



Presbyterian Mission
**Young Adult
Volunteers**

Scripture study that can be done with a YAV and their sending community

Theme: Exploring What It Means to be Called:

Scripture: 1 Samuel 3:1-9

- Open with prayer
- Checking-In:

How is the YAV feeling? Any anxiety about accepting this call? Comfort level with this new opportunity?

- Lectio Divina:

Read the scripture passage. As you hear words spoken, listen for a phrase that speaks to you. Encourage the YAV to share. Have a different person read. Listen again for a word or phrase. Has something new come to mind? Invite further sharing.

How easy or hard is it to hear God's call in our lives? How do we listen to that voice? How do you hear that voice?

- The meaning of discern is to sift, to separate, to distinguish between. The YAV at this point has gone through a mutual discernment process with the program. How did the YAV center themselves to hear God's voice?

- Read the story of Naaman in 2 Kings 5:1-14.

What happened when Naaman alone tried to decide God's message? How did this understanding change when community was involved?

Think about the people who make up your community. Think about the larger Christian family as a community. How is this place here and now forming community?

- End with prayer and invite further discussion if needed/requested.



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Theme: Exploring Talents:

Scripture: Ephesians 4:1-16

- Open with prayer
- Read Ephesians 4:1-16.

What Focusing on verses 4:4-7: What gifts have been affirmed in you by your faith?
 What is one gift you feel called to share with others during a year a service?
 is one gift you hope to explore during a year of service?

*Please use this as a time of creative prayer (whether through drawing, meditation, spoken words, etc.). If time permits, have folks share their drawings, symbols, thoughts, etc.

- Read Ephesians 4:8-16.

What are some “winds” that blow in your daily life? What does it mean to “grow up into Christ?” How can you feel grounded in a calling to serve God that may be perceived as counter-cultural?

- Encourage the YAV to begin journaling as a way to gauge their preparation into a year of service. This is also a fantastic practice to keep up during the YAV year.
- End with prayer and invite further discussion if needed/requested.



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Other Ways to Support a YAV:

- Check in with them to see how their preparation is going. We encourage sitting down over a cup of coffee or a meal. Ask them about:

- *Fundraising efforts*
- *Emotional state: normal butterflies vs. heightened unusual anxieties*
- *Spiritual health*
- *Continued vocational discernment*
- *Readiness to engage in simple living*
- *Readiness to live in a new community*

- Some helpful sample probing questions are:

- *How are you feeling as you prepare for your YAV year? What are some specific emotions you are feeling? How do you understand those emotions?*
- *How is your fundraising going? How can I (the congregation) help you with this? (fundraiser event, minute-for-mission opportunity, etc.)*
- *How will your YAV year fit into your larger vocational discernment?*
- *What are you most excited about?*
- *What are you most anxious about?*
- *Who is in your current support network and how are they supporting you?*

***Some YAVs face the challenge of explaining a year of service to parents, family members, and friends who do not understand their reasons for doing a service year. These YAVs might need particular care and support in how to navigate that area.*

However, what is more typical is over-involvement from the YAV's support network while preparing for service. Some YAVs might need some help in navigating through this so they can continue to seek support while exercising a healthy level of adult independence that will be critical to having a positive YAV year experience.



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Things to consider when supporting a YAV:

As a sending congregation/community, it is important to support a YAV in a healthy way as they are stretched to grow during their YAV year. Suggestions are:

- Read their blogs and let them know that you are reading! Leave a comment at the bottom of their post or send them an email with your appreciation and any other follow-up. You can also check with them about re-publishing some of their posts in your congregation's newsletter or website. If the YAV is not consistently writing blogs, remind them that there are people who are interested in hearing about their journey.

- Hold the YAV in prayer throughout the year, and let them know you are doing this. Add them to a prayer list, prayer chain, or whatever way your congregation lifts up persons in their daily faith life.

- Help YAVs to navigate through challenges on their own. A YAV might reach out to you for support during challenging times. While it will be tempting to jump in, refrain from solving the problem for them. We suggest asking probing questions to see what steps they have taken and provide them with other ideas they might try to deal with the situation. Please do not offer to contact/call persons in charge on their behalf. We encourage YAVs to engage in direct communication.

