

# **NE MN Synod Discipleship Challenge: Love Like Jesus!**

## **2013 Worship Resource: INVITE**

The NE MN Synod faith practice focus for November is “*Invite*.” Below are ideas you might use to integrate the faith practice of “*Invite*” in your worship services. This resource is not intended to use “as is” but to pick and choose, tweak and modify for your particular setting...or simply to spur your imagination on how you might integrate faith practices in your worship that meet the needs and personality of your congregation.

### **Invite – Invite others often.**

*We have found Him...come and see. John 1: 45-46*

Consider the use of tangible invitations during the worship service.

- Maybe your bulletin looks like an invitation, stating “You are Invited!”
  - Occasion, date, time, place on the bulletin cover.
  - R.S.V.P. – Enter the sanctuary.
- Maybe ushers hand worship attendees a tangible written invitation to communion.
- Maybe each worship attendee receives a blank card/invitation as they exit the worship space. They are asked to fill out the invitation, inviting someone to join them in worship, and pass it on during the week.

Each part of the worship service involves the practice of “invitation”. Consider boldly heading each section of your worship bulletin with an “invite” label. See below for examples.

### **INVITED INTO WORSHIP (section 1)**

Include a Call to Worship that focuses on the invite to “Come.” God is the acting party, first inviting us into relationship with God and all of creation. Below are suggestions for Call to Worship.

#### **Call to Worship**

L: Listen, everyone who thirsts. Come to the waters and drink!

C: You who have no money, come take freely and eat.

L: From the heavens above, righteousness and mercy pour forth in abundance.

C: For the Lord our God loves us dearly with a steadfast love.

L: So then, let us humble ourselves to praise and honor our God.

C: Come, let us walk in the way of love.

(River of Mercy – Cross the Sky Music – [www.crossthesky.com](http://www.crossthesky.com))

### **Call to Worship**

L: Come, join the journey of Jesus today!

C: We come—in our different ways, walking in our own speeds. But we come to join the journey.

L: Come, as we walk toward God's future for us: a future of adventure and risk, that demands endurance and patience; a future that offers enrichment and excitement, without the false claims of being easy—a future of discipleship.

C: We come to join the journey of Jesus today!

(Advent liturgy – Dakota Road Music – Work of the People Vol. 1.5, [www.dakotaroadmusic.com](http://www.dakotaroadmusic.com))

### **Call to Worship:**

L: Young and old, slow or fast; tall or small, know-it-alls or eager learners:

P: Come! Wonder of wonders! God has called each of us here.

L: Wrinkled, white-haired, stooped with age; bright-eyed, smooth-skinned, leapers-of-two-steps-at-a-time:

P: Come! Wonder of wonders! Each of us is made in God's image.

L: Parents volunteering at school, kids playing tag, workers stocking shelves, retirees planning a trip:

P: Come! Wonder of wonders! God works through each of us.

(Liturgy written by Thom M. Shuman – [www.textweek.com](http://www.textweek.com))

### **Call to Worship:**

L: As disciples, we are called to do those things that enrich our journey with Jesus. Inviting others to join the journey becomes easier as we experience God's presence and power in our own lives. Shall we join the first disciples in sharing God's Good News through our own life stories?

C: Yes! Lord, let our lives be invitations to join your journey.

L: Shall we be open to letting God's love shine through our actions and words so that others may seek Jesus?

C: Yes! Lord, let our lives be invitations to join your journey.

L: Leaders in homes and families, will you encourage one another to share stories of God's presence and activity in your daily lives, with friends, neighbors and co-workers?

C: Yes! Lord, let our lives be invitations to join your journey.

L: Will you seek to engage others in conversations that will nurture their faith and increase their desire for growth in community?

C: Yes! Lord, let our lives be invitations to join your journey.

L: And will we invite others to join us in our congregational life and worship?

C: Yes! Lord, let our lives be invitations to join your journey.

L: Children, will you tell your friends about Jesus and invite them to follow him?

C: Yes! Lord, let our lives be invitations to join your journey.

L: Then join me, in prayer, as we honor our call to discipleship.

C: Thank you Lord for the opportunities you give us to welcome others and to invite them into faith and community. Amen.

(Discipleship Materials - Engaging the Faith Practices at Home - ELCA-wide Call to Discipleship. Copyright© 2000, <http://www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith/Discipleship/Christian-Education/Discipleship.aspx>)

## Opening Song Suggestions:

The opening song reminds us that we are God's invited people.

- Come, All You People #819ELW
- Come now is the time to Worship (By Phillips, Craig and Dean)
- All are Welcome (By Dakota Road, [www.dakotaroadmusic.com](http://www.dakotaroadmusic.com))
- All are Welcome #641ELW
- Big House ("*Come and Go with Me to My Father's House*", by Audio Adrenaline)
- Come, Ye Thankful People, Come #693ELW

## RESPONDING TO THE INVITATION (section 2)

God invites and we respond. This section asks God to help us openly invite and receive/recognize his presence in our daily lives.

