



GRADUATION SUNDAY

MUSIC & WORSHIP RESOURCES

Sunday, June 22, 2008

Nolan Williams, Jr., Lectionary Team Liturgist

Worship Planning Notes

(a) Involve the graduates in as many of the liturgical ministries as possible. Use their gifts of song, dance, and speech throughout the liturgy. Invite a couple of the graduates to offer a reflection on the meaning of this moment of transition in their lives and of how God has been a part of their journey.

(b) Find an age-appropriate devotional book to present to graduates. It is appropriate to present high school and college graduates with a Life Application Bible, or The Message Bible.

(c) Send out letters (a little more than a month before Graduation Sunday) to the graduates and their parents, letting them know the date that Graduation Sunday will be held. Have them submit a senior picture and their school graduation invitation to the church for posting. Both should be placed on a special church bulletin board display 2-3 weeks before Graduation Sunday.

(d) Develop a questionnaire, the information from which can be compiled and placed as special insert in the bulletin on Graduation Sunday.

1. Elementary/Middle School: Favorite class, favorite teacher, favorite sport

2. High School seniors: What college they will attend, extracurricular activities, person who influenced them most, best spiritual decisions made in high school, academic achievements
3. College graduates: Information on new job or graduate school, academic achievements, where they will live, etc.

(e) Ask the congregation to keep the graduates in prayer throughout the summer and fall as they make the transition to the next step along their journey.

1. Introit or Processional

We Are an Offering. By Dwight Liles

2. Litany

This litany seeks to invite people of various faith traditions to share in an act of reflection, self-offering, and prayer. Although it seeks to involve different groups present for the service (students, parents, faculty, and religious leaders), it will be more effective if it is adapted to the user's particular context. People may read wherever the litany applies to them. Also, this litany is more appropriate for high school and college graduates; however, it can be adapted to be inclusive of elementary and middle school-age graduates.

Baccalaureate Litany

Leader:

Today is a gift from God. Gathered on the edge of a milestone, we offer to God what we have to give—ourselves and the stirrings of our hearts and minds. Let us bless God.

ALL:

Blessed be the Lord!

Graduates:

Strange, surreal, like a high peak where we can look back over the way we've come and ahead to where we have not yet walked. Exciting! Scary! We're ready!

ALL:

Blessed be the Lord!

Parents and family members:

Where did the time go? Suddenly babies have become young women and men, explorers and natives in a world in which we are aliens.

ALL:

Blessed be the Lord!

Teachers:

We did our job—coaching, challenging, encouraging, and risking our passion in hope that they would not only turn the tassel, but believe in themselves as gifted, lovable people who are contributors in a world that needs them.

ALL:

Blessed be the Lord!

Religious leaders and members:

Tradition and vision mean so much to us: God, love, justice, faith, hope, kindness, the Ten Commandments, and the Great Commandments. With you, we have continued to learn the ways of peace and life. May the holy and divine Life of the Word be a pathway for you as you commence your journey,

and find your way.

ALL:

Blessed be the Lord! How good it is, Great Spirit, to share this moment on tiptoe expectancy: grateful, alive, feeling whole and entering into the rest of our lives. Thank you for this milestone. Blessed be the Lord!

3. Hymns and Congregational Songs

(a) Lead On, O King Eternal. By Ernest W. Shurtleff. Tune, (LANCASHIRE), by Henry T. Smart

(b) Give of Your Best to the Master. By Howard B. Grose. Tune, (BARNARD), by with refrain by Charlotte A. Barnard

(c) Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah. By William Williams. Tune, (CWM RHONDDA), by John Hughes

4. Spirituals or Traditional Songs

(a) I Know the Lord Has Laid His Hands on Me.

(b) Give Me Jesus.

(c) Standin' in the Need of Prayer.

