I'm Just a Flag Waving American

Games
The National Anthem
Print out the words of the national anthem but leave blanks in place of some of the words. See how many can fill in all the blanks. The first verse is not too difficult, but most will have trouble with the second and third verses. You will find the words in the Salvation Army Song Book, #965.

Who Wants to be a Flag Waving American?
This could be played as a paper and pencil game or a game based on the TV program “Who Wants to be a Millionaire?” The answers are in italics.

1. The name of the woman who made the first American flag. a. Joan of Arc; b. Eve; c. Betsy Ross; d. Martha Washington
2. The date the Declaration of Independence was signed. a. January 1, 1776; b. July 4, 1776; c. December 7, 1941; d. June 14, 1776
3. America received independence from this country. a. France; b. Russia; c. Japan; d. England
4. We celebrate this national holiday to commemorate our independence. a. Flag Day; b. V–Day; c. Fourth of July; d. Veterans Day
5. This country was our ally during the war for independence. a. France; b. England; c. Italy; d. Japan
7. Name the first American war. a. Civil War; b. French and Indian War; c. Revolutionary War; d. World War I
8. A term used to describe the enemy. a. Red Coats; b. Turn Coats; c. Revolutionists; d. Brits
9. The term used to describe the Americans. a. Loyalists; b. Patriots; c. Revere’s Men; d. Washington’s Boys

Decorations
Keeping with a patriotic theme, use red, white and blue decorations. Cover the tables with white cloths with red crepe–paper stripes down the center. Accent with blue napkins folded fan style. (Directions—open the napkin and fold it in half. Start from one end and make one–inch folds, like a paper fan, leaving two to three inches unfolded at the end. Fold in half with the fan edges out. Take the corner of the open edges and fold like a triangle tucking those edges into the corner of the fan. Open the fan and stand in place.) Place red, white and blue flowers with small American flags in bud vases.

Table Favor
Use empty cardboard paper towel tubes cut into two–inch sections, and fill with wrapped candy. Cut a four–inch square of red tissue paper and wrap the tube, twisting each end to look like a firecracker. Secure the ends with red, white and blue curling ribbon. Cover the firecracker with blue or white paper stars.

Refreshments
Make a Jell–O® cake by taking a basic white cake mix and preparing it according to directions on package. After the cake is cooled, poke holes with a toothpick in the top. Dissolve a small package of red Jell–O® in hot water and cool. Don’t let it set. Pour the Jell–O® over the cake. Frost with Cool Whip® and cover with fresh blueberries and strawberries. Serve with red punch.

Sing–a–long
Sing patriotic songs: “My Country ’Tis of Thee,” “America the Beautiful,” “I’m a Yankee Doodle Dandy” and “The Star Spangled Banner.”

Let Freedom Ring
It’s great to be an American, and we are proud to stand and wave our flag. During the Olympics it is thrilling to watch the Stars and Stripes being raised and the national anthem being played for our gold medal winners. Since September 11, 2001, we have seen a great display of American flags and an outpouring of patriotism. We take pride in our country and in being Americans, as well we should.

However, there have been times when we took our citizenship and all that it entails for granted. We celebrate the Fourth of July as just another day off work, a day to enjoy a picnic or to have a fun time watching fireworks and lighting sparklers. We forget the reason behind this holiday and the many who fought and gave their lives that we might enjoy the blessings of freedom and independence.

In our spiritual life we sometimes take for granted the freedom and independence we have in Christ Jesus. Scripture tells us in Romans 3:23, “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” We do not deserve to be saved or to be free from sin. However, we read in Romans 6:23, “But the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” We find freedom from the bondage of sin that came with a great price. Our Lord willingly shed His blood and gave up His life for our freedom. Let us not take for granted His love for us. Instead, we should share the blessings we receive and celebrate as children of God.

Today remember those who gave their lives for our freedom. Let us proudly wave our flags and sing “God Bless America,” knowing that our freedom is a gift to be honored and cherished. Thank God for the gift, not only of our independence as a country, but our freedom from sin that is available when we accept the gift of salvation offered freely to us all.

Close by singing “God Bless America.”
How Do You Solve a Problem Like Maria?

We often experience difficulties with situations and people who view a circumstance differently from ourselves. Life would be pretty boring if we all thought and acted the same. This program is centered on Maria Von Trapp, whose life was featured in the musical “The Sound of Music.” Maria, the young, energetic novitiate in an Austrian Catholic convent, was curious, contrary and full of energy. She just didn’t seem to fit in with the rest of the nuns. She was a problem. Why are some people considered to be a problem? How can we change problems into possibilities? Sometimes we think that some people are a problem because they perceive a situation differently from the way we do.

Program Ideas

Inkblot Test

Psychology textbooks contain examples of pictures that can be viewed as two different things. Psychologists use the inkblot to determine psychological perspectives in individuals. Have the women make an inkblot test. Put paint on one side of a piece of paper, fold the paper in half, rub the sides together and separate. Ask the women to share what they see in the pictures.

Negotiating

As with the inkblot, we all look at the same situation, person or object and see something different. We run into trouble when we are unable to acknowledge the view of the other person. There are a series of steps that can help to solve a problem that we are experiencing with another individual.

★ Identify the problem.
★ Identify your own unmet needs.
★ Set a time to talk together.
★ Describe your specific problem and needs to your partner.
★ Listen while your partner restates your problem and needs.
★ Ask what your partner sees as the problem and what she needs.
★ Restate what your partner sees as the problem and what she needs.
★ Negotiate a solution by agreeing on the problem, defining some possible solutions, deciding on the best solution and then meeting at a later time to evaluate the decision.

Separate the women into groups of three. Two of the members will practice negotiating one of the problems listed below. The third person will be the guide, reminding the partners of the next step in the process.

- A neighbor’s barking dog is keeping you awake at night.
- A friend hasn’t repaid the twenty dollars she borrowed.
- An out-of-town friend phones at the last minute to cancel the weekend you’d planned to spend together.

