵ even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved

⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

⁷ so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God

⁹ not the result of works, so that no one may boast.

¹⁰ For we are what God has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

Reflect:

1. Listen to the passage.
2. Underline any words or phrases that stand out.
3. Sit quietly with those words.
4. What message do you hear?
5. Share with another person.

Debrief Observations:

- Who do you see? Describe the people.
- What are they doing?
- What conversations do you observe?
- Are people alone or in groups?
- Do you see people walking on the streets? Driving? Sitting? Biking?
- How are the people dressed? Pay attention to details such as shoes, jewelry, hair and clothing styles.
- What do you hear and smell?
- Pay attention to the town infrastructure: sidewalks, streetlights, stop lights, signage. What do they tell you about the community?
- Describe the houses you see: single family, apartments, condos? Are they well cared for? Do you see toys in the yards? Cars parked out front? What can you tell about the community?
- What kind of signage do you see? Advertising? Fliers on telephone poles?
- What is your overall impression of the community?
- Is there anything that you might expect to see in a community that seems to be missing?
- Describe the commercial district: what stores do you see? What stores are not present? What signs of commercial vibrancy do you see?
- What businesses do you observe? Can you get a sense of what people in this community do for a living?
- Where are the children? Is there a school in the community? What signs of children or youth activities do you notice?
- What leisure activities can you observe? Is there a gym, movie theater, sports facility, etc.
- What churches or other community gathering places do you observe?