5. Songs for Choirs, Ensembles, or Praise Teams

(a) Bless Me (Prayer of Jabaez). By Andraé Crouch and Donald Lawrence

(b) Never Too Busy. By Brent Jones. For solo

(c) I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes. By Judith Christie McAllister and Jason White

(d) Power Belongs to God. By David Frazier

6. Liturgical Dance Music

(a) My Life Belongs to You. By Derek Thomas

(b) He Is Exalted/Give You Praise. By JJ Hairston and Twila Paris

7. Anthems

(a) Use Me. By M. Roger Holland, II. For SATB, and solo

(b) Hymn of Praise. By Shelton Beckton. For SATB

(c) Great Is Thy Faithfulness. By Thomas O. Chisholm and William M. Runyan

(d) Lord, I Want to Live for Thee. By F. L. Eland. Setting by Leo H. Davis, Jr. For SATB, organ,

solo

8. Modern Song

Go. By Leon Patillo

9. Offertory Song or Instrumental

During the offertory, have representatives of the graduating group bring forth a gift to the church. This should be a gift to which all of the graduates have contributed and they can present to the church. Gifts such as a perennial plant or flowering tree, a special furnishing for the church, or artwork are all appropriate gifts.

Another item that could be brought up during the offertory are the prayers and hopes of each of the graduates. Invite each one to write their prayer or hope for the future on a slip of paper, then place them in a basket. These would serve as their offering to God, the church, the world, and themselves.

Selections

(a) Trust, Try, and Prove Me. By Lida S. Leech. Tune, (GIVING).

(b) Bring a Gift of Love. By Mary Kay Bottens

(c) Offertory. By John Ness Beck. For SATB with optional string quartet

(d) 'Tis So Sweet (to Trust in Jesus). By Louisa M. Stead. Tune, (TRUST IN JESUS), with refrain by William J. Kirkpatrick. Arr. by Fred Hammond. For solo

10. Song or Instrumental for the Period of Prayer

Spirit of the Living God. By Daniel Iverson

11. Sermonic Selection

Only What You Do for Christ Will Last. By Raymond Raspberry. For solo

12. Invitational Song or Instrumental

(a) Just as I Am. By Charlotte Elliott. Tune, (WOODWORTH), by William Bradbury

(b) Jesus Is Calling. By Fanny J. Crosby. Tune, (CALLING TODAY), by with refrain by George C. Stebbins

13. Benediction Sung or Spoken

(a) Sung

God Be with You. By Jeremiah E. Rankin. Tune, (GOD BE WITH YOU), by William G. Tomer

(b) Benediction Spoken

Franciscan Benediction

May God bless you with discomfort at easy answers, half truths, and superficial relationships, so that you may live deep within your heart. Amen.

May God bless you with righteous indignation at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, so that you may work for justice, freedom, and peace. Amen.

May God bless you with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation, and war, so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and to turn their pain into joy. Amen.

May God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you can make a difference in this world, so that you can do what others claim cannot be done. Amen.

And the Blessing of God, who Creates, Redeems, and Sanctifies, be upon you and all you love and pray for this day, and forevermore. Amen.

14. Audio Video Suggestion

The church may wish to develop a PowerPoint presentation with pictures that have been collected over the years of the students involved in church activities, plus pictures that have been submitted by their parents and relatives. The slide presentation can be set to music and shown during a dedicated point in the worship service.

15. Other Resources

(a) Graduate's Prayer

Have all of the graduates come to the altar and recite the following prayer.

Father, [God] I have knowledge,
so I pray you'll show me now
how to use it wisely and find a way somehow
to make the world I live in a little better place,
and make life, with its problems, a bit easier to face...
Grant me faith and courage and put purpose in my days,
and show me how to serve Thee
in the most effective ways
so all my education,
my knowledge and my skill,
may find their true fulfillment
as I learn to do Thy will...
And may I ever be aware in everything I do
that knowledge comes from learning -
And wisdom comes from You.

(b) Blessing of Graduates

Use the blessing as a way for parents to bless their sons and daughters, during worship service, by standing face to face with their hands upon their child's head or holding their hands while the blessing is said, or the prayer can be given to parents and relatives to use at home in family worship.

Before you were even formed, God knew you.
While in your mother's womb, God named you.

At your birth, God's breath filled you with life.
Today we celebrate what you have become at this moment in time. And so we pray,

God of our beginnings,
We thank you for the gifts of this/these graduates; his/her/their excitement, his/her/their awesome wonder and curiosity, his/her/their open speech and encouraging words. His/Her/Their contributions have blessed and challenged us, and we have become a richer and more diverse community because of them. As he/she/they step forward into the world that awaits, comfort his/her/their fears with the full knowledge of your divine presence. Strengthen his/her/their resolve to walk in the footsteps of Jesus as modern-day disciples in a world that needs his/her/their spirit. Guide his/her/their feet as he/she/they move(s) through life, protecting hi/her/them from the pitfalls of darkness while he/she/they help to lead future generations into the warmth and promise of your light.

