



**SUNDAY SCHOOL**  
**Matters**  
**Motivation and Inspiration for All Things Sunday School**

# I Didn't Know Our Sunday School Had ... Rally Day

## Come, Follow Jesus Sunday School Rally Day Worship Service

It's time to welcome children, teachers, and your church to another year of Sunday School! Typically, this is done on Rally Day, which includes the promotion of children to the next grade or class and the commissioning of teachers for another year of service. While there are some basic elements that make up a typical Rally Day, there are no rules about what has to happen. The worship service and tips here are intended to help you plan 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 plan 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 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.
- Have children process in behind the processional cross, 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 and pass out any printed information.
- Invite the senior citizens of the parish to come and share their memories of Sunday School.

## Rally Day Worship Service

Churches often observe Rally Day on the first Sunday in September. For this reason, this year's service is formed around the Gospel reading for Sunday, September 3, 2017, from Series A of the three-year lectionary. If you are celebrating Rally Day on a different Sunday, discuss with your pastor how to adapt the materials to fit with the appointed readings.

In the Gospel reading, Jesus tells His disciples to take up their cross and follow Him. In the Bible, Jesus often talks about following Him and being His disciple. But here, He gives His disciples insight into what it means to be His follower. His talk of taking up our cross, suffering, and losing our life is disconcerting, even frightening. It's contrary to what we expect or want to hear as one of His followers! By ourselves, we cannot even do this. Nor could His disciples! But Jesus was preparing them for what He was about to do for them and us; on the cross, Jesus would suffer and die for us in payment for our sins. His righteousness is now ours by faith and with it,

the promise of eternal life. And so, for Jesus' followers, the end is not the cross, but life in God's kingdom.

Still it's true that, in this life, Jesus' followers will continue to have troubles. Believers often experience hardship or ridicule, too, in various forms because of their faith in Him. Faith in Jesus does not exempt us from that. But our God is faithful. He equips us to follow Him by giving us His Spirit, who works through Word and Sacrament to strengthen us in faith and service. Someday our earthly troubles will end, and great joy will come as we hear Christ's words, "Well done, good and faithful servant. . . . Enter into the joy of your master" (Matthew 25:21).

This Gospel reading is also a fitting theme for a Sunday School Rally Day, since the Church provides for Sunday School in order to teach children about God's love in Jesus and what it means to be His followers. Children, too, need to know that they will still have troubles in this sin-broken world, just as God's people, whom they learn about in the Bible, did. They, too, need to hear of God's love and rescue in Jesus, who suffered and died on the cross to pay for our sins and then rose again victorious over sin, death, and the devil. As Jesus' followers, they need to be taught God's Word, through which God helps them grow in faith and preserves them in faith against the evil influences of this world. They need to hear over and over how Jesus loves them and is with them. They need to hear the assurance that they no longer need to fear the troubles in this life, but can gladly follow Him, trusting in His forgiveness, His ongoing care for them, and His promise of life with Him forever.

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 within this service, or you may substitute various parts of the liturgy in keeping with the Rally Day theme.

## Christ Be My Leader *LSB 861*

### *Stand*

### Opening Versicles

- L This is the day which the Lord has made;
- C let us rejoice and be glad in it.
  
- L From the rising of the sun to its setting,
- C the name of the Lord is to be praised.
  
- L Better is one day in Your courts than a thousand elsewhere;
- C I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked.
  
- L Make me to know Your ways, O Lord.
- C Teach me Your paths.

- L Sanctify us in Your truth.  
C Your Word is truth.
- L From the rising of the sun to its setting,  
C the name of the Lord is to be praised.
- C Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

## Old Testament Canticle

Select a soloist to sing the main part of the canticle, and have the congregation and children sing the refrain. Option: Substitute “We Praise You and Acknowledge You, O God” LSB 941. Sing the first two stanzas for the Old Testament canticle. Sing the last two stanzas for the New Testament canticle.

