

Youth Ministry Sunday 2014 Resources

Imagination

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A Message from the Bishop

Youth ministry is a vital way in which our diocese is following Christ passionately. Whether at the diocesan or parish level, our ministries are connecting with our vision and in turn raising up new disciples for God's mission. Having experienced firsthand the transforming power of our ministries for youth, I can tell you that there is much for us to celebrate on Youth Ministry Sunday.

A celebration such as this is also a wonderful opportunity to highlight our many diocesan youth ministry programs. We have a program to fit just about any youth, but we need your help in identifying and encouraging youth to participate in them. It is my sincere hope that your parish will be sending participants to these programs on a regular basis as one of the many ways you undertake ministry.

This year's theme - imagination - invites us to explore what it means to be made in God's image, with the capacity to imagine the world God dreams for us, and make that dream a reality. Taking our cues from the bold visions our youth offer, the theme of imagination invites us to celebrate the unfolding work of building an enlivened Church.

+ Michael Bird

About Youth Ministry Sunday

Youth Ministry Sunday celebrates the many expressions of youth ministry in our parishes and in our diocese. We suggest observing it on **Sunday June 1**, but it can be observed at any time that makes sense for your community.

The celebration allows us also to thank the parishes and volunteers who support youth ministry at the diocesan level. Each year, our Diocesan Youth Ministry programs touch over 300 youth in all six of our regions. Youth Ministry in Niagara is a vital, exciting movement that continues to evolve!

Suggestions for Using this Resource

In our diocese, worship and ministry vary greatly from one parish to the next. We hope that this resource will offer you a variety of ways in which you can incorporate the celebration of Youth Ministry Sunday into your community life in a way that fits for your unique expression of our Anglican tradition.

In keeping with the celebratory nature of Youth Ministry Sunday, we hope you'll be intentional about creating just such a mood for your Sunday worship. Engage all the senses in your celebration — colourful fabrics to engage your eyes, freshly baked bread to enliven your noses, baptismal water to refresh your foreheads, lively music to animate your spirit, flavour-filled food to get your taste buds dancing and send you on our way! The possibilities are endless; go ahead and play!

Cut and paste and adapt – and if you need more ideas, contact us! The Bishop of Niagara has approved all of the materials in this resource booklet for use as part of Youth Ministry celebrations in the diocese. Whatever you choose to do, we hope you'll offer the youth connected to your parish opportunities to actively participate in your planning and celebrations.

Imagination

The spiritual guide Henri J.M. Nouwen wrote, “Just imagine that there was no longer fear among people, no longer rivalry, hostility, bitterness or revenge. Just imagine all the people on this planet holding hands and forming one large circle of love. We say, ‘We can’t imagine.’ But God says, ‘That’s what I imagine, a whole world not only created but also living in my image.’”

What is it to be made in the image of God? Perhaps many things, but what if one aspect is this capacity to imagine? Jesus is our exemplar of imagining a new reality marked by compassion, love, peace and justice. What if, in our time, it’s our youth who often do this well? The young people in our midst can offer new ways of relating, openness to fresh ideas, and a willingness to let go of things that are no longer life-giving.

Where can we find inspiration for this new reality offered us by Jesus and modeled by our youth? So often children and young people love to go outside. Creation is an expression of God’s playful imagination. The seas, the skies, mountains, deserts, islands, and all the plants and animals that call each home... from God’s imagination has sprung such different, amazing kinds of life! The earth and our natural world can enliven what we ourselves imagine.

Drawing inspiration from creation, the parishes of the Diocese of Niagara pray with you, Spirit of God, to help us re-imagine our lives following the example of Jesus.

Liturgical Resources: Gathering Responses

Opening Response Option A

One People of God,
look around and see familiar faces—
families, neighbours and friends—
a community of prayer.

All Let us imagine together.

One People of God,
look around and see new faces—
guests and strangers—
the ones who we do not yet know.

All Let us imagine together.

One People of God,
look around and see all the images of God gathered here.
In me, in you, in each of us,
God's spirit bursts forth.

All Let us imagine together.

One People of God, we are ready.

All Let us imagine together.