We ask this blessing upon him/her/them, In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
AMEN!

Cites and Additional Information for Music and Material Listed

1. Introit or Processional

We Are an Offering. By Dwight Liles

Location:

Radical for Christ. Praise in the House. New York, NY: Integrity, 1996.

2. Litany

Baccalaureate Litany. By Daniel Benedict. Copyright © 2002 by The General Board of Discipleship. Used with permission.

Location:

General Board of Discipleship
The United Methodist Church
P.O. Box 340003
Nashville, TN 37203-0003

Online location: www.gbod.org

3. Hymns and Congregational Songs

(a) Lead On, O King Eternal. By Ernest W. Shurtleff. Tune, (LANCASHIRE), by Henry T. Smart

Location:

African American Heritage Hymnal. Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, 2001. #477

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. The A.M.E. Zion Hymnal Official Hymnal of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Charlotte, NC: A.M.E. Zion Pub. House, 1996. #228

The New National Baptist Hymnal 21st Century Edition. Nashville, TN: Triad Publications, 2005. #415

(b) Give of Your Best to the Master. By Howard B. Grose. Tune, (BARNARD), by with refrain by Charlotte A. Barnard

Location:

African American Heritage Hymnal. #465

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church Hymnal. #672

The New National Baptist Hymnal 21st Century Edition. #446

Church of God in Christ. Yes, Lord! Church of God in Christ Hymnal. Memphis, TN: Church of God in Christ Pub. Board in association with the Benson Co., 1982. #369

(c) Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah. By William Williams. Tune, (CWM RHONDDA), by John Hughes

Location:

African American Heritage Hymnal. #138

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church Hymnal. #82

The New National Baptist Hymnal 21st Century Edition. #232

Yes, Lord! Church of God in Christ Hymnal. #31

4. Spirituals or Traditional Songs

(a) I Know the Lord Has Laid His Hands on Me.

Location:

African American Heritage Hymnal. #360

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church Hymnal. #52

Lead Me, Guide Me: The African American Catholic Hymnal. Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, 1987. #243

(b) Give Me Jesus.

Location:

Graves, Denyse. Angels Watching Over Me. Loudoun County, VA: Carmen Productions, 1998.

African American Heritage Hymnal. #561

(c) Standin' in the Need of Prayer.

Location:

African American Heritage Hymnal. #441

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church Hymnal. #416

Lead Me, Guide Me: The African American Catholic Hymnal. #216

The New National Baptist Hymnal 21st Century Edition. #496

Yes, Lord! Church of God in Christ Hymnal. #310

5. Songs for Choirs, Ensembles, or Praise Teams

(a) Bless Me (Prayer of Jabaez). By Andraé Crouch and Donald Lawrence

Location:

Lawrence, Donald. The Best of Donald Lawrence & the Tri-City Singers: Restoring the Years. Brentwood, TN: Chordant, 2003.

(b) Never Too Busy. By Brent Jones. For solo

Location:

Cage, Byron. The Prince of Praise. Brentwood, TN: Gospocentric, 2003.

(c) I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes. By Judith Christie McAllister and Jason White

Location:

McAllister, Judith Christie. Send Judah First. Nashville, TN: Judah Music, 2001.

(d) Power Belongs to God. By David Frazier

Location:

Walker, Hezekiah. Family Affair. New York, NY: Verity, 1999.

6. Liturgical Dance Music

(a) My Life Belongs to You. By Derek Thomas

Location:

Israel & New Breed. New Season. New York, NY: Sony, 2001.

(b) He Is Exalted/Give You Praise. By JJ Hairston and Twila Paris

Location:

Youthful Praise. Exalted. Nashville, TN: Light, 2007.

7. Anthems

(a) Use Me. By M. Roger Holland, II. For SATB and solo

Location:

GIA Publications, Inc.
7404 South Mason Avenue
Chicago, IL 60638
Phone: 1-800-GIA-1358

Online location: www.giamusic.com

(b) Hymn of Praise. By Shelton Beckton. For SATB

Location:

GIA Publications, Inc.