Communication

To practice communication skills, separate the women into pairs. Have them sit back to back. Make a puzzle by placing two 3 x 5 cards together and cutting them into large block-like shapes. Give one woman the completed puzzle that has been attached to a colored piece of paper. The other receives an envelope containing the separated pieces of the same puzzle.

The first woman must describe the puzzle pieces so that her partner will be able to put the puzzle together by listening to her directions.

Maria Von Trapp was perceived by the nuns in her convent as a problem. But in actuality, it was only a difference in how they looked at living out their vocation. Maria desired to take action, whereas the other nuns were focused on the inner life. Their problem was solved when they began to understand that they each had a meaningful vocation, even though they expressed it in different ways.

Define your problem, understand what you need and then act together in finding ways to solve your differences.

Joseph’s Dilemma

Joseph had a problem. Mary, the woman he was engaged to marry, was pregnant. If he reprimanded her publicly, she would be stoned to death for breaking the Hebrew law. Because he loved Mary, he considered his only option to be that of divorcing her and ending the relationship quietly. It seemed to Joseph that he was in a no-win situation. Either way he would lose the companionship of Mary.

In the first chapter of the book of Matthew we find the story of the birth of Jesus Christ and Joseph’s predicament. The first Chapter of Luke gives Mary’s perspective. Joseph’s plan was to quietly put the problem aside, whereas Mary, though troubled by the situation, praised God for choosing her to give birth to the Savior of the world. The same problem, but a different perspective.

I suppose we could say that Mary and Joseph confronted the situation like most typical men and women. Joseph was concerned about the specifics of the problem and ready to take immediate action, whereas Mary responded like many women, with her emotions. By listening to God and considering the perspective of the other, they confronted their problem and trusted God.

While vacationing in Washington State during the summer, I had the opportunity to view the moon without the distraction of city lights. I discovered that when it was only a quarter moon, I could see the small slice of the moon very clearly, but if I allowed myself to relax and look at the broader picture of the sky surrounding the moon, I could see the shadow of the full moon. I saw what was clear to the naked eye, but I also viewed the possibility of the whole. Two perspectives of the same object, changed by a matter of allowing myself to see more than the obvious.

Is there a circumstance in your life that seems like a problem? Is there someone in your life who causes you frustration? Step back and get a clear view of the situation and of yourself. Your problem may simply be a difference of perspective. Try God’s perspective and watch your problem diminish as you trust Him.
They Shall Come from the East
An International Family Night

Decorations and Refreshments
Decorate with flags from every nation and items associated with the countries that will be presented during the program. Your refreshments should be typical of what would be served in those countries.

Program
Assign three groups to prepare material featuring a different country, their customs, family life, music, native dress and foods. Allow five to ten minutes for each group’s presentation. Ideally, there will be three women with an international heritage who could be helpful in putting together the material. Set up tables to display arts, crafts, instruments and food indicative of each country.

Program Outline
Welcome and Opening Prayer
Song # 829, “Tell Them In The East
And In The West”*

Presentation of the First Country
Song # 824, “Whosoever Will
May Come”*

Presentation of the Second Country
Song # 170, “They Shall Come
From The East”*

Presentation of the Third Country

Devotional—Time with My Family
Time of Prayer and Thanksgiving
Closing Chorus “I’m so Glad
I’m A Part Of The Family of God”

Benediction

Service Project
Fill baskets with herbs, spices and other products that typically represent the countries that you are featuring in your program. Auction off the baskets with the proceeds going to World Services.

Spending Time with My Family

“The Lord says, ‘At that time I will be God to all Israel’s family groups, and they will be My people.’” (Jer. 31:1). I like this version of this verse, which is taken from the Youth Bible, New Century Version, because it speaks about the unity of the family. I have found that some of the best times of my life are those hours that I spend with loved ones. One of the songs from “The Sound of Music” talks about “my favorite things.” My favorite thing is spending time with my family. Whether we’re at the beach, watching a video or just playing a game, there’s something about that closeness that is comforting and makes me feel safe and secure. With your family, you can be yourself. They love and accept you as you are.

God is our heavenly Father and one of His favorite things is spending time with His family—you and me. God says, “I will be God to all Israel’s family groups.” You might say “my family isn’t from Israel; I’m not Jewish, how can I be part of God’s family?” Galatians 3:26–29 tells us, “You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” All those who accept Jesus Christ as their Savior have the right to become His children. God is an all-inclusive God. He is the God of Israel, the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the God of you and me. He included all of us in His divine family. He has adopted us because He loves us and wants to spend time with us. Do we take the time to be with Him?

I remember when I was little I always wanted to be with my mom. As I grew older, started going to school and making friends, I wanted to be with my friends more than my mom. One day when I was eighteen, she became very ill. She was rushed to the hospital with a ruptured ulcer and had a stroke on the operating table. The doctors weren’t sure she would live, and at that moment I wished that I had spent more time with her. I prayed to the Lord and He heard my cry. My mom lived for another ten years and I took advantage of every moment that I could spend time with her. I realized that school and work were important, but not more important than time with my family.

If we have accepted Christ as our Savior, we are part of God’s family. But do we take the time to be with Him? He wants to be our Father. “I will be a Father to you, and you will be My sons and daughters’, says the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor. 6:18). If God is our Father, then He should be the one we tell our joys and our troubles to, and the one that we look to for guidance. He should be the head of our family. We need to take the time to seek, talk and to listen to Him. Our communion with God comes through the reading of His Word, through prayer and meditation. It is through this communion that He speaks and guides us.

In this hectic world, don’t forget what’s important: our families—our natural family and our spiritual family. Take the time to tell them how much you love and care for them. Demonstrate that love with your actions. In order for the family to be united, Jesus Christ must be in the center. It is through Christ that we are given the privilege of becoming part of God’s family. Remember also to spend time with your heavenly Father every day.

