



# THE ORDER OF SERVICE

- I. Bell tap or organ voluntary as a signal for silence
- II. Singing
- III. The Apostles' Creed
- IV. Prayer, closing with the Lord's Prayer in concert
- V. Singing
- VI. Calling roll of officers and teachers
- VII. Responsive reading of the lesson text by school
- VIII. The Decalogue

## THE LESSON

- I. Organ interlude while the classes are being arranged
- II. Class study of the lesson
- III. Warning bell — 5 minutes
- IV. Closing bell — silence

## THE CLOSING

- I. Singing
- II. Review and application of the lesson
- III. Secretary's report
- IV. The Church School Creed
- V. Singing
- VI. Benediction

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## THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; the third day He arose from the dead, He ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Church Universal, the communion of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

## THE CHURCH SCHOOL CREED

I believe my A.M.E. Church School must grow and grow; and that I must make it a top priority to make it so. Every member a Christian, every Christian a worker, every worker trained so that a worker need not be ashamed. This we ask in Jesus' name.

*A.M.E. Discipline*

## DEVOTION: PASS IT ON

*Scripture: These words that I am commanding you today must always be on your minds. Recite them to your children. . . . Write them on your house's doorframes and on your city's gates. —Deuteronomy 6:6, 7a, 9*

When I was kid, I lived two doors down from a friend who was Jewish and directly across the street from a Muslim family with five boys. We played together every day: football, tag, basketball, and riding bikes all around our neighborhood.

As we grew older, we had sleepovers at one another's houses. At my Jewish friend's house, I noticed something on the door and asked him about it. He explained that it was a "Mezuzah," a reminder of who God is and how we should love God, adding that it was from the Book of Deuteronomy. Young and naïve, I asked how that could be since Deuteronomy was in the Christian Bible. Filled with grace, his parents intervened in the conversation.

They took out a small Torah and explained that these are the same words at the beginning of the Christian Bible. Turning to the passage in Deuteronomy, they read a Scripture I recognized. At this point one of the Muslim brothers added: "Hey! That is close to the Shahada!" They explained that the Shahada is an important statement of belief in Islam that also sounds a lot like Deuteronomy 6:4.

In that moment I realized that our parents had passed down a strong faith to each of us and that our language around faith was more similar than it was different.

- Add your thoughts about this devotion here.

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## I'LL HOLD MY OWN HAND

*Scripture: This is love: that we live according to his commands. This is the command that you heard from the beginning: live in love. —2 John 6*

My youngest child, a boy, was a very independent and strong-willed toddler. When he and his brother were preschoolers, our standard operating procedure on every outing was for them to hold an adult's hand while in a parking lot or when crossing a street. Two-year-old Brad challenged this command at every opportunity. He'd say, "I'll hold my own hand," then clasp one chubby index finger inside the other closed fist. He had a mind of his own, and I could never let down my guard. Once, when visiting a bookstore, Brad darted into the parking lot before I could grab him. Fortunately, the nearest driver slammed on his brakes in the nick of time. I was already scared speechless—and then the driver proceeded to admonish me for my poor parenting skills.

Often we behave like that precocious two-year-old in our relationship with God. We want protection but still long for freedom, independence, and lack of supervision. Sometimes we don't think before we act and must suffer the consequences. We believe we have all the answers, but then flounder in unexpected results. We are blessed to have the eternal safety net of the perfect parent. God loves us and forgives us no matter how many times we disobey the Commandments that are meant to save us from ourselves and to preserve our relationship with God and other people.

*Prayer: Gracious God, thank you for your unending love and the gift of repeated grace. Remind us that you are the parent we need and that you will always help us up when we stumble. Amen.*

- Add your thoughts about this devotion here.

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## LOVE AND DEVOTION

**KEY VERSE:** *Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your being, and all your strength. —Deuteronomy 6:5 (CEB)*

### Concentric Circles

Have the class form two equal groups, with one group in a circle facing out and the other group directly opposite and facing them.

The people facing each other should consider the following questions: 1) What are some words you've heard people use to describe love? 2) What is the best hug you've ever received? Why? 3) What are some ways you've observed love in action? 4) What is the best present you've ever received? 5) What do you think makes a good listener?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### DEUTERONOMY 6:1-9 (NRSV)

- 1 Now this is the commandment—the statutes and the ordinances—that the Lord your God charged me to teach you to observe in the land that you are about to cross into and occupy,
- 2 so that you and your children and your children's children may fear the Lord your God all the days of your life, and keep all his decrees and his commandments that I am commanding you, so that your days may be long.
- 3 Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe them diligently, so that it may go well with you, and so that you may multiply greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, as the Lord, the God of your ancestors, has promised you.
- 4 Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone.
- 5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.
- 6 Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart.