Phone: 1-800-GIA-1358

Online location: www.giamusic.com

(c) Great Is Thy Faithfulness. By Thomas O. Chisholm and William M. Runyan

Location:

African American Heritage Hymnal. #158

African Methodist Episcopal Church Hymnal. #84

The New National Baptist Hymnal 21st Century Edition. #45

Lead Me, Guide Me: The African American Catholic Hymnal. #242

(d) Lord, I Want to Live for Thee. By F. L. Eland. Setting by Leo H. Davis, Jr. For SATB, organ, solo

Location:

GIA Publications, Inc.

Phone: 1-800-GIA-1358

Online location: www.giamusic.com

8. Modern Song

Go. By Leon Patillo

Location:

Caesar, Shirley. Shirley Caesar: Her Very Best. New York, NY: Word Entertainment, 1998. For solo or choir

Lead Me, Guide Me: The African American Catholic Hymnal. #66

9. Offertory Song or Instrumental

(a) Trust, Try, and Prove Me. By Lida S. Leech. Tune, (GIVING).

Location:

The New National Baptist Hymnal 21st Century Edition. #353

(b) Bring a Gift of Love. By Mary Kay Bottens

Location:

African American Heritage Hymnal. #669

(c) Offertory. By John Ness Beck. For SATB with optional string quartet

Location:

Beckenhorst Press, Inc.
960 Old Henderson Road
Columbus, OH 43220
Phone: 614-451-6461

Online location: www.beckenhorstpress.com

(d) 'Tis So Sweet (to Trust in Jesus). By Louisa M. Stead. Tune, (TRUST IN JESUS), with refrain by William J. Kirkpatrick. Arr. by Fred Hammond. For solo

Location:

Commissioned. The Commissioned Reunion: LIVE. New York, NY: Verity, 2002.

African American Heritage Hymnal. #368

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church Hymnal. #508

Lead Me, Guide Me: The African American Catholic Hymnal. #236

Yes, Lord! Church of God in Christ Hymnal. #102

10. Song or Instrumental for the Period of Prayer

Spirit of the Living God. By Daniel Iverson

Location:

African American Heritage Hymnal. #320

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church Hymnal. #692

Lead Me, Guide Me: The African American Catholic Hymnal. #126

The New National Baptist Hymnal 21st Century Edition. #133

Yes, Lord! Church of God in Christ Hymnal. #197

11. Sermonic Selection

Only What You Do for Christ Will Last. By Raymond Raspberry. For solo

Location:

African American Heritage Hymnal. #548

The New National Baptist Hymnal 21st Century Edition. #531

Yes, Lord! Church of God in Christ Hymnal. #197

12. Invitational or Instrumental

(a) Just as I Am. By Charlotte Elliott. Tune, (WOODWORTH), by William Bradbury

Location:

African American Heritage Hymnal. #345

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church Hymnal. #415

The New National Baptist Hymnal 21st Century Edition. #167

(b) Jesus Is Calling. By Fanny J. Crosby. Tune, (CALLING TODAY), by with refrain by George C. Stebbins

Location:

African American Heritage Hymnal. #351

Yes, Lord! Church of God in Christ Hymnal. #303

13. Benediction Sung or Spoken

(a) Benediction

God Be with You. By Jeremiah E. Rankin. Tune, (GOD BE WITH YOU), by William G. Tomer

Location:

African American Heritage Hymnal. #634

The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Bicentennial Hymnal. #598

Lead Me, Guide Me: The African American Catholic Hymnal. #309

The New National Baptist Hymnal 21st Century Edition. #560

(b) Benediction Spoken

Franciscan Benediction

Location:

The Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation Institute - Franciscan Prayer and Praxis at
www.jpc-sec.org.uk

14. Audio Visual Suggestion

See #14 above.

15. Other Resources

(a) Graduate's Prayer. By Helen Steiner Rice

(b) Blessing of Graduates - A PDF of this blessing is available for download from the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry.

Location:

National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, Inc.
415 Michigan Avenue, NE Suite 40
Washington, DC 20017-4503
Phone: 202-636-3825

Online location: www.nfcym.org/resources/yymm/yymm2001_graduates.pdf