Close with a prayer of thanksgiving to God for the opportunity He has given each of us. Pray for our natural and spiritual families.
Morning Hymn and Alleluia

Lord, How Majestic Is Your Name

About three years ago I was privileged to meet my husband in London and then take a vacation throughout Europe. When planning for our trip several years earlier, my husband had stated he wanted to go to Rome. But by the time we arrived there we were tired and ready to go home. As we approached the city, our guide began to talk about different historical sites. We chose the Coliseum and several other close-by places. On Sunday we decided that we would tour the Vatican.

Normally, it would cost $25.00 per person, but as this was the fifth Sunday in the month you could tour free. We got to the Vatican at 7:00 am and found the line was already halfway around the city. The gates didn’t open until 9:00 am. There were moments when we wondered if the wait was worth it.

Finally we arrived at the entrance to the Sistine Chapel. I knew it contained great art, but I was not prepared for how it would make me feel. From one end of the chapel ceiling to the other the story of creation was depicted, with the creation of man in the center. But what became a moment of worship in my heart was the way Michelangelo had depicted God reaching down and with the touch of His finger giving life to man. Three hundred people surrounded me, yet I was not distracted in my worship and love of God. It was a moment that I will never forget.

Standing in that chapel, I viewed the majesty of God in creation, His love in His sacrifice of Christ and His wrath against sin at the last judgment. In much the same way the Psalmist David in Psalm 8 takes us from the glory of creation to the questioning of why man is so important to God and back to man praising Him. Read Psalm 8.

It is important to realize that we are made in God’s image. We are a little lower than the angels. Matthew Henry, a great Bible commentator, put it best when he said, “Man has a soul, which is immortal and spiritual like the angels but is bound by our clay body.” We worship God with our voices because we see His majesty as we see it in creation—in the heavens around us. The angels worship and praise God because they see His glory. When we see Him in glory one day, we too will praise Him in this same way. At this moment we understand the joy of His presence in the beauty of the sunrise and sunset. We understand some of His power as we view the sea and the life in it or grasp the enormity and complexity of the universe. When we consider how God has provided all that we need, we proclaim with the psalmist, “How excellent is Your name in all the earth.”

God put man in control of the creatures of the earth and the birds of the sky. He loved man so much He allowed His Son to take on the form of man and dwell with us. He did this because He does not desire that any should perish but that all have eternal life. He desires our praise and worship. When thinking of Him as the sovereign God, we often say He is the ruler, but He is more than that—He is our Shield against Satan and sin! God’s love for us should cause unending praise and love from us to Him. I once heard somebody pray, “Help me to love like You (God) love me.” Songwriters Randy and Terry Butler have said it best in their song “You, Oh Lord, Are a Great God,” Winds of Worship, Volume 2.

Consider you are made in His image, that He gave His Son for you, and He loves you unconditionally. Are you praising Him with the psalmist and saying, “Lord, our Lord, Your name is the most wonderful in all the earth!” (Psalm 8:9, New Century Version)
Hymn Writers (Continued)

◆ #25, “All Things Bright and Beautiful.” Mrs. Cecil Frances Alexander was the chief writer of hymns for children in the nineteenth century, writing over 400 hymns. She wanted to help children understand the Christian faith.

◆ #988, “O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing.” Charles Wesley said that he was never quite sure of his own birthday as he was his mother’s eighteenth child. Born prematurely, he was so small that he seemed more dead than alive. For two months he neither cried nor opened his eyes. But he was quite sure of the date of what he called his “second birth” on May 21, 1738. A year later he wrote this hymn for the anniversary of his conversation. There were originally eighteen verses.

◆ #935, “We Plough the Fields and Scatter.” Matthias Claudius, a German, wrote this hymn. He was a Commissioner of Agriculture and Manufacture, a newspaper editor and a bank auditor. A serious illness turned him to the Maker of all things. He wrote this hymn as a part of a dramatic sketch for a harvest Thanksgiving service held in a German farmhouse.

◆ #302, “Rock of Ages.” In 1756, a layman by the name of Morris, who could hardly spell his own name, spoke to a small group of people in a village in Southern Ireland. At that meeting a 16-year-old by the name of Augustus Toplady put his trust in the Lord for the first time. He later wrote this much-loved hymn.

◆ #525, “Take My Life.” Frances Ridley Havergal was a natural musician and could have been a professional singer. She was not strong physically but worked hard and used her musical and linguistic gifts to the full. This hymn was written at a friend’s home where she wanted everyone to commit themselves wholeheartedly to God and experience His blessings.

◆ #160, “Jesus Shall Reign.” On Whit Sunday 1862, some 5,000 people from the South Sea Islands of Tonga, Fiji and Samoa gathered to worship. Some were chiefs and warriors who had recently been fighting bitter wars of cannibalism and revenge. That day marked their first meeting with knowledge of the Christian gospel. This hymn, which had started life as a Hebrew psalm nearly 1,000 years before Christ, was translated by Isaac Watts and opened the celebrations on that Sunday.

◆ #578, “Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah.” For almost half a century William Williams traveled over the mountains, roads and tracks of Wales, averaging some 3,000 miles a year on horseback or on foot. Of the 800 hymns that he wrote in Welsh, this is the best known.

◆ #58, “How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds.” Neither John Newton’s language nor his talent for verse had always been used for sacred purposes. He became notorious for his wickedness. His conversion to Jesus brought about a startling change and this hymn is clear evidence of that fact.

◆ #690, “Onward, Christian Soldiers.” The children at the Sunday school in Horbury Bridge, Yorkshire, England, were the first people to sing this song in 1864. Their vicar, Sabine Baring-Gould, wanted something both rousing and new for the Sunday school to march to with real enthusiasm. He stayed up all night writing and in the morning produced the words of this famous hymn.

◆ #124, “The Old Rugged Cross.” At the age of 16 George Bennard needed support to help him meet the family responsibilities that had suddenly been thrust upon him at the death of his father. He found this sustaining force in The Salvation Army, later working for some years as an officer. The inspiration for the writing of this hymn came as a result of his work with the Army.

