



**Menonite  
Mission  
Network**

The mission agency of  
Menonite Church USA

**Transformed**  
by God's love

## Worship ideas for Mission Sunday 2014

### Scripture

Isaiah 5:1-7, Psalm 80:7-15, Philippians 3:4b-14,  
Matthew 21:33-46

### Call to worship/gathering prayer

**Leader:** O, God, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen, we come to worship you.

**People:** We want to know you. We want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection.

**All:** *We gather to press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call. Amen.*

### Prayer for restoration

**Leader:** Restore us, O, God of hosts. Let your face shine, that we may be saved.

**People:** You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it. You cleared the ground for it. It took deep root and filled the land. The mountains were covered with its shade, the mighty cedars with its branches; it sent out its branches to the sea and its shoots to the river.

**Single voice:** *Why, then, have you broken down its walls, so that all who pass along the way pluck its fruit? The boar from the forest ravages it, and all that move in the field feed on it.*

**Leader:** Turn again, O, God of hosts; look down from heaven and see. Have regard for this vine, the stock that your right hand planted.

### Children's story and giving project

In the Bible verses we read today, we are reminded that God wants our lives to show fruit. But what does that *really mean*? Are we supposed to swallow watermelon seeds, so that they grow in our stomachs? (No! People who say that might be playing a joke on you!)

If our lives show God's fruit, it means that we're taking what we learn from our pastors, parents and teachers, and practicing it in our own lives. A great example of this can be seen in Brian and Noelia Fox's youth group in Spain.

Brian and Noelia Fox work with Menonite Mission Network and, for years, they have been telling the youth at their church about God's love. Their hope is that the youth would bear God's fruit, or show God's love to others.

The youth group did this! One Friday night, they gathered together on the street and offered free hugs to whoever wanted one. They also set up a table with a small box on it. On slips of paper, people could write things that they wanted prayer for and place it in the box. After spending a few hours giving free hugs, the youth took their box of prayer requests to their Bible study and prayed for each person who wanted prayer.

"We think that people need a lot of love and someone to listen to them," said Vanesa Moreno, one of the young adults in the youth group. As the weeks went on, people began to recognize the youth group gathered together on the street, and asked for prayer when they passed by. Some of them began to come to church.

When Brian and Noelia saw this happening, they knew without a doubt that what they taught their youth group was showing fruit. The youth group was taking what they knew about God's love and putting it into practice.

## Prayer

Dear Jesus,  
Thank you for all of the different ways that you show love to us. Give us the courage to live in ways that share your love with others.  
Amen.

## Giving project: Spain Mission Bank tools

No matter the age, you can participate in God's mission! Mennonite Mission Network's globe mission bank materials give teachers the resources to tell children about God's work in the world. Our most recent project is Spain. Involve all ages in mission, and get your mission bank tools at: [www.MennoniteMission.net/Resources/MissionBank](http://www.MennoniteMission.net/Resources/MissionBank).

## Suggested hymns and songs

*HWB:* 43, 140, 121, 594  
*SJ:* 12, 16, 27, 53  
*SS:* 37, 55, 124

## Suggested prayers

*HWB:* 732, 735  
*SJ:* 139

## Suggested readings for sending

*HWB:* 764, 765

## Sermon starter theme: Transformed by God's love

God's love has the ability to transform our lives. Below, you'll find a few individual stories of transformation from areas where Mennonite Mission Network workers live. These stories are intended to be used individually as sermon openings or illustrations. Additional stories can be found on the [MennoniteMission.net](http://MennoniteMission.net) website. May you and your congregation be inspired by God's word and deeds.

### Sermon starters from Matthew 21:33-46

#### *Bearing fruit*

In Matthew 21:43, Jesus says, "Therefore, I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom." As Christians today, do we take seriously God's call to bear fruit? After 30 years, a dream bears fruit in Benin through congregations in the United States, Beninese leaders, and Benin Bible Institute. Read more about this story at: [www.MennoniteMission.net/Stories/News/Pages/Agro-pastoralprojectbirthedafterlongincubation.aspx](http://www.MennoniteMission.net/Stories/News/Pages/Agro-pastoralprojectbirthedafterlongincubation.aspx).

What fruits are being made visible in our context? How do we recognize the fruits of action and service locally? Regionally? Globally?

### *Love your neighbor*

This important section of Matthew ends with the Great Commandment (22:34-39), the summation of Jesus' theology and authority for our fruit-filled lives: *When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"*

One good resource about "loving your neighbor" that can be found on our website is *Missio Dei #1 Understanding Islam: a Christian reflection on the faith of our Muslim neighbors—Who is our Neighbor?* by Calvin E. Shenk. Shenk and his wife, Marie served for many years in Jerusalem, with a focus on Jewish-Christian relationships amidst the Muslim world.

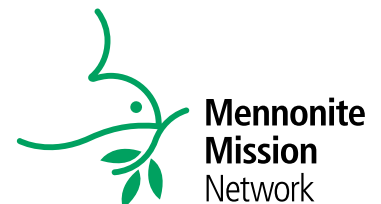
### Sermon starter from Philippians 3:4b-14

#### *Sacrificial love*

Resurrection is usually described in Scripture as the result of an act of divine power, but here Paul describes resurrection as itself a source of power in the lives of believers. Those who are in Christ share his faith, righteousness, and resurrection—but only if prepared to share in "his sufferings." Being conformed to Christ's death is an ongoing process of sacrificial love in the life of believers.

This required (and freely given) sacrificial love is shown as the churches of Argentina's Patagonia Mission Project partner with Mennonite congregations in Illinois. The *Missio Dei #9* that features the Patagonia Story highlights the insights of people from both sides of the partnership, and demonstrates how the roles become mutually beneficial.

[www.MennoniteMission.net](http://www.MennoniteMission.net)  
1-866-866-2872



The mission agency of  
Mennonite Church USA