

# Service based on Lectionary scriptures

## Focus Statement

In the midst of the every day activities of our lives, God calls our name, asking us if we're ready to learn something new. If we're willing and ready to learn, we need to recognize that our lives will be changed and transformed!

## Theme Ideas:

Mennonite/Christian education changed my life.  
Call and education

## Scripture Texts:

Luke 5:1-11  
I Cor. 15:1-11  
Isaiah 6:1-8 (9-13)  
Psalm 138

## Music Suggestions

"I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" (S. Sundar Singh)

"In the Secret" (Andy Park)

"Knowing You Jesus" (Graham Kendrick)

"Open the Eyes of My Heart" (Paul Baloche)

"Open Our Eyes, Lord" (Bob Cull)

"Sanctuary" (many composers)

lyrics begin with "Lord, prepare me, to be a sanctuary, Pure and holy, tried and true ..."

*Hymnal, A Worship Book*, #70 "Immortal, invisible, God only wise"

*Hymnal, A Worship Book*, #395 "Here I am Lord"

*Hymnal, A Worship Book*, #499 "Lord, speak to me"

*Hymnal, A Worship Book*, #544 "When we walk with the Lord"

*Hymnal, A Worship Book*, #545 "Be thou my vision"

*Hymnal, A Worship Book*, #548 "Teach me thy truth"

*Sing the Journey*, #27 "God of the Bible"

*Sing the Journey*, #46 "O breathe on me, O breath of God"

## Moment on Mennonite Education

### Option 1:

Two persons do the reading on the following page.

### Option 2:

One person does the reading on the following page.

**Reader 1:** Here is a quote by G. K. Chesterton, “Education is simply the soul of a society as it passes from one generation to another.” When it comes to the soul of a person, education helps the learner find out who he or she is, how to relate to others and what is needed to live life. Mennonite education helps a person live as a Christian in the world. It is easy to see how this is a life-shaping or life-changing experience. Here is an invitation to imagine what might be possible.

**Reader 2:** Just imagine a Mennonite Church with a vision—the vision of healing and hope. “God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace, so that God’s healing and hope flow through us to the world.”

**Reader 1:** Just imagine that the Mennonite Church believes that distinctive Mennonite education is an integral component of realizing this vision.

**Reader 2:** Just imagine that all of the Mennonite educational institutions re-ordered their mission statements, strategic plans, faculty selection, curricula, and day-to-day operations in order to envelope the campus goals of intellectual and social development with the larger intention to make their campuses into communities of grace, joy and peace, so that God’s healing and hope flow through them to the world.

**Reader 1:** Just imagine that people would enroll at our Mennonite educational institutions at all levels or go there on visits for the express purpose of participating in those communities of grace, joy and peace.

**Reader 2:** Just imagine that conservatives and liberals, locals and cosmopolites, females and males, Racial/Ethnic persons and Caucasians, would know and celebrate the spiritual support and nurture that those campuses provide.

**Reader 1:** Just imagine that the church would come to recognize that our campuses are places of good will, high standards of discipline and exemplary Christian lifestyle.

**Reader 2:** Just imagine our students who apply their intellect as Christians creating communities of grace, joy and peace in the world today.

**Reader 1:** We celebrate the way our Mennonite educational institutions, our faculty and our students live into this imagination answering God’s call in the vision of the church and invite you into it as well.

**Reader 2:** “God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace, so that God’s healing and hope flow through us to the world.”

## Call to Worship

### Option #1

The worship leader reads all of Psalm 138.

### Option #2

Responsive reading:

**Leader:** I give you thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart; before the gods I sing your praise; I bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness; for you have exalted your name and your word above everything.

**People:** On the day I called, you answered me, you increased my strength of soul.

**Leader:** All the kings of the earth shall praise you, O Lord, for they have heard the words of your mouth. They shall sing of the ways of the Lord, for great is the glory of the Lord.

**People:** For though you, O Lord, are high, you regard the lowly; but the proud you perceive from far away.

**Leader:** Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve me against the wrath of my enemies; you stretch out your hand, and your right hand delivers me.