Word Search from Psalm 8

Moon Praise Name Majestic Angel Stars Sang Heaven Human Finger Created

M O O N A B S D N G

N A M E C I L E I E

P O J I N P E T F R

R H E E G O G A H E

A U A T S G N E F G

I M R L S T A R S N

S A N G E T I C L I

E N E V A E H C O F
Decoration

Place old radios, 8-track tapes, cassettes, albums or CDs with sheet music and a sprig of ivy in the center of each table. Use white paper tablecloths and place black strips of construction paper on them to represent a keyboard. Hang music notes and old 45 records from the ceiling.

Program Ideas

Karaoke Night

Provide a stage and spotlight for this event. You can rent karaoke equipment or use a CD or tape player with an overhead projector for the words. Karaoke tapes can be ordered online or the Hallelujah Chorus CDs, available from the Central Territory, will work quite well. Plan the evening by theme—love songs old and new, Broadway show tunes, oldies, country, Christian or pop. Enlist the help of two or three women who would be willing to start the evening. Their participation will encourage others to give it a try and get involved. If they are reluctant to sing by themselves, encourage duets and trios.

Give awards to the participants. Some suggested categories are most tuneful, least tuneful, loudest or the one getting the biggest laugh. Present a “golden microphone” award. Spray a toy microphone, which can be found in dollar or toy stores, with gold paint.

Lip–Synch Content

If your women don’t sing or claim shyness, have them participate in a lip–synch contest. Provide a box of props to complement the songs. For example, use a baseball hat, bat, peanuts and Cracker Jack® for the song “Take Me Out to The Ballgame.”

Poems of Praise

Break into groups of five or six women. Have them read Psalm 34, which is an acrostic poem with each verse beginning with the successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and then create their own poem of praise. Similar to Psalm 34, each line should begin with the successive letter of the alphabet and must contain a song title or a line from a song. For example:

A—“A wonderful Savior is Jesus My Lord,” and I ask that you will …
B—“Be near me Lord Jesus,” and then we can all …
C—“Come, let us all unite to sing, God is love.”

D—“Do you sometimes feel that no one really knows you?”
E—“Every day with Jesus is sweeter than the day before.” And that is why we sing …

F—“Fairest, Lord Jesus,” and we will always …

G—“Give to Jesus Glory.”

You can allow the women to use the Salvation Army Song Book if you feel that they need some extra help. Have each group read their completed poem and award a prize to the most original.

Video

Watch a Christian video of praise music. Provide the words so that the women can sing along. The Gaithers have many to choose from, which are available in most Bible book stores or check their website at www.gaithermusic.com.

The Lost Chord

Have you ever found yourself just bursting into song—right out loud? On many occasions (too numerous to count) without notice, I find that this eruption happens within me. I just feel so full of God’s presence. It’s a feeling so strong that I just can’t hold it any longer. It doesn’t matter where I am, the time of the day or the circumstances—washing dishes, walking the dog, the joy of seeing autumn leaves or even during a test at the hospital—that urgency to sing God’s praise happens. The melody and the words just come spilling out, “Oh God, You are my God and I will ever praise You.”

Now I suppose most people are closet or shower singers. Only the dog and our immediate family have ever heard our audible singing voices. Our Sunday–go–to–meeting voices singing, “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of Creation,” is only loud enough to wake the church mice.

From the beginning of time, singing has been a part of Christian worship. It was, and is natural, ordinary thoughts and feelings, governed by the Spirit, flowing freely and without inhibition. The Apostle Paul says that those who are full of the Spirit should “Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your hearts to the Lord” (Eph. 5:19). Making music comes from the affections found within the heart. The rhythm, the melody, come from the depths of one’s being.

Worship is an everyday experience that just flows, happens, erupts. This outflow is like an artesian well—our heart’s response to Christ. It’s motivated by God’s words that dwell within us.”Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God” (Col 3:16). When the apostle speaks of spiritual songs, he’s challenging us to sing those songs that erupt in our souls as we walk throughout our days in communion with God. Even those of us who think we can’t sing, can sing in our hearts.

I challenge you to learn the psalms of the Old Testament. We need to memorize them so that we can sing them in praise to Him. Sing the great hymns of the church so that we wake every living creature with our joy. Sing praises to your Lord and Savior!
A Woman’s Right to Preach—Despite Obstacles

Mention Phoebe Palmer to a group of Christians and usually several people will say, “Phoebe who?” Mrs. Palmer, a Methodist and a prodigious speaker, was instrumental in the conversion of literally thousands of people in America and Europe in the 1800s. For thirty-five years she traveled and preached every summer at camp meetings in America and England. She was never ordained and never even asked for a preaching license but emphasized the work of laity in soul-saving.

When Mrs. Phoebe Palmer’s right to preach was challenged, young Catherine Booth felt impelled to take up her defense and every woman’s Biblical right to be Christ’s witness. Out of indignation arose her brilliant treatise, Female Ministry. The pamphlet was issued a few days before the birth of her fourth child. While she lay in weakness and solitude the Holy Spirit compelled her to apply the argument she had so zealously put forth for woman’s ministry in general, to her own testimony in particular. She wrote, “I was one of the most timid and bashful disciples the Lord Jesus ever saved. During a season of sickness it seemed one day as if the Lord revealed it all to me by His Spirit. I had no vision, but a revelation to my mind … and I remember promising Him there in my sick room, ‘Lord, if Thou wilt, revisit me with those urgings of the Spirit I used to have, I will obey, if I die in the attempt.’”

On Whit Sunday morning in 1860 Catherine Booth first spoke in public. She was thirty-one years of age, the wife of William Booth, a Methodist minister in Gateshead, England. She wrote, “It seemed as if a voice said to me, ‘Now if you were to go and testify, you know I would bless it to your own soul, as well as to the people.’” I gasped and said in my heart, ‘I cannot do it.’ A moment afterward there flashed across my mind the memory of the bedroom visitation when I had promised the Lord that I would obey Him at all costs. Without stopping another moment I rose up from my seat and walked down the aisle. My dear husband was just going to conclude. He thought something had happened to me, and so did the people. He stepped down and said, ‘what is the matter, my dear?’ I replied, ‘I want to say a word.’ He was so taken by surprise that he could only say, ‘My dear wife wishes to speak.’ I stood and told the people how it had come about.”

