



**Mennonite
Mission
Network**

The mission agency of
Mennonite Church USA

Bubbling OVER WITH LOVE

Worship ideas for Mission Sunday 2015

Scripture

Deuteronomy 6:1-9; Psalm 119:1-8; Hebrews 9:11-14; Mark 12:28-34

Gathering prayer/Call to worship

Leader: Come, experience the loving arms of a mighty God.

People: We come, loving the Lord with all our heart.

Leader: Come, giving to God all that burdens you this week.

People: We come, knowing that God will give us peace.

Leader: Come, where milk and honey flows for all people.

People: We come, using our strength to gather in this place.

Leader: Come, where the Spirit of God exists and the water of life is freely offered.

People: We come, surrendering our whole being—heart, mind, soul and strength—in worship to God.

All: *Amen.*

Prayer for restoration

Mighty and loving God, you bless those who are blameless and walk according to your ways. In our busyness, we may miss the nudge of your Holy Spirit to act in grace and love. Sometimes we act without considering the good of others. We seek you with all our heart, but we don't always obey. God, do not forsake your children and our unyielding heart, but give to each of us your grace, mercy and love. Amen.

Children's story and giving project

A camp for peace

Every year, the Korea Peacebuilding Institute helps plan a peace camp. The camp is for young people from China, Japan and Korea. These three countries are neighbors, but because of wars and bad things that have happened in the past, many Chinese and Korean youth are taught to feel hatred toward Japan.

At the Youth Peace Camp, the campers gather in friendship. This is what Heo Hyo-eun, a 15-year-old girl from Korea, said about her experience:

“On the first day of Peace Camp, I had no idea what it would be like. When I saw one young girl from Japan, Yuki, I wanted to be her friend. We were placed on the same team, and I was happy! Through playing, dancing and games, we became close.

“In the mornings at camp, we did games and other activities that helped us to build trust with each other. In the afternoons, we had time to think about peace and express our ideas through drama and talking. I felt hopeful, since everyone there seemed to really want peace.

“One of the biggest things I will remember is the relationships we built with friends from other countries. Since we're students, we have all studied about our history of pain and hurt. Even just sharing space together and eating food together was a powerful experience for us.

“The last night of Peace Camp, my Chinese friend and roommate, Linda, shared a lot. She said, crying, ‘We hated Japan, because we cannot forget what Japan did to us ... but through this camp, my hatred toward Japan has disappeared. I want to be closer to them.’

“When it was the Japanese students’ turn, they went to the front. They were crying, and said, ‘We are very sorry to Korea and China ... really sorry ... sorry.’ Their tears extinguished the fire of my hatred. Yuki, from Japan, had become my best friend.

“After this, we had a candle-lighting ceremony. Each person placed a candle on the world map on the floor, in an area where they wanted to see peace grow. The area between China, Korea and Japan became the shining-est part of the map. I thought to myself, ‘Let’s love warmly and accept each other, just like these candles. And may we never again repeat our painful history.’”

Questions for discussion

1. Sometimes when we hear bad things about someone, we dislike them without even knowing them. How can that change when we get to know that person?
2. How can games and activities help us really get to know someone?
3. Why do you think the Japanese students were so sorry?

Prayer

Dear God, help us not to dislike others because of how they look or what we’ve heard about them. Help us to get to know them and make friends. Amen.

Giving project: South Korea 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 ministry in South Korea.

Involve all ages in mission, and get your mission bank stories, activities and photos at <http://www.MennoniteMission.net/Resources/MissionBank>.

The suggested project for Mission Sunday 2015 is Mennonite Mission Network ministries in South Korea:

- The Northeast Asia Regional Peacebuilding Institute helps to recruit teachers for the Connexus Language Institute. Both of these organizations promote peace by working on healing relationships.
- Northeast Asia Youth Peace Camp (see story above).

- One-week training seminars for northeast Asian leaders from Mongolia, Japan, China, South Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong. Topics include peace education, sustainable development, restorative justice, and conflict transformation.

Sermon Scripture and starter ideas

Mark 12:28-34

As Christians, when we talk about the water of life or a spring of living water, most of us would understand that to be about God’s love and saving grace found in Jesus Christ. We use the metaphor of a spring of water that bubbles up from the ground in a continuous flow, representing God’s grace, mercy and love that is abundant and ever-flowing for God’s people and God’s creation.

I was on vacation this fall at Little Eden Camp in Onekama, Michigan. Next to the camp is a fountain of fresh water that bubbles up from the ground. Over the years, it has been reinforced by cement, rocks and pipes, and you can now drink from the fountain or fill a water bottle or jug from the spout. This water is always running, year-round. On a hot sunny day in August, this is the most refreshing and good-tasting water around. It refreshes the physical body. Jesus is the living water that refreshes our soul.

The commandment to love God with all our heart and soul and might is found in the Torah (Deuteronomy 6:1-9). In the Mark verses, often labeled the greatest commandment, with similar verses found in Matthew 22:34-40 and Luke 10:25-28, Jesus is found in Jerusalem in or near a temple and talking with the chief priests, scribes and elders. These educated leaders were well versed in the oral laws of Moses and the Torah laws. When we read the chapters leading up to our passage today, we find that often these leaders weren’t happy with Jesus’ response. And quite honestly, Jesus wasn’t pleased with these leaders’ actions. But in these verses we find common ground between one scribe and Jesus (vs. 32-34).

Love that bubbles up and flows freely for our neighbors is what we are called to, but sometimes it requires us to find common ground in which we can express this love. The church, even in its earliest days, has tried to understand what it means to be church among people who have very different world experiences and views. The disciples and other early Jewish believers

Suggested hymns and songs

HWB: 12, 41, 74, 512
SJ: 14, 27, 61
SS: 1, 37, 124

Suggested readings/prayers

HWB: 720, 737, 776, 808
SJ: 139, 141, 152
SS: 181, 192, 200

who walked with Jesus had to learn to love and live with Greek and pagan converts. Paul, who experienced his own conversion, wrote many letters to churches struggling to understand how to live and worship together. It's hard work to be the church, and we haven't always gotten it right. I sometimes wonder what makes us think we can get it right, since, after all, we are only human.

Without the bubbling love of a creator God who offers grace, mercy and forgiveness for our sins and wrongs, we cannot find hope, peace or justice in this world. A call to be reconciled to God, to one another, and even to ourselves is a constant challenge in a society where people are driven and measured by independence, wealth, success and status. The church has a message that needs to be heard loud and clear ... God's love bubbles over for you and me! And we are called to love one another with the same grace, mercy and forgiveness.

Share a personal, community, or worldwide story of God's love bubbling up like a gift from the spring of the water of life. It does our hearts

good to hear, and repeat often, the stories of God at work in the world today. It is, after all, God who does the work, and we are the messengers. To God be the glory!

—Sandy Miller,
director of Mission Network Church Relations

Need help finding a worldwide story? Check Mennonite Mission Network's website, <http://www.mennonitemission.net/Stories>, or the Mennonite World Conference website, <https://www.mwc-cmm.org/blog>.

Sending

Leader: Spirit of God, send us into our world with your greatest commandment written on our hearts and ready to share.

All: *Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. And love your neighbor as yourself.*
(Mark 12:30-31 NIV)

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