Rally Day 2012: God Loves You!

It’s time to welcome the students, the teachers, and the church for another year of Sunday School! A typical Rally Day includes the promotion of children to the next grade or class, attendance recognition, and the commissioning of teachers for another year of service. While there are some basic elements which comprise a typical Rally Day, there are no “rules” regarding the activities and events of the day. The resources provided on this CD are to aid you in planning your church’s Rally Day. Use what fits, discard what doesn’t, adapt these materials, or do your own thing!

Rally Day is not part of the liturgical or Church Year calendar, and thus it is important to take care in planning the day’s activities so they support rather than detract from the worship life of your parish. Your pastor will appreciate your consulting with him about what sorts of things (if any) might be included within your church’s worship service on Rally Day Sunday.

Some ideas and options:

- Install and commission teaching staff during or after the service. (The Order for Installation of Sunday School Teachers and Other Instructors in the Faith Lutheran Service Book Agenda is included in these Rally Day materials.)
- Have children process in and sit together in front of church with their teachers.
- Have the congregation pray for the Sunday School.
- Sing hymns that the children know or can easily sing along.
- Create a banner reflecting the theme; use it in a processional, or display it through the year.
- Promote children and award attendance certificates from previous year.
- During the Sunday School hour, host an open house for parents, students, and staff.
- Offer refreshments that are easy to eat and kid-friendly.
- Make announcements regarding Sunday School; pass out any printed information (use the Rally Day Flyer included on the Director CD).
- Invite the senior citizens of the parish to come and share their memories of Sunday School.
- Present information on the mission project that Sunday offering money will support. (Most mission agencies have promotional materials describing their work and needs.)

Rally Day Worship Service

This year’s service is formed around the Gospel reading for Sunday, September 9, 2012, from the Three-Year Lectionary, Series B. If you are celebrating Rally Day on a different Sunday, discuss with your pastor adapting the materials to fit with the appointed readings.

This year’s theme text is Mark 7:31–37. Today’s Sunday School Rally Day service focuses on God’s love and miracles. In the Gospel reading, God’s love for the deaf and speech-impaired man is manifested in the miracle that restored his hearing and speech. God’s love for each of us is manifested in the miracle of Christ’s death and resurrection for us and for our salvation. Each week, as the family of God gathers around the means of grace, His Word and Sacraments, God performs miracles anew granting us forgiveness, life, and salvation. What we hear and see is testimony to God’s eternal love for us. In Sunday School, God’s deed of old are taught to the children that they may hear and believe God’s love for them in Christ Jesus.

Consider the following as part of this service: commissioning teachers and promoting students to the next grade or class. Such activities highlight the Sunday School in the congregation, encouraging involvement and support by all members. The hymn “God Loves Me Dearly” (LSB 392) ties in nicely with the text and explains what God does for His dearly loved children. This hymn has a delightful melody and is easy to sing.

The suggested order of service is Service of Prayer and Preaching as found in Lutheran Service Book (p. 260). The following items are provided to fit in with or substitute for various parts of this liturgy in keeping with the Rally Day theme.
Opening Processional Hymn
“God Loves Me Dearly”  

OPENING VERSICLES
(as printed, using the common Versicles)

THE OLD TESTAMENT CANTICLE

The Old Testament Canticle  

(Select a soloist or choir to sing the main part of the Canticle and have the congregation and children sing the refrain. You may wish to substitute an appropriate hymn, such as “Sing Praise to the God of Israel” [LSB 936]. The first two stanzas could be sung as the Old Testament Canticle and the final two stanzas could be substituted for the New Testament Canticle.)

READINGS FROM HOLY SCRIPTURE

Old Testament: Isaiah 35:4–7a  
Gospel: Mark 7:31–37

COMMON RESPONSORY

CATECHISM READING

(Select one or more of the catechism readings provided in the liturgy.)

SERMON

HYMN

“I Am Jesus’ Little Lamb”  

OFFERING

INSTALLATION OF SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS

and Other Instructors in the Faith  

Director CD and LSB Agenda, p. 249

PRAYER

COLLECT OF THE DAY

O Lord, let Your merciful ears be open to the prayers of Your humble servants and grant that what they ask may be in accord with Your gracious will; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

PRAYER FOR SUNDAY SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS

Lord Jesus, our Savior and Redeemer, You have given the Church the command to bring the children to You that they may find hope in the promise of everlasting life with You. Therefore, help and support our pastors and leaders as they assist our parents in nurturing the baptismal faith of Your little lambs. You alone can preserve them in faith against all the evil influences of this world, yet You have given to us the task, the privilege, and the means to nurture the faith of all our children. You alone can create faith and hope and love in these children, yet You call men and women to teach Your holy Word. Bless the instruction offered in our Sunday School. May Your Word nourish and sustain all who hear it. Bring all teachers to realize not only the importance of their vocation but also that You promise to be with them and that they, too, are children of God redeemed with Your holy, precious blood. Give them the wisdom, understanding, and ability to proclaim to the children entrusted to their care the truths of Your Word that provides the certainty of the salvation You have won for them. May the lives of our teachers so agree with Your instruction that they may always be shining examples of Christian virtue among us. Amen.
Morning Prayer  

New Testament Canticle  
(Or you may wish to substitute an appropriate hymn. As suggested previously, consider “Sing Praise to the God of Israel” [LSB 936]. Stanzas 3 and 4 could be substituted for the New Testament Canticle.)

Blessing  

Recessional Hymn  “Your Hand, O Lord, in Days of Old”
Installation of Sunday School Teachers and Other Instructors In the Faith

Those to be installed are presented before the altar.

**P**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, you are to be installed as [name of position(s)] at [name of congregation], a work in which our Father in heaven has great joy.

Hear the Word of the Lord:

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.” (Deuteronomy 6:4–7)

Beloved in the Lord, You are to assist me (us), the minister(s) of Word and Sacrament, in the instruction of God’s people according to His holy Word. You are to prepare yourselves for this work by your individual and corporate study of the Word of God and the faith drawn from it as it has been delivered to us in the Small Catechism.

While holiness of life and obedience to Christ are expected of all members of the congregation, it is especially important that you show yourselves, by word and example, to be faithful to Him in service and Christian devotion.

In the presence of God and of this congregation, I therefore ask you: Do you accept the position entrusted to you, and do you promise faithfully to carry out your duties, trusting in the Lord and conforming yourself to His Word in accordance with the faith of the Evangelical Lutheran Church? If so, then answer: I do.

**R**

I do.

**P**

Beloved in the Lord, you have heard the promises of faithfulness spoken by these men and women. Do you promise to support them in their work, to remember them in your prayers, and to work with them to the best of the abilities that God has given you, so that He may be glorified and His work be done in our midst? If so, then answer: We do.

**C**

We do.

**P**

Brothers and sisters in Christ, I install you as [name of position] at [name of congregation] in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C**

Amen.

**P**

The almighty and most merciful God enlighten and strengthen you in your service that you may be good and faithful leaders and teachers to the glory of His name and the salvation of His people.

**C**

Amen.

*Stand*
P  Let us pray.

O Lord, grant to these Your people the gifts of wisdom and discretion, kindness and faithfulness, so that they may effectively teach and guide, and grant to all Your people a ready willingness to learn. Let the knowledge of Your Word be preserved and extended among us so that all may know and praise You now and forever; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C  Amen.

P  Go in the name of the Lord. Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain. The almighty and most merciful God, the Father, the + Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless and preserve you. (1 Corinthians 15:58)

C  Amen.