Without consulting her, William Booth announced that his wife would preach in the evening service. The chapel was filled as Catherine Booth stood in the pulpit on that anniversary of Pentecost and spoke from the text, “Be filled with the Spirit.” Her public ministry had begun. In the next thirty years she spoke of God to all manner of people. The educated and refined flocked to hear her; the rough and ignorant crowded the theaters and public halls where even in those turbulent days she never failed to command attention. Since that time a host of articulate, Spirit-filled Salvationist women have stood before congregations large and small, and have preached the Gospel with gentleness, forthrightness and conviction.

In Salvation Army tradition, in February 2001 Colonel Margaret Hay, an officer and chaplain for London’s Rochester prison in Kent, England, received the Times (of London) “Preacher of the Year” award. She was the first woman to win this prestigious award. The judges selected her from 500 parsons, rabbis and priests for the conviction with which she preached on Isaiah 9:2: “The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light.” Hay says that her work in the Rochester prison provided much of the impetus for her winning sermon.

Women not only have the right to preach the gospel, but also are compelled by the Spirit of God to do so.
Responsive Reading

The Bible teaches that both man and woman were created in God’s image, that they had a direct relationship with God and shared jointly the responsibilities of bearing and rearing children and having dominion over the created order.

Then God said, “Let us make man in Our image, in Our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air and over the livestock, over all the earth and the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number ... rule over every living creature that moves on the ground” (Gen. 1:26–28).

Man and woman were co-participants in the Fall. Adam was no less culpable than Eve.

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it (Gen. 3:6).

Jesus Christ came to redeem women as well as men. Through faith in Christ we became heirs to the blessings of salvation without racial, social or gender distinctions.

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:26,28).

In the New Testament economy, women as well as men exercise prophetic, priestly and royal functions.

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light (1 Pet. 2:9).

Christ entrusted the very first message of His resurrection to women and commanded them to tell the apostles that He was risen from the dead.

The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; He has risen, just as He said ... Then go quickly and tell His disciples: He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see Him” (Matt. 28:5–7).

Women were to be the messengers of God’s message, just as men and were to preach the gospel.

I will pour out My Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy (Joel 2:28). He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation” (Mark 16:15).
**Fill My Cup, Lord**

**Program and Service Ideas**

**My Favorite Jar**
Ask the women to bring a jar or container from home that is significant to them. This could be a cookie jar that was in their home as a child or a vase that they received as a wedding gift. Have a time of sharing.

**Game—How Many?**
Fill a jar with buttons. The woman coming closest to guessing the number in the jar wins a prize.

**Blessing Jars**
Present decorative blessing jars to those in the hospital or shut-in. Ask the women to write a favorite Scripture verse or a thing that they appreciate about the individual who will receive the jar that will be of encouragement to them while convalescing.

**Mason Jars**
Ask the women to bring in Mason jars with lids. The size of the jar will depend on how you plan to fill it—cookie mix, layered dried bean soup mix, spiced tea mix or bath salt, are a few suggestions. Sources for dry mix recipes can be found on the Internet. The following sites are helpful: www.busycooks.miningco.com or Holiday Organizer.com. These jars can be sold as a fundraising project for World Services or taken on visitation to absentees and shut-ins.

**M & M's Cookie Mix**
1 1/4 cups sugar
1 1/4 cups M & M candies
2 cups of flour mixed with 1/2 tsp baking soda and 1/2 tsp baking powder

Layer the ingredients in the order given above in 1–quart wide-mouth canning jars. Press each layer firmly in place before adding the next ingredient. Attach a label to the jar as follows:

Makes 2 1/2 dozen M & M cookies. Empty the mix into a large mixing bowl, mix thoroughly. Add 1/2 cup soft butter or margarine, one beaten egg and one teaspoon of vanilla. Mix until completely blended. Shape into balls the size of a walnut. Place 2 inches apart on sprayed baking sheets. Bake in a 375 degree oven for 12 to 14 minutes.

**Jars of Clay**

Open the devotional time by reading scripture verses from a promise jar prepared before the program and then sing the chorus, “Fill my cup, Lord, I lift it up, Lord.”

Recycling is very important to our environment. In most communities we are required by the municipalities to place aluminum cans, plastic and glass into special containers for the refuse collection. Today we have shared about containers that we own and told of their significance to us.

In years past, clay pottery provided an important part in the lives of people. It has given an accurate history telling us about the art, wealth, culture, foods and other information about the people who used them. Pottery is like a voice from the past.

There are many Bible passages that refer to pottery. In ancient days, it was considered a valuable craft. Potters were well respected. Did you know that the first bathtub dates back about 3600 years ago to a palace in Crete? It was made of painted clay and was shaped similar to the bathtubs of today. The Hebrews used various materials in their building. Tradition states these included bricks made by mixing clay with barley or wheat straw.

Second Corinthians 4:7 states “We have this treasure in jars of clay...” What is this treasure? God charges us with the valuable message of salvation found in Jesus Christ. He has entrusted us, who are no more than feeble and imperfect human beings—jars of clay—with this treasure. The point here, however, is not the perishable container that can be destroyed or ruined, but on its priceless contents—God’s power dwelling with us. The power of Christ in our lives is possible with the Holy Spirit filling us with His love. We may be weak, we may be delicate, frail, sickly, debilitated, lacking in strength in our own right, but God can use us to spread and make known His Good News. Like jars of clay, if filled, we can be useful. When empty, we are of no value. He gives us His power to do His work.