**ALL:** *The Lord will fulfill God's purposes for me; your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of your hands.*

## Invocation/Opening Prayer

O God, we thank you for being the great Teacher.

Open our minds and our hearts to receive what you desire to teach us as your students.

We desire to be open to the lessons you have for each of us to learn.

Help us to recognize that you are the One with all truth and wisdom and knowledge.

Amen.

## Confession Prayer

Based on Isaiah 6:1-8

God of Wisdom,  
 We are people of unclean lips, and we live among people of unclean lips.  
 Forgive us for the use of knowledge that puffs us up,  
     rather than using that knowledge in wise service to you and others.  
 Forgive us for ignoring the knowledge we have of you  
     when we unwisely chase our own ways that separate us from you.  
 Forgive us for the knowledge that we failed to pass along  
     during those times when the wisdom was especially needed.  
 We come to you, God, longing to have you reveal something of yourself to us.  
 Let us see you with fresh eyes.  
 Cleanse our unclean lips, and blot out our guilt with your everlasting love.  
 Give us a message of wisdom from you,  
     and the good judgment to share it in timely and loving ways. Amen.

## Offering Prayer

God, you are the giver of every good gift.  
 We thank you for all the blessings you have given to us.  
 We thank you for the wisdom you give us to be good stewards of your gifts.  
 And now, we honor you with our gifts, giving them back to you.  
 Use these gifts to remind us that,  
     though we give back a part to you, all we have is ultimately yours.  
 Bless these gifts and use them in your wisdom to bring your reign on the earth. Amen.

## Children's Time

*Supplies needed: fishing rod, fishing box (with fishing items), bags with Goldfish crackers. Someone who enjoys fishing can talk to the children about what it takes to fish. Or, someone who doesn't fish can joke about not knowing what the different fishing items are. They can talk about what it would take to learn how to fish.*

In Luke 5, several men who fish as their job had just finished working. They are cleaning their nets and ready to go home for the day. But Jesus shows up, and after teaching the crowd, he instructs them to fish again, giving them a new way to do it. Jesus is teaching them how to fish.

After they collect tons of fish, Jesus talks to them about no longer fishing for fish, but fishing for people. It's a different way to think about doing things. Jesus liked to teach new ways of doing things. *(Person leading the children's time could talk about loving your enemies, turning the other cheek, last shall be first, greatest is least, etc...)*

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During the sermon today, we're going to hear more about Jesus teaching people. As you listen to the message, we want to give you a snack, to remind you that God teaches us new things, like instructing us to fish for people. (*Hand out bags of Goldfish crackers for the children.*)

## Sermon Ideas

### Option 1:

#### General Thoughts

In this passage from Luke 5, Jesus asks fishermen to fish after a full night of work. Although they were ready to close up shop (having already cleaned their nets), they chose to listen to Jesus and put the nets into the water. Not only are Simon Peter, James and John surprised at the results, but they recognize their unworthiness to be in the presence of Christ.

This same concept happens in Isaiah 6. When we are in the presence of the Holy One, we see our sinfulness and our unworthiness. And yet, God calls our name, asking us if we're ready to learn something new. If we're willing and ready to learn, we will see our lives changed and transformed! We will learn a new way of life!

Each one of us is invited to answer God's call and invite others into a lifelong journey of learning by having a relationship with Christ. We can teach and mentor those around us, as we recognize our unworthiness and step into a new way of life. Mennonite education (in congregational and school settings) helps students recognize their calling/vocation and to offer it to the church. In these settings, young people are formed to be disciples.

#### Possible Sermon Outline

Key elements in Luke 5

The disciples:

- Were ready/available
- Followed instructions (even if they seemed a bit crazy)
- Recognized God's holiness compared to own failings
  - Much like story in Isaiah 6
  - Need to see that we need to be taught ...
  - Posture/attitude of a student rather than an expert
- Took action, put lessons learned into practice – application ...
  - Information and formation

What about us?

- Are we ready/available?
- Do we follow God's instructions?
- Do we recognize our failings in light of God's holiness?
- Do we allow the lessons we learn to transform us by putting them into action?