### Prayer of Confession (example)

- You may consider giving people paper invitations for the confession. With each confession have them tear the invitation and hold the piece in reflection. During the absolution, use the pieces from the invitation as confetti to throw in celebration of God's forgiveness. (This will make a mess but can make a powerful connection.)

L: Holy God, you invite us to come and follow you but often we refuse your invitation.

C: Forgive us, when we allow your invitation to get lost in the pile, as we rush to respond to the flashier, more enticing invitations of the world.

L: You long for us to offer you an invitation to be present and active in our days.

C: Forgive us, when not only are you not first on our list, but we forget to invite you into our living at all. Forgive us for not noticing your presence with us.

L: God of invitation, you call us to extend your invite to all we meet.

C: Forgive us when we stay silent, uncomfortable and unfamiliar with words of invitation.

Forgive us when we intentionally limit who gets invited, when we hold tightly and brag about our invitation but cease to pass it on. Forgive us, when we forget that invitations are central to who we are as your people.

### Assurance of Forgiveness

Our God is not a God that invites only once and shies away when the invitation is ignored. God invites us again and again. God forgives when we fail to receive the invitation and forgives when we fail to pass the invitation on to others. Hear the Good News! You are forgiven and invited again to live into God's invitation.

### SONG SUGGESTION:

These songs respond to God's invitation to us, inviting God to continue to be present with us.

- Come, Thou Almighty King #408ELW
- Come to Us (By Jerome Evavold and Barry Marciniak)
- Come thou Font of every Blessing #807ELW
- Dance with Me ("*This is Holy Time...*", author unknown)
- Come My Way, My Truth, My Life #816ELW

## **INVITED INTO THE WORD (section 3)**

### **John 1 (This text is an example of how to invite. We invite others to “Come and See”.)**

<sup>43</sup>The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, “Follow me.”<sup>44</sup> Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.<sup>45</sup> Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth.”<sup>46</sup> Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.”<sup>47</sup> When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, “Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!”<sup>48</sup> Nathanael asked him, “Where did you get to know me?” Jesus answered, “I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you.”<sup>49</sup> Nathanael replied, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!”<sup>50</sup> Jesus answered, “Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these.”<sup>51</sup> And he said to him, “Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”

### **Matthew 11 (This text is an example of God’s invitation to us.)**

<sup>28</sup>“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.<sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.<sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

### **Matthew 4: 18-23 (In this text Jesus offers an invite to be people of invitation.)**

<sup>18</sup>As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen.<sup>19</sup> And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.”<sup>20</sup> Immediately they left their nets and followed him.<sup>21</sup> As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them.<sup>22</sup> Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.

<sup>23</sup>Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

**Luke 19:1-10 (In this text Jesus offers an invitation to an unlikely man and in doing so teaches us to be God's people of invitation.)**

19He entered Jericho and was passing through it.<sup>2</sup>A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich.<sup>3</sup>He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature.<sup>4</sup>So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way.<sup>5</sup>When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today."<sup>6</sup>So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him.<sup>7</sup>All who saw it began to grumble and said, "He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner."<sup>8</sup>Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much."<sup>9</sup>Then Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham."<sup>10</sup>For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost."

**John 4:5-42 (This text is the text used in the Practice Discipleship discussion guide as a story of a woman's response to Christ's invitation. She models the practice of invitation herself as she invites others to "Come and See".)**

<sup>5</sup>So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph.<sup>6</sup>Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.<sup>7</sup>A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink."<sup>8</sup>(His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.)<sup>9</sup>The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.)<sup>10</sup>Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."<sup>11</sup>The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?"<sup>12</sup>Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?"<sup>13</sup>Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again,<sup>14</sup> but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life."<sup>15</sup>The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water."<sup>16</sup>Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back."<sup>17</sup>The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband';<sup>18</sup> for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!"<sup>19</sup>The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet."<sup>20</sup>Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people

must worship is in Jerusalem.”<sup>21</sup> Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.<sup>22</sup> You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.<sup>23</sup> But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him.<sup>24</sup> God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”<sup>25</sup> The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.”<sup>26</sup> Jesus said to her, “I am he, the one who is speaking to you.”

<sup>27</sup> Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you want?” or, “Why are you speaking with her?”<sup>28</sup> Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people,<sup>29</sup> “Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?”<sup>30</sup> They left the city and were on their way to him.<sup>31</sup> Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, “Rabbi, eat something.”<sup>32</sup> But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.”<sup>33</sup> So the disciples said to one another, “Surely no one has brought him something to eat?”<sup>34</sup> Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work.<sup>35</sup> Do you not say, ‘Four months more, then comes the harvest’? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting.<sup>36</sup> The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together.<sup>37</sup> For here the saying holds true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’<sup>38</sup> I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.”<sup>39</sup> Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I have ever done.”<sup>40</sup> So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days.<sup>41</sup> And many more believed because of his word.<sup>42</sup> They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world.”