Recognizing that the power is His and not our own keeps us from self-admiration and pride and motivates us to come to Him daily as our source of power. It is our responsibility to live so that others see Jesus through us every day.

**Closing Song (Tune for verses and chorus, Chorus #60, “Channels Only, Blessed Master,” The Salvation Army Song Book)**

How I praise You, precious Savior,
That your love laid hold of me;
You have saved and cleansed
And filled me
That I might your channel be.

Chorus
Channels only, blessed Master,
But with all your wondrous power
Flowing through me, you can
Use me,
Every day and every hour.

Jesus, fill now with Your Spirit
Hearts that full surrender know;
That the streams of living water
From our inner man may flow.
I Have Confidence

God is Our Help

Four men decided to go mountain climbing. In the middle of the climb, one slips over a cliff, drops about sixty feet and lands with a thud on the ledge below. The other three, hoping to rescue him, yell, “Joe, are you okay?” “I’m alive, but I think I broke both my arms!” “We’ll toss a rope to you and pull you up. Just lie still!” they said. Dropping one end of the rope over the edge, they start tugging and working feverishly to pull their wounded companion to safety. When they have him about three-fourths of the way up, they suddenly remembered that he said he’d broken both his arms. “Joe! If you broke both your arms, how in the world are you hanging on?” “With my TEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEETH ...” came back the reply.

We all go through times when we feel we are just barely hanging on. We are broken, bruised and our last ounce of strength is being used to hold on, maybe by the skin of our teeth.

David wrote, “Surely God is my help; the Lord is the one who sustains me” (Ps. 54:4). When he penned this psalm, he was going through a time of testing. To be betrayed by Doeg the Edomite was hardly a surprise (1 Sam. 22:22). But in spite of rescuing one of their towns from the Philistines, David found himself being rejected by men of his own tribe (1 Sam. 23:19; 26:1). In this situation, he turned to God, telling Him his troubles. He asked Him for His protection, for justice to be done and that God would listen to his prayer. David’s confidence in God’s sovereignty is seen in this psalm. He knew that God would take care of him and avenge his enemies. Romans 12:19 says, “Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: ‘It is Mine to avenge: I will repay,’ says the Lord.” David had faith in God, knowing that his life and the circumstances surrounding it were in His hands. We, too, should feel confident that God is in control of whatever happens. But the only way to have this confidence is by giving Him complete control of our lives.

Legend has it that a man was lost in the desert, dying for a drink of water. He stumbled upon an old, ramshackle, weather-beaten shack. As he glanced around, he saw an old, rusty water pump about fifteen feet away. He stumbled over to it, grabbed the handle and began to pump up and down, up and down. Nothing came out. Disappointed, he staggered back. He noticed off to the side an old jug. He looked at it, wiped away the dirt and dust and read a message that said, “You have to prime the pump with all the water in this jug, my friend. P.S. Be sure you fill the jug up again before you leave.” He looked into the jug and sure enough, it was almost full of water. Now he was faced with a decision. If he drank the water, he would live. But if he poured all the water in the old rusty pump, maybe it would yield fresh, cool water from down deep in the well, all the water he wanted. He studied the possible options. Reluctantly he poured all the water into the pump. Then he grabbed the handle and began to pump—squeak, squeak, squeak. Still nothing came out! Then a little bit began to dribble out; then a small stream and finally a gush of cool water poured out. Eagerly he filled the jug and drank from it. He filled it another time and once again drank its refreshing contents. Then he filled the jug for the next traveler and added this little note, “Believe me, it really works. You have to give it all away before you can get anything back.”

We have to give it all to God. He will take the most hopeless situations and use them to strengthen us, giving us a reason to rejoice. Even during the most trying times in our life, we as Christians know that God in His sovereignty is in control. We can survive any trial. We can have confidence in Him.

I Have Confidence

Program Outline

Opening Prayer

Song #1, “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”

Poem

Solstice
The skies are grey,
The fields are dismal brown,
The trees stretch out Bare branches to the air.
The frost has throttled Ev’ry latest rose
And blanketed the earth With dank despair, Yet spring will come, Transform the dismal scene, And dress the barren fields And trees with green. New life will animate Each silent thing And fill the air with song. I’m sure of spring!

Sharing Time— Have the women tell how God has helped them survive in difficult situations.

Devotional—God is Our Help

Song #13, “O God Our Help”*

Closing prayer of confidence that God is in control of every situation.

*The Salvation Army Song Book
The Alphabet Song

Decorations

Arrange the meeting room classroom style with chairs on one side of the tables. Place the teacher’s desk at the front. Add various school props such as a ruler, writing board and pencils. Stack lettered building blocks on the tables. Large letters or stencils of the alphabet can be placed on the walls. For table favors, glue three crayons and a small plastic apple onto a six–inch ruler. A school supply store is a good resource for decorations.

Refreshments

To reflect the alphabet theme, serve food starting with the letters A, B, C:

◆ A—apple slices with caramel dip
◆ B—alphabet bread sticks. Use bread sticks from a refrigerator can and shape them into the letters.
◆ C—celery and carrots sticks with dip or a carrot cake.

School Days Program

The teacher rings the school bell to call the class to order and also rings the bell between each of the classes.

History Lesson

Lead the women in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

On September 8, 1892, Francis Bellamy, the circulation manager for the Boston based The Youth’s Companion magazine, published the following for students to repeat on Columbus Day that year: “I pledge allegiance to my Flag and the Republic for which it stands—one nation indivisible—with liberty and justice for all.”

At the first National Flag Conference in Washington D.C., on June 14, 1923, a change was made. The words “the Flag of the United States” replaced “my flag.” It was not until 1942 that Congress officially recognized the Pledge of Allegiance.

In June of 1954 an amendment was made to add the words “under God.” President Dwight D. Eisenhower said, “In this way we are reaffirming the transcendence of religious faith in America’s heritage and future; in this way we shall constantly strengthen those spiritual weapons which forever will be our country’s most powerful resource in peace and war.”