Opening Response Option B

One God of Dance,
you choreograph the movement of the planets,
and the flight of the hummingbird.

All God's imagination is at work!

One God of Song,
your divine song is sung by alpine streams
and the ocean breeze.

All God's imagination is at work!

One God of Art,
you give the cosmos its form, shape canyons and fjords,
and design even the smallest of seahorses.

All God's imagination is at work!

One God of Wonder,
we rejoice to be a part of the divine world
which you love and sustain.

All God's imagination is at work!

Liturgical Resources: Hearing God's Word

While the lectionary readings of the day may be used, the readings and reflections which follow offer additional options for connecting with this year's theme: imagination.

First Reading: Genesis 1:26-31

Psalm 8

O Love, my Beloved,
How powerful is your Name in all the earth!
You, whose glory is sung in heaven by the angels and saints,
Who with the innocence and spontaneity of a child,
Confound those who are mighty and proud,
You quiet the unloving and fearful.

When I look up at the heavens,
at the work of Love's creation,
at the infinite variety of your Plan;
What is woman that you rejoice in her,
And man that you do delight in him?
You have made us in your image,
You fill us with your Love;
You have made us co-creators of the earth!
guardians of the planet!
to care for all your creatures,
to tend the land, the sea, and the air we breathe;
all that you have made,
You have placed in our hands.

O Love, my Beloved,
How powerful is your Name in all the earth!

Gospel Reading Matthew 17:1-13

Homily Idea A: Imagining Yourself in the Gospel

Our imagination can be a powerful tool for opening the Scriptures to us! Using all your senses, let the Transfiguration passage gently unfold in your awareness—imagine you are in first-century Palestine, so you can see the people, hear the voices, taste..., smell..., touch... Place yourself in the Gospel—perhaps as an observer, or someone helping another; perhaps near the action, even talking to Jesus. Let the story unfold, let the dialogue take shape, simply be present without striving to make anything happen.

Have 3 or 4 people each share a different perspective of the encounter with Jesus described in today's Gospel.

Homily Idea B: Re-connecting with the Imagination

In today's Gospel, Jesus invites us into a new way of seeing, one that engages our imagination. Remember a time when you felt imaginative... Describe it. Also, how did others perceive you when you felt imaginative? How do you reconnect with this side of yourself? Why is connecting with one's imagination important?

After a brief homily, invite the congregation to get in touch with their imagination, perhaps at stations led by youth: cloud watching, painting a picture, writing a poem, flying a kite, blowing bubbles, listening to the wind in the trees, build a sand castle, plant some bulbs. What else might you add to this list?

You may also wish to invite someone from your congregation to speak about the transformation that youth ministry has had on their lives. Recent participants may need some support in sharing their story to the congregation. Ideas like a question and answer format, or inviting participants to share one highlight from a recent youth ministry program might be a helpful way to enable the stories of transformation to be heard.

Alternatively, you could invite someone to come to your parish and speak about youth ministry and the ways it has impacted their lives. Please contact Brian Reusch at the Synod Office to inquire about possible speakers. Brian can be reached at 905-527-1316 ext 430.

Liturgical Resources: Responding

Affirmation of Faith

One: God waits for us,
like an old friend who's seen it all before
and loves us anyway,
with whom we can spend time
without having to pretend or explain.

**All: We believe in God,
Three in one,
Father, Son, Spirit,
Paradox,
Mystery,
Love.**

**We believe in God,
the Mother of creation.
God, the father of humanity.
God, the lover of us all.**

**We believe we are called to live the abundant life,
by the Son of God,
through his actions,
calling down through history,
borne on the wings of the Spirit.**

**We believe we are called to imagine wonderful things,
through Christ, the thread
weaving us all together.**

Confession & Absolution

Around this sacred space are six stations, where you may taste in the lemon something of the times we have not been as open, loving or generous as we could. You may also taste a spoonful of honey; in its sweetness, we taste something of God's forgiveness.

Arrange 4-6 stations of cut lemons (or lemon juice) and honey with small wooden stir sticks.

At the station with lemons: Taste and remember those times when we could have done better.

At the station with honey: Taste and know God forgives you.