- Funnel all financial support towards their official PC(USA) or local site fundraising efforts. Sending extra cash or spending money interferes with their goal to live out simple living during their YAV year. A simple care package is a great way to show your love for them without interfering with their simple living. It's also a good practice to ask if the YAV would like to receive such a package and the best address to use.

- If someone from the sending community hopes to visit the YAV during their year, please wait until after Christmas to do so. The first 6-months of a YAV year is a critical time of building relationships in their new community. While a visit with familiar faces might provide a temporary relief, it tends to have a negative impact on their long-term ability to connect with their local community.

- Homesickness is a normal part of a YAV year. One way in which YAVs deal with homesickness might be to reach out to their family or sending community. While this might provide temporary relief, too much contact can prevent them from being present with their new community. If you suspect that a YAV's connection with their home base is leaning towards unhealthy, check in with them. If they seem to be experiencing normal homesickness, help normalize their experience and encourage them to seek support from their YAV site community.



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Sample Commissioning Liturgy:

Leader: Today we have the honor of recognizing [YAV name] joining in God's mission in [YAV's site]. [YAV name] has accepted Christ's call into mission service, but they do not serve in isolation.

All: **We serve in mission together, as an entire church, with global and local partners, who have invited us to join them in long-term partnership, based on mutual respect and trust. Christ's call to mission is for us all.**

Leader: It is a calling to share the good news of God's love, exemplified in Jesus Christ. It is a calling to address the root causes of poverty, and to seek reconciliation of people with one another. We accept this calling as disciples of Christ, knowing that Jesus first did these things. As God's people connected in effective mission, we can indeed be a compelling witness to Jesus Christ in our world.

All: **We lift up [YAV name] who is committing to a year of service grounded in intentional Christian community, so that they might discern God's call, not just during their service year, but for their whole lives.**

Leader: [YAV name], do you promise to follow Jesus Christ, in faithfulness to God's call to you, relying on God's grace and power? Do you?

YAV: *I do.*

Leader: Do you promise to be faithful and diligent in all you do, proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed? Do you?

YAV: *I do.*

Leader: Do you welcome your responsibility because you are determined to follow the Lord Jesus, to love neighbors, and to work for the reconciling of the world? Do you?

YAV: *I do.*

Leader: Will you serve the people to whom you are called with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love? Will you?

YAV: *I will, with God's help.*



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- Leader: And to all gathered here, please stand in body or spirit and join me in the response.
- [YAV name] is being sent by God through the church to serve in [YAV site]. God calls each of us into the world, not alone but to minister as a community of Christians. Will you welcome and embrace [YAV name] into this community and encourage them as they go out on behalf of the Presbyterian Church (USA)?
- All: We share in a calling to be the hands, feet, words, and tears of Jesus Christ in the world. We promise to welcome, embrace, and encourage [YAV name] as they join our community here and throughout the world.**
- Leader: Do you commit yourselves to support [YAV name] in ministry with prayer and with necessary resources, so that they may witness to God's reign in the world and among all peoples in all places?
- All: As God's people, we commit ourselves to support [YAV name] with prayer, encouragement, and resources so that Christ's reign of peace, justice and love will be known in all our communities and throughout the world, until Christ comes.**
- Leader: As we surround [YAV name], we will lay hands on them and offer a prayer. As you feel comfortable, please lift your hands to extend a blessing as well. Please pray with me:



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Sample Benediction:

*May God bless you with discomfort at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships,
So that you may seek truth boldly and live deep within your heart.*

*May God bless you with holy anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people,
So that you may work tirelessly for justice, freedom and peace among all people*

*May God bless you with the gift of tears to shed for those who suffer pain, rejection, hunger and war,
So that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and to turn their pain to joy.*

*And may God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you can make a difference in this world,
So that you are able, with God's grace, to do what others claim cannot be done.*

~Fourfold Franciscan Blessing