Art Class

Distribute colored pipe cleaners. The women are to shape them into the initials of their name and arrange them on construction paper. Provide colored pens, ribbons, small silk flowers and glue to complete their art project.

Music Class

Lead the women in the Alphabet Song to the tune of “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.” Have a chorus sing using choruses starting with the first three letters of the alphabet. For help with appropriate choruses or songs, you can use the index in the back of the Salvation Army Song Book.

Physical Education

Ask the women to line up in a straight line in alphabetical order by their first names. Once they are arranged, they should sound off starting with the letter A to see if everyone is in the proper order. Then ask them to march around the room and participate in some low impact exercises.

Spelling Bee

Have the women remain in line for a spelling bee. If she misspells the word given, she should be seated.

Prizes

Cans of alphabet soup, alphabet Spaghetti O’s® or ABC cereal would be suitable prizes.

Spiritual Lesson

Do you remember your first day of school? I do. I was four years old and was allowed to attend kindergarten because I would have my fifth birthday that fall. The yellow school bus pulled up and I had to be lifted up to the first step because I was too small to reach it.

What did we learn during those half–day sessions of school? There is a book titled, “Everything I Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten.” However, I’m not sure that is true for me. In the days prior to pre–schools and the Head Start programs, children were introduced to the alphabet and color wheel during that first school year. While the computer age has caused an influx of well–prepared kindergartners, there still remains the need for basic life skills to be taught and practiced. Listening skills and sharing with others are valuable lessons that we need to succeed in life.

Second Timothy 2:15 tells us to “Study to show thyself approved unto God a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (KJV). In our Christian walk there are certain basics to learn and practice. Becoming a Christian is the same as entering kindergarten. We must learn to listen to God, share the Gospel with others and know the ABC’s of faith.

Accept Jesus into your life.

Believe He is the Son of God and died for your sins.

Confess your sins to Him.

Just as a teacher is pleased with a student’s good work, so is God pleased when we study the Bible. As we consider the ABC’s of life, ask the following questions:

† Do I accept Jesus as my Redeemer and Savior?
† Do I believe that Jesus is the Son of God and that He died for my sins and lives today?
† Do I know that I have confessed my wrongs to Jesus and believe that He forgives me?

If “yes” is your answer to these questions, you are ready to learn the next lesson God has for you. If “no” is the answer, you can talk to the chaplain or any leader for direction and guidance.

Prayer: Help us Lord, to remain committed to You as our teacher and guide. Amen.
When You Know the Notes to Sing

1. A strong box. arms
2. Made by whips. trunk
3. Part of a shoe. eyelid
4. What a soldier carries. drum
5. Part of a tree. trunk
6. An affirmative vote. eye
7. A name for scholars. brain
8. Percussion instruments. drums
9. Place of worship. temple
10. Used to hold a wooden building together. nail
11. A type of fish. sole/soul
12. A shell fish. mussel/muscle
13. Baby cows. calves
14. Tropical trees. palms
15. A member of the deer family. hart/heart
16. Two flowers. tulip/two lips

Musical Notes and Spiritual Gifts

Learning the right musical notes to sing in a song can be compared to the steps we need to take in our Christian walk. It’s a progressive experience. You’ve heard the saying, “Practice makes perfect.” For a musical group to sound harmonious and pleasant to the listeners’ ears, they must practice. Discovering and developing our spiritual gifts is a part of the process of growth in a Christian’s life. When we practice our spiritual gifts, we bless one another and our witness becomes more powerful.

It would seem that some people have been gifted with the “sound of music.” It just comes naturally. Others have to develop an ear to hear the notes. However, even folks who confess to not being able to “carry a tune in a bucket” would probably be able to distinguish between a group of singers who were not in tune and beautiful music from a group singing in harmony.

I love the sound of the high soprano part. But I appreciate that sound more when it is combined with the others parts. I used to think the second soprano and alto were less important than the high soprano. But as I listen to our corps trio I have come to realize that without the other parts, the soprano’s notes don’t make the same impact. (Have a trio or quartet sing at this point.)

Scripture tells us that God has given each of us spiritual gifts to use for the building up of His church. No one is without at least one and many have more than one gift. So there are no “I can’t carry a tune in a bucket” excuses! Like music, some of us can easily identify our gifts but for many, we need to “practice” and train our spiritual senses to identify those gifts. Either way, God expects us to use what He has given us.

Read 1 Corinthians 12 and list on a board the different gifts, giving a parallel to the sounds of music.

✔ Verse 2—Before Christ we were undisciplined and easily led astray. Ever go to a school band concert and hear the band warming up? The sounds are chaotic and not pleasant to listen to.

✔ Verse 3–6—Jesus brings order and purpose to our lives, just as when the band conductor stands up to conduct the band.

✔ Verse 7—He helps us understand that He has given each of us a part to play, a spiritual gift to impart to the whole. Each bandsman or choral participant has a part to play for the benefit of the whole musical piece.

✔ Verse 14–18—As a choir works together to bring harmony, so does the body of Christ bring harmony to His church.

✔ Verse 22–25—No spiritual gift, or musical note, is more important than the other. When one is missing, the piece is not complete.

✔ Verse 27—We all have a part in building God’s kingdom. Our goal is to find out what that part is and build one another up.
All About Candles

A candle is an object made of wax or a similar material that is burned to give light. From ancient times candles have been made from a variety of substances—bayberry wax, beeswax, paraffin, stearin and tallow. When lit, wax melted by the flame is drawn up an embedded wick. The wick is made of cotton, paper or a combination of the two. The liquid wax vaporizes into a gas, which burns and produces light.

Candles are an example of a necessity turned into a luxury. Before electricity, candlelight wasn’t considered romantic or relaxing, it was a tool to enable people to see after dark. Candles were made at home using one mold. Today, candles come in every shape, size, color and fragrance. Whole stores are devoted to selling candles and their accessories.