### *Refrain*

The Lord God is my strength and my song,  
and He has become my salvation.

With joy will you draw water  
from the wells of salvation.

And you will say in that day:

“Give thanks to the Lord, call upon His name,  
make known His deeds among the peoples,  
proclaim that His name is exalted.” Refrain

Sing praises to the Lord, for He has done gloriously;  
let this be made known in all the earth.

Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitants of Zion,  
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel. Refrain.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning, is now,  
and will be forever. Amen. *Refrain.*

*Sit*

## Readings from Holy Scripture

Jeremiah 15:15-21

Romans 12:9-21

Matthew 16:21-28

*After each reading:*

- L This is the Word of the Lord.
- C Thanks be to God.

## Responsory

- L Forever, O Lord, your Word is firmly set in the heavens.
- C Lord, I love the habitation of Your house and the place where Your glory dwells.
- L Blessed are those who hear the Word of God and keep it.
- C Lord, I love the habitation of Your house and the place where Your glory dwells.
- L Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.
- C Lord, I love the habitation of Your house and the place where Your glory dwells.

*Stand*

## Catechism Reading

One or more of the following parts of the Small Catechism may be spoken (LSB, p. 264).

- Ten Commandments
- Apostles' Creed
- Lord' Prayer

*Sit*

## Children's Message

### Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus *LSB 685*

## Sermon

Installation of Sunday School Teachers and Other Instructors in the Faith  
(LSB Agenda, p. 249)

## Offering

*Stand*

## Prayer

- L In peace, let us pray to the Lord:  
C Lord, have mercy.
- L For the gift of divine peace and of pardon, with all our heart and with all our mind, let us pray to the Lord:  
C Lord, have mercy.
- L For the holy Christian Church, here and scattered throughout the world, and for the proclamation of the gospel and the calling of all to faith, let us pray to the Lord:  
C Lord, have mercy.
- L For this nation, for our cities and communities, and for the common welfare of us all, let us pray to the Lord:  
C Lord, have mercy.
- L For seasonable weather and for the fruitfulness of the earth, let us pray to the Lord:  
C Lord, have mercy.
- L For those who labor, for those whose work is difficult or dangerous, and for all who travel, let us pray to the Lord:  
C Lord, have mercy.
- L For all those in need, for the hungry and homeless, for the widowed and orphaned, and for all those in prison, let us pray to the Lord:  
C Lord, have mercy.
- L For the sick and dying and for all those who care for them, let us pray to the Lord:  
C Lord, have mercy.
- L For . . . [additional bids for prayer may be inserted here] . . . let us pray to the Lord:  
C Lord, have mercy.
- L Finally, for these and for all our needs of body and soul, let us pray to the Lord:  
C Lord have mercy. Christ has mercy. Lord, have mercy.

## Collect of the Day

- L Almighty God, Your Son willingly endured the agony and shame of the cross for our redemption. Grant us courage to take up our cross daily and follow Him wherever He leads; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C Amen.

## Collect for Sunday Schools

- L 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. I thank and praise You for such grace and compassion. 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. Hear our prayer for Your sake.
- C Amen.

## Morning Prayer

- C I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

## New Testament Canticle

Select a soloist to sing the main part of the canticle, and have the congregation and children sing the refrain. Option: Substitute “We Praise You and Acknowledge You, O God” LSB 941, stanzas 3 and 4.

Refrain: Christ has been raised from the dead! Alleluia. Alleluia.

Christ our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed.

Raised from the dead, He will never die again.

Death has no more dominion over Him. Refrain.

Dying, Christ dies to sin, once for all.

Living, He lives to God.

Count yourselves as dead to sin

and alive to God in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Refrain.

## Blessing

L Let us bless the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

P The almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, the + Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
bless and preserve you.

C Amen.

## Go, My Children, with My Blessing *LSB 922; AGPS 102*

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