## **Option 2 - How to support Mennonite/Christian Education:**

### **General Thoughts**

Jesus forms us not only when we expect it but also when the “formal” teaching is done.

Jesus sets out in a boat in order to teach the people without being crowded by them. But it is when the teaching is done and the people are dispersing that the real education is starting for Simon Peter, James and John.

Jesus presents them with a new experience, catching a bunch of fish after an unsuccessful night of casting their nets. This new experience forces them to look at the power of Jesus and see Jesus for who he is. This produces a fearful response in Peter but one that ultimately leads him to become a disciple of Christ.

### **Possible Sermon Outline**

From Luke 5

- Jesus entered the boat in order to teach the people.
- When Jesus finished teaching, he instructed the fishermen to let their nets down.
- The experience led the disciples to see Jesus in a new way and with a new understanding.
- The initial response seems less than favorable, i.e., fear.
- Ultimately, this experience leads Simon Peter and his companions to become disciples of Christ.

Our students at Mennonite educational institutions

- Students at our educational institutions receive a top quality education. Let’s be honest; there are plenty of good schools, colleges and universities that can educate our students and pass on knowledge. What happens at our educational institutions beyond the formal education is even more valuable: passing on wisdom and the desire to follow Christ in an Anabaptist context.
- Students have experiences they would not have at other places: chapels, other forms of worship, cross-cultural experiences with an emphasis on service, opportunities to lead worship, etc. (Ask your students and alumni what experiences are/were meaningful to them and are shaping/shaped their spiritual development.)
- Through these new experiences that help them see Christ in a different way, they come to new understandings of what it means to be a person of faith.
- Initially, they may be fearful as they develop a faith that is their own. Or we may be fearful of their developing faith.
- By claiming their faith as their own and living it, they learn what it means to become authentic disciples of Jesus.

Our congregations

- Support our educational institutions because of the quality education they offer and for what they can experience beyond the classroom.

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- Support all students of all ages as they grow into their faith, encouraging them as they become disciples.
- Provide a safe place to ask questions; students have new life experiences that cause them to ask big faith questions even though, at times, these questions can produce fear in us.
- Encourage them to listen for the voice of Christ and respond in obedience when they hear it.
- Become trusting communities where we mentor each other in the ways of discipleship.

Mennonite Education is a tool for passing on wisdom and preparing people to encounter the world with passion for Christ.

### **Sending Prayer/ Benediction**

May you come into the presence of the Living God this week.  
May you be made wise by that presence to see your shortcomings and your gifts  
as you serve our Most Holy God.

# Service based on education-related scriptures

## Focus statement

It is easy for us to get caught up in focusing on things that are not God—we have a lot of distractions. Or maybe a sudden event in our lives is causing us to question how we think about God. In either case, focusing on God and remembering what God has done, for us and in the Bible, will help us to renew our minds.

## Theme ideas

Renewing of your mind  
Passing on stories of God

## Scripture texts

Romans 12:2  
Psalm 78:1-8  
Proverbs 9:9-11

## Music suggestions

“I Have Decided to Follow Jesus” (S. Sundar Singh)

“In the Secret” (Andy Park)

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## Call to Worship

*Hymnal, A Worship Book, #671*

## Invocation/Opening Prayer

O God, we thank you for being the great Teacher.

Open our minds and our hearts to receive what you desire to teach us as your students.

We desire to be open to the lessons you have for each of us to learn.

Help us to recognize that you are the One with all truth and wisdom and knowledge. Amen.

## Prayer of Confession

Holy God, you have given us wonderful and complex minds to use in honoring you. Yet so often, we fail to think of you in our daily lives.

Forgive us for the times we have used our minds for wrong—ways that do not reflect your glory:

- Thinking that is disrespectful toward you, God, at times even idolatrous; *(Pause)*
- Thinking about ourselves that pridefully raises ourselves above others, or fails to recognize ourselves as one of your beautiful children; *(Pause)*
- Thinking about others in ways that rob them of their humanity as we try to make them less of a person loved by you—whether that person be in front of us or on the other side of the world; *(Pause)*
- Thinking about creation that fails to recognize and preserve its beauty as we strive for our own comfort and efficiency. *(Pause)*

Forgive us for the times that we have failed to look for and recognize your presence and power in our lives—relying on ourselves rather than turning our thoughts and prayers toward you.