- 7 Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise.
- 8 Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead,
- 9 and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

**SOMETHING EXTRA!**

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The Greek term for the first five books of the Bible is *Pentateuch*, which means “five scrolls.”

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**S** CRIPTURE READING

Choose a passage, either Deuteronomy 6:1-3 or Deuteronomy 6:5-9.

- Name one verse, idea, word, or phrase in this *passage* that caught your attention.

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- What are two questions you have after reading this *passage*?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

If you are comfortable doing so, talk about your questions with the class or a friend

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**H** EART, SOUL, AND MIGHT

Deuteronomy 6:5 talks about loving God with our heart, being, and strength. Reflect on the verse and answer the questions below.

- What does it mean to love God with your heart?

- What does it mean to love God with your being?

- What does it mean to love God with your strength?

Based on your answers, write the first letter of each area—H, B, and S— on the line below indicating where you think you are regarding your love for God in this area.

←—————→  
NEEDS WORK BEST IT CAN BE

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**C**ONCENTRIC CIRCLES 2.0

Based on the conversations with your classmates, what are some ways to show your love to . . .

your friends? \_\_\_\_\_

your family? \_\_\_\_\_

your enemies \_\_\_\_\_

your neighbors? \_\_\_\_\_

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**C**LOSING REFLECTION

*God, guide us this week as we strive to love you with our hearts, our beings, and our strength. Show us the way of your love and help us to reflect that love to others, both now and forever. Amen.*

## CHOOSE TO LOVE AND SERVE GOD

**KEY VERSE:** *But if it seems wrong in your opinion to serve the Lord, then choose today whom you will serve. Choose the gods whom your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you live. But my family and I will serve the Lord.”—Joshua 24:15 (CEB)*

### **Would You Rather . . .**

Split into groups of two and consider the following options:

- ❖ The general public thinks of you as a horrible person, but your family is very proud of you OR your family thinks of you as a horrible person, but the general public is very proud of you.
- ❖ You have a horrible job but will be able to retire in ten years OR you have a dream job but will need to work until you die.
- ❖ You will be unable to use search engines OR unable to use social media.
- ❖ You will receive one free, roundtrip, international plane ticket every year OR be able to fly domestic anytime for free.
- ❖ You can live on the beach OR live in a cabin in the woods.

Remembering the options given, answer the following questions.

- In general, what made these choices difficult?

- Why are some decisions more difficult than others?



**JOSHUA 24:1-3 (NRSV)**

- 1 Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel; and they presented themselves before God.
- 2 And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Long ago your ancestors—Terah and his sons Abraham and Nahor—lived beyond the Euphrates and served other gods.
- 3 Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River and led him through all the land of Canaan and made his offspring many."

**13-15 (NRSV)**

- 13 "I gave you a land on which you had not labored, and towns that you had not built, and you live in them; you eat the fruit of vineyards and oliveyards that you did not plant.
- 14 Now therefore revere the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord.
- 15 Now if you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

**21-24 (NRSV)**

- 21 And the people said to Joshua, "No, we will serve the Lord!"
- 22 Then Joshua said to the people, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the Lord, to serve him." And they said, "We are witnesses."
- 23 He said, "Then put away the foreign gods that are among you, and incline your hearts to the Lord, the God of Israel."
- 24 The people said to Joshua, "The Lord our God we will serve, and him we will obey."

**SOMETHING EXTRA!**

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The verb serve is used 7 times in Joshua 24:14-15.

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**T**YPES OF CHOICES

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Give an example of . . .

a choice between a good option and a bad option:



a choice between two good options:

a choice between two bad options:

When choosing between two good options or two bad options, what are some factors that help you decide?

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**C**HOOSING GOD = CHOOSING LOVE

Have the class brainstorm people your community can serve. Ask a volunteer to list the suggestions on a markerboard. From the class list, choose three groups or individuals and write names beside numbers 1 to 3 below. Then, for each person or group, list two ways that you and your friends can help to show them love.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_

**C**LOSING REFLECTION

Spend a few minutes meditating on the Key Verse (see page 7). As you do, think about these questions:

- What would it mean for you to make this choice today?
- What would change?
- What would stay the same?
- How would it affect your family?
- How would it affect your friends?