Exchange of Peace

Blessed be Christ the Prince of Peace

Who inspires us to imagine a more just and peaceful world.

The peace of God be always with you.

Praise to Christ who unites us in peace.

The peace of Christ be with you all...

Prayers of the People Option A:

Caring God, We thank you for your gifts in creation: for our world, for our land, its beauty and its capacity to inspire and refresh us. God, hear our prayer:

And in your love answer.

We thank you for the gift of children and youth, and how much they bless us with their presence. God, hear our prayer:

And in your love answer.

We pray for those who work with children and youth, especially teachers, mentors, volunteers and all those in children's and youth ministry; God, hear our prayer:

And in your love answer.

We pray for artists, scientists and visionaries, that through their work we may see creation afresh. God, hear our prayer:

And in your love answer.

We thank you for giving us life; for all who enrich our experience. God, hear our prayer:

And in your love answer.

God, Creator, let our imaginations be life-giving.

Jesus, Redeemer, renew our hearts.

Holy Spirit, strengthen and inspire us.

Prayers of the People Option B:

O God, lover of the world,

You hold all that you have made

Within your tender care,

As you hold our lives

Touched by pain or grief within your aching heart,

We cry out for wholeness—

For ourselves, for those we love,

And for our world that we are passing onto our children.

God, hear our prayer:

And in your love answer.

May your nurturing presence bless all
the children and youth in our lives

God, hear our prayer:

And in your love answer.

May your loving presence inspire and guide
those who work with young people,
especially in children's and youth ministry.
God, hear our prayer:
And in your love answer.

May your transforming presence
create generosity, compassion, and justice
so that all children may flourish
God, hear our prayer:
And in your love answer.

O God, lover of the world,
From the silence of our own hearts,
We bring before you
All that needs
Your healing, loving, transforming presence: (silence)
God, hear our prayer:
And in your love answer.

O God, lover of the world,
This is your world,
And we claim your power and your presence
To make it whole.
God, hear our prayer:
And in your love answer.

Eucharistic Prayer Option A:

The Spirit of God be with you.
And also with you.

Lift your hearts and imaginations
As our offering to God.

Let us give thanks to God.
It is right to offer thanks and praise.

It is right indeed to give you thanks most loving God,
Through Jesus Christ, who inspires us to reimagine our lives.

Your whole created universe reveals the vastness of your imagination,
And we praise you for your bountiful gift of life.
We thank you that you make us in your image
And stay with us
Even when we turn from you.

Holy God,
You came among us in Jesus Christ.
Making all things new.
Through Christ,
You reconcile all peoples to yourself.

May your Spirit gather us,
with all the saints and the faithful,
Joyfully we praise you and say:

**Holy, holy, holy:
God of diverse life;
Earth and sea and sky and all that lives,
Declare your presence and your glory.**

All glory to you, Giver of life,
Accept our praise,
for Jesus Christ,
Who in the night that he was betrayed,
Took bread,
And when he had given thanks,
Broke it, gave it to his disciples, and said:
Take, eat, this is my body
Which is given for you;
Do this to remember me.

After supper he took the cup;
And when he had given thanks,
He gave it to them and said:
Drink this, all of you.
This is my blood of the new covenant
which is shed for you, and for many,
to forgive sin.
Do this as often as you drink it
to remember me.

Therefore, God of all creation,
We lift up the cup of joy
And call upon your name.
Here and now, with this bread and wine,
We celebrate your great acts of salvation
Ever present and living in Jesus Christ,
Who was and is and is to come.
Amen! Come Lord Jesus.

May Christ inspire our imaginations
as we offer ourselves to you.

Empower our celebration with your Holy Spirit,
And make us one in the body of Christ
With all who share your gifts of love.

**Through Christ,
In the power of the Holy Spirit,
With all who stand before you
In earth and heaven,
We worship you, Creator God. Amen.**

Eucharistic Prayer Option B

Christ is risen!
He is risen indeed.

Lift up your hearts
We bring our whole selves.

Let us give thanks to God.
It is right to offer thanks and praise.

It is the joy of our salvation,
God of the universe,
to give you thanks
through Jesus Christ.