Strengthen us, God, in our desire to have our minds become more and more like the mind of Christ. Amen.

## Offering Prayer

O God, who perceives our thoughts from afar and knows our hearts,

We come to you with thanksgiving for the wonderful gifts you have given to us.

You give us gifts abundantly.

Some you have blessed materially;

others you blessed with an abundance of spiritual gifts;

some have athletic abilities,

some musical talents,

and still others you have gifted with very sharp minds.

*(continued on next page)*

We all have received gifts from you, Lord.

Whatever our gifts might be, you have called us to use them in your service.

This morning as we give our offering to you, God, remind us to give liberally of our gifts—all of our gifts—with cheerful hearts, in order to glorify you.

Take the gifts that are present in this room and bless them so that they may be used in big or small ways to bring praise and honor in your name. Amen.

## Children's Time

### *Option #1 - Talk about learning at school ...*

*Ask the children:* Why do we go to school? What do you like about school? What don't you like about school?

We go to school so we can learn. Why is learning important?

Part of the reason that we come to church is so we can learn more about God. We have Sunday School classes where we can learn, and during the worship service someone teaches us through a sermon or message.

In Matthew 22:37, Jesus taught that it is important to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind. It's important for all of us to use our minds so that we can learn more about God and be able to share what we know with others.

Today we're going to hear more about renewing our minds and learning about God every day, not just on Sundays. Try to listen to see if you can figure out the ways that we renew our minds.

### *Option #2 - Talk about the game of Memory ...*

How do you play Memory? You turn over two pieces to find matches. What happens if they don't match? You turn them back over and the next person goes. You have to remember where things are located to get matches.

It's important for us to learn and use our memory and our minds so that we can remember things.

In Matthew 22:37, Jesus taught that it is important to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind. It's important for all of us to use our minds so that we can learn more about God, remember what we learned and be able to share it with others.

Today we're going to hear more about renewing our minds and learning about God every day, not just on Sundays. Try to listen to see if you can figure out the ways that we renew our minds.

## Sermon Ideas

In Romans 12:2, Paul tells the Romans to be transformed by the renewing of their minds. Renewing implies returning it to a previous state of being—the state of being for which the mind was created. Think about fixing a car engine or refurbishing a piece of furniture. We want to return it to a previous state of being—more functional or more appealing. Or we remodel or repaint houses in order to achieve a different result. That brown shag carpet may have been sweet in the early 80's, but it might be time to change it, time for an upgrade.

It is the same thing with our minds. All of our being, including our minds, was created good by God but has been undermined. At times we find minds, even our own, working against the good things for which God created them. Or we find that we are asking questions that do not fit into our current belief system. We want to keep the same rooms in our house, but it might be time to remodel how everything fits together because the old way of thinking is not functioning well for us anymore.

How do we go about renewing our minds? Whether going back to the basics to reclaim our mind for God's purposes or re-arranging the way our faith fits together, a good place to start is with the fear of the Lord (Proverbs 9:10). Reverence for God reminds us of our place in the world. We are created by God whom we serve and who holds a place of honor. We are called by God in order to serve as God's partners in bringing the reign of God on earth. This is a good place to start a journey toward renewing one's mind and becoming wise (verse 9 and 11 of Proverbs 9).

Psalm 78:1-8 reminds us of the importance of passing on the deeds of the Lord. These include both the works of God found in the Bible and the ways God is working in our lives—showing love to us in spite of our failures and helping us to love others unconditionally. Paying attention to how God worked and is working even now is another important way to renew our minds by training it to look for God in the world.

By remembering our place in the universe and God's place, and by thinking about where we see evidence of God's presence, we are creating good and godly habits of thought and retraining (renewing) our minds to be wise.

## Sending Prayer/Benediction

Go and see God at work in your life.

And as you begin to notice God in every part of your life,

may your mind be transformed to be more and more like the mind of Christ.