**The following three texts are lifted up in the ELCA Call to Discipleship materials as texts speaking to the practice of invitation:**

### **Deuteronomy 6:4-9**

The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. 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.** Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead and write them on the door posts of your house and on your gates.

### **Romans 10:14-15**

But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

### **Matthew 28:19**

Go therefore and make disciples of nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you.

### **Children's Messages:**

Below are websites that have examples of Children's Messages that focus on the practice of invitation.

Three approaches to the Children's time:

- Celebrate God's invitation to us.
- Invite God into the moments of our days.
- Practice going out and inviting others

<http://www.sermons4kids.com/you-are-invited.html>

<http://www.sermons4kids.com/delivering-invitation.html>

<http://www.sermons4kids.com/come-see.html>

<http://www.sundaychildrensfocus.com/index.php/Lectionary/childrens-sermon-come-and-see.html>

Additional suggestions:

- Have children practice inviting by going out into the pews and inviting people to join them up front. Talk about: Did you go and find someone familiar? Was it a little scary to invite someone up? Did anyone you invited forward say 'no'?
- Have children make invitations to God. When would you like to invite God to be present with you during the day? Have them take the invite home to remind them that God has already responded to their invite.
- Tell about a time you received an invitation that you were excited about. Ask them for examples of times they were excited to be "invited" to something. What does God invite us to? Let's get excited.
- Have something in the very back of the sanctuary or off on a side where you can see it but the children and congregation cannot. Maybe it is a dog or special treat. Get excited about it. Tell them how great it is. See if they get excited. Then invite them to "Come and see." Discuss how it is great to share your excitement through words but even better when you can invite one to "come and see" and experience for themselves. Jesus invites us and others to "come and see" and be a part of what God is up to.

### **Sermon Starters:**

Video clips from [www.sermonspice.com](http://www.sermonspice.com) (enter these titles in their search bar):

- "Invite" - The Sound Tank
- "Simply Invite Package" - Restoration Videos

- “Awkward Invites-Goulash” – Skit Guys
- “Who Invited You to Church” – Praz Media

**Message** (Refer to the Discipleship Challenge video clips and discussion guides.)

**Song Suggestions:**

Here I am Lord #574ELW

We are Called #720 ELW

You have Come Down to the Lakeshore #817ELW

(see additional sending songs)

The Apostle’s Creed

**INVITED TO GIVE (section 4)**

Offering

**INVITED TO BE IN CONVERSATION WITH GOD (section 5)**

**Prayers of the People:**

**Prayer Song** - Send Me Jesus – #549 ELW

Use this song between sections of your prayers for the people.

Begin with the added verse:

You invite me, you invite me, you invite me, Oh my Lord.

Pray words of thanksgiving for the invitations you have received from God.

Pray words of thanksgiving for those that have invited you to be a part of the body of Christ.

Sings verse two:

Send me, Jesus; send me Jesus, send me Jesus, send me Lord.

Pray for God to make you an inviting person, able to extend the invitation to others.

Ask for direction that we might know who to invite to “Come and See”

Pray for an openness that others might “Come and See”

Sing verse three:

I am willing; I am willing; I am willing, willing Lord.

**Imaginative Prayer** – Consider using any of the texts you did not use in the lessons as a imaginative prayer experience. Resources such as “Imaginative Prayer for Youth Ministry” by Jeannie Oestreicher and Larry Warner may be helpful in forming these prayers.

Consider asking people to “invite” someone to pray with them. This is a way to practice invitation and the sharing of our faith within the congregational context. Allow time for them to pray together.

## **INVITED TO THE TABLE (section 6)**

**Words of Institution** (Remind worship attendees that this is an example of an invitation from God.)

**The Lord's Prayer**

**Distribution**

### **Communion Invitation Songs:**

Come and Taste (By Handt Hanson)

Come to the Table #481 ELW

Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ #674 ELW

## **SENT TO EXTEND THE INVITATION (section 7)**

### **Benediction:**

3 movements for the Benediction:

May the Spirit of God empower you to...

- openly and freely receive God's invitations, (Hands open and out in front of you)
- daily invite God into your living, (Hands lifted up)
- extend the invitation to Come and See to all you meet. (Hands out to those beside you)

### **Sending Song:**

Pass My Love Around (By John Ylvisaker)

Pass It On (By Kurt Kaiser)

I Love to Tell the Story #661ELW

Go Tell it On the Mountain #290ELW

Make Me An Instrument (By Larry Olson/Karol Baer)

Reach Out (By Paul Franisen)

Send Us Out (By James Hersch)

Go Make Disciples #540ELW

To Be Your Presence #546 ELW

Go, Make Disciples (By Handt Hanson)

We Can Make a Difference (By Dakota Road)

### **Dismissal**