You have created us
in your very image
for love

You sent your Son
to show us how to live abundantly
and inspire our imaginations.

You send your Holy Spirit
to strengthen and to guide your Church.
Therefore, with all your saints
we praise you for our creation
with loving and with imaginative hearts:

**Holy God, holy and merciful, holy and just,
Glory and goodness come from you.
Glory to you most high and gracious God.**

Blessed are you, most holy, in your Son.
On that night before he died
He took bread and gave you thanks.
He broke it, gave it to his disciples, and said:
Take, eat, this is my body
Which is given for you;
Do this to remember me.

After supper, he took the cup,
And gave you thanks.
He gave it to them and said:
Drink this. It is my blood of the new covenant,
Shed for you, shed for all,
To forgive sin;
Do this to remember me.

Therefore with this bread and wine
We recall your goodness to us.

**God of the past and present,
We your people remember your Son.
We thank you for his dying and rising,
We look for his coming in glory.**

Send your Holy Spirit,
That we who receive Christ's body
May become his body,
And we who share his cup
Draw strength from the one true vine.

**Called to follow Christ,
Help us to imagine together.**

For you, God, make all things new;
You are the beginning and the end, the last and the first.

**Praise, glory and love be yours,
This and every day.
Amen.**

You may wish to invite youth to assist in the distribution of communion.

Liturgical Resources: Sending

Blessing

One: Bless to us, O God,
The children and youth who are amongst us,
May we see your divine image in each of them,
and ourselves.

All: Amen.

Dismissal

One: Go forth imagining God working
through each of us.

All: Thanks be to God.

One: Go in peace.

All: Amen!

Additional Resources

- **Bulletin covers—in legal and letter sizes**
- **Poster**

Sources

Bread for the Journey by Henri J.M. Nouwen. 1997.

Creative Ideas for Alternative Sacramental Worship by Simon Rundell. 2010.

Creative Retreat Ideas by Sue Pickering. 2010.

Iona Abbey Worship Book. 2001.

Living the Christ Life by Louise Mangan & Nancy Wyse with Lori Farr. 2001.

A New Zealand Prayer Book. 1989.

Psalms for Praying: An invitation to Wholeness by Nan C. Merrill. 2006.

This resource is a production of the Diocesan Youth Ministry Committee
of the Anglican Diocese of Niagara and is intended for use by parishes.
April 2014

Our Programs

aWay - An intimate spiritual retreat for youth aged 16-25 highlighting **Life Changing Worship**, **Outstanding Leadership for Ministry**, and a **Continuous Culture of Innovation** which takes place in January or February and is an opportunity for young people to explore their spirituality in the quiet of an intimate small group in a rural setting.

Youth Leadership Training Program (YLTP) - A three-year leadership training program (now in its third decade) held during March Break to develop youth leaders who can offer **Outstanding Leadership for Ministry**. In addition to an emphasis on developing servant leadership skills, participants experience and create **Life Changing Worship** and focus on a **Generous Culture of Stewardship**.

Youth Synod in Action - The largest youth ministry program in Niagara with a dual focus on **Prophetic Social Justice Making** and **Outstanding Leadership for Ministry** has been re-imagined to offer youth delegates ages 13-21 the opportunity to be immersed in justice issues important to their faith and their communities as well as providing opportunities to experience **Life Changing Worship**; takes place over the course of a weekend in early May.

Niagara Youth Conference (NYC) - This high-energy event in youth ministry in Niagara with a multiple focus on **Life Changing Worship**, a **Continuous Culture of Innovation**, a **Generous Culture of Stewardship**, and **Prophetic Social Justice Making** - takes place the week before the Labour Day weekend and is full of fun, learning, worship, spirituality, peer support, and lots of community building.

The Gathering - is a youth-created and youth-led worship service featuring the NYC Band. These events embrace a **Continuous Culture of Innovation**, **Life Changing Worship**, **Outstanding Leadership for Ministry**, and a **Generous Culture of Stewardship**.

Let's connect! On the web at www.niagaraanglican.ca/youth

Facebook: Anglican Diocese of Niagara - Youth Ministry

Twitter: @NiagaraAnglican