We appreciate candles today because we associate them with the good things that we desire. Candlelight softens the atmosphere, creating a warm and cozy feeling. The gentle flame of the candle draws our eye and soothes our spirits, causing us to slow down and enjoy the moment. The soft glow of the candle is romantic and relaxing. The fragrance of candles can be anything from pumpkin pie to ocean breeze. (Ask the women to identify a variety of fragrant candles. Chose some of the more unusual ones.)

Candles are used for celebrations—on birthday cakes, for holidays and as decorations. They are often a part of religious observances. At Christmas we light the advent candles, and menorah candles are a part of Hanukkah. On Good Friday the candles are extinguished in the Tenebrae service to remind us of the death of Jesus who is the “Light of the world.” On Easter the candles are re-lit to celebrate His resurrection.

There is a Christian festival called Candlemas which is held on February 2 and celebrates the “Presentation of the Lord,” when the infant Jesus was taken to the Temple by His parents. It occurs forty days after Christmas and marks the end of the Christmas season. It is called “Candlemas” because of the traditional observance of blessing the candles and distributing them to the worshippers. The candles recall the lights of Christmas and Simeon’s prophetic words, found in Luke 2:30–32, “For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.”

Service Idea

Make candle holders for distribution to nursing homes. You will find patterns on the Internet. A good site is—www.familycrafts.about.com or use the following suggestion.

Wrapping Paper Candle Holders
◆ Small glass candle holder (jelly jars or baby food jars will work)
◆ Wrapping paper
◆ Decoupage
◆ Light colored tissue paper

Wash and dry the glass container. Tear the tissue paper into 1” pieces. Using a paint brush put a small amount of the decoupage on the tissue and position on the glass. Brush more decoupage on the top. Continue gluing the pieces of tissue paper overlapping at the edges until the candle holder is covered. Brush another coat of decoupage over the entire candle holder. Allow to dry.

Cut pictures from the wrapping paper, brush with decoupage and position them on top of the tissue paper. Brush another coat of decoupage over the entire glass and allow to dry. If desired, tie a ribbon with small flowers around the top.

This Little Light of Mine

Begin the devotions by singing the chorus, “This Little Light of Mine.”

“We are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house” (Matt. 5:14–15, KJV). This verse reminds us that Jesus calls us to be His candle to the world. Just as He said, “I am the Light of the world” (John 8:12), we are to be a light to our world by reflecting Him.

The problem with candles is that they are temporary. As they burn, they are consumed. They have a relatively short life span. In my house I have many used candles that I have a hard time discarding, but I cannot light them any longer as the wicks are gone. Sometimes we feel that way about our witness and the command to be a candle for the Lord. We feel burned-out in our work for Him; our flame is sputtering from the lack of oxygen. Perhaps we even feel that our light has gone out. We all go through times of trial and feelings of being inadequate.

There is good news, though. Jesus is the source of our light. We are to reflect His light. In the first chapter of John, verses 6–9, we read “There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through Him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that give light to every man was coming into the world.” We, like John the Baptist, are not the source of God’s light; we merely reflect that light. Jesus Christ is the true light. He has chosen to reflect His light through His followers to an unbelieving world.

Close with chorus #203, “The Light of the World is Jesus.” Salvation Army Song Book.
Climb Every Mountain

Drama—Must I?

(A woman walks to the center stage. She is evidently lost and dismayed. A second woman in a robe enters.)

Robed woman: You look upset and unhappy. What do you think you need to be happy?

First woman: Money, if I just had enough money, then I would be happy.

Robed woman: All right, I will give you all the money you want.

(Shes hands her a wad of paper money. The woman looks at it, drops it and turns her back to audience with a bowed head.)

Robed woman: Money didn't do it. So what do you need to be happy?

First woman: Friends, if I just had friends, then I would be happy.

Robed woman: All right, I will give you friends.

(The woman then extends her arm in a sweeping motion over the audience. Four women come and form a line with the unhappy woman in the middle. Then they turn their backs to the audience and go back to their seats one by one.)

Robed woman: Money and friends didn't bring happiness. So what do you think you need to be happy?

First woman: Love, if I just had love, I would be happy.

(In a sweeping motion she points to a man off to the side. He comes, holds the woman's hand, they turn their backs to the audience, and then he goes off to the side.)

Robed woman: Money didn't make you happy, nor did friends or even human love. Would you like to find real happiness? Then climb the mountain.

(Shes points to a chair. On the other side of the chair is a large cross. The first woman moves to the chair but appears afraid. Very slowly and cautiously she climbs onto the chair and to the other side where she sees the cross and kneels before it.)

First woman: I am beginning to understand that true happiness can only be found in the cross on which Jesus died for my sins. It is only through accepting Him as my friend and Savior that I can find forgiveness, acceptance and joy.

Follow Me

I have done a lot of hiking in the last four years of my life. As someone who has always feared heights, this was at times very scary. I have, however, begun to conquer that fear through the help of the Holy Spirit and the love and support of my husband. As I climb to the top of a mountain I rejoice in the creation that God has given to us—the colors, beauty and sights that are all around.

God loves us and wants us to enjoy His world. We, however, tend to look to earthly things for love, joy and peace. In the drama, the woman was looking for happiness. She sought it in money, friends and worldly love. But she didn't find it. It wasn't until she looked to the cross and Calvary's mountain that she understood the true source of happiness and joy.

Calvary wasn't easy for Christ. The night before going to the cross He went to the Mount of Olives and prayed, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done" (Luke 22:42). Jesus tells us, "If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me" (Mark 8:34). This is not always easy for us to do. But as we overcome fears, our own desires, our own selfishness and take up our cross and climb to the top of that mountain, we realize the beauty of His love for us. Through Him we can receive acceptance, forgiveness, joy, peace and love. Look around you today and realize all that God has given you through His creation.

Pray, thanking Him for the salvation that is available through His Son Jesus. If you do not know this peace, joy and love, allow the Holy Spirit to minister to you. As wonderful as the beauty of creation is, His provision of forgiveness, love, peace, and joy through Jesus are far better.