

service sunday resources 2019

scripture focus

2 Peter 1:5-8 (The Message)

So don't lose a minute in building on what you've been given, complementing your basic faith with good character, spiritual understanding, alert discipline, passionate patience, reverent wonder, warm friendliness, and generous love, each dimension fitting into and developing the others. With these qualities active and growing in your lives, no grass will grow under your feet, no day will pass without its reward as you mature in your experience of our Master Jesus.

calls to worship

By Ben Bear, BVS Unit #277

One: We are the beloved children of God.

All: Gifted with abilities and skills to serve one another.

One: Yet that is not enough.

All: There is more we can do.

One: Remember the mustard seed?

All: The smallest of the seeds?

One: It did not stop growing after a few leaves.

All: It set its roots and put forth many new branches.

One: We, too, shall not settle for a few leaves to gather the sunlight.

All: But will strive for branches and boughs reaching skyward.

One: May we seek the light that gives us life.

All: There is growing to do!

By Jenn Dorsch-Messler, Director of Brethren Disaster Ministries

Leader: Generous Lord, you ask us here today to worship together on this Service Sunday.

All: We remember that Jesus did not become man to be served as an earthly King.

Leader: He became flesh to serve others and to sacrifice for us all.

All: Your generosity is lavish, and your promises are great and precious.

Leader: We come to praise you and build up our faith in you as a community.

All: We now also focus on the other qualities that you ask us to strive toward for continued development.

Leader: We commit to make every effort to add to our faith and not forget that we have been cleansed of our sins because of your grace. We strive to grow in our faith, expand our knowledge of Christ and search for ways to serve in your name.

By Roger and Kathy Edmark, BVS Unit #319

One: Once we were small and in need.

All: Thank you to all that met my needs!

One: We needed a hand to cross the street.

All: Thank you for holding my hand and guiding me!

One: Your love kept me safe and warm.

All: Thank you for helping me feel loved and cared for!

One: Your heart helped me see Jesus.

All: Thank you for helping me grow in faith!

One: Jesus' life provided an example to follow

All: Thank you for showing me Jesus and his ways!

One: Jesus cared for those with needs.

All: Thank you that I can care for others too!

One: Jesus serves and loves all his neighbors.

All: Thanks be to God that I too am called to serve and love my neighbor!

prayers

By Roger and Kathy Edmark, BVS Unit #319

Lord,

You call us to persevere, even in the face of trials. To face those trials of life, head on, and even with a heart of joy for we know those trials will lead to maturity and wholeness. You call us to grow in wisdom, asking you for whatever we need, because you want the very best for us and will give it to us when asked. Help us to not doubt your goodness and generosity, but to continue to grow in our understanding of your purposes for us. And when we are called to give and to serve, we know that you will not give us more than we can handle, so let us serve faithfully. We know that in everything we do, it does make a difference in the lives of those around us, so teach us to give with a heart full of love and compassion, with a soul that seeks justice and mercy, with hands that reach out to meet people's needs, and with a mind that is ever-ready to see and respond to the needs of this world. We are your servants. Let us serve the needs of our world with love.

In Jesus name,

Amen

By Pauline Liu, BVS Unit #319

Lord,

Thank you for being present and making yourself known in the smallest of details. When I can't seem to find my way and when I get lured away by the temporary pleasures of this world, help me to bring my brokenness to your feet and transform my heart and mind. Help me to trust that when I'm hurting and struggling, that you see me and that you are still good; remind me that these difficult times are meant to grow and strengthen my faith and dependence in you. Help me to cultivate the simplest gifts you've bestowed upon me into methods that I can humbly serve your people, your kingdom, and you.

Amen.

By Monica McFadden, BVS Unit #319

Creator God,

Help us recognize that with growth comes growing pains. It is rarely easy to be pushed into uncomfortable new places and ideas. It takes a great deal of courage and grace to grow, falter, and commit to growing once more.

Let us grow in our understanding of others.
Let us grow in our wonder at the world.
Let us grow in our humility.
Let us grow in our compassion.
Let us grow in our fierce commitment to revealing truth and working for justice.
God, surround us with warmth, light, and love as we seek to grow into the version of ourselves that looks most like you. It is a hard path, but it is well worth journeying.
Amen.

By Judy Stout, BVS Unit #319

Mother, Father God,
Know that we are doing our best.
Every day brings new challenges but, by your grace, we will endeavor.
May we see your face in each encounter.
Hold us in the palms of your hands as we hold others in our care.
Walk with us along the path, as of yet, unknown.
Guide our actions, softening our concerns.
We are yours to shape, to use for your plan.
Let us rest in your power and sweetness.
Alleluia,
amen.

By Emmett Witkovsky-Eldred, BVS Unit #321

Lord, prepare us for lives of service. Work within our hearts, sowing seeds of compassion, reaping a bountiful harvest of faithful action.
Cultivate our faith to maturity. Let it grow roots that plunge deep and hold firm. Let it grow branches that stretch far and reach high. Let it grow fruit that gleams invitingly and nourishes sweetly. Let each new ring of growth reinforce the last and prepare for the next.
Let us be known for the things that create and sustain: strong faith, good character, spiritual understanding, alert discipline, passionate patience, reverent wonder, warm friendliness, and generous love.
Above all, Lord, we pray to know you. And we pray that through our example, our compassion, and our service, others might come to know you and your love, as well. Be with us now and always, while we ready our hearts, minds, and bodies to serve you now and forever. Amen.

sendings

By Jenn Dorsch-Messler, Director of Brethren Disaster Ministries

Amazing Lord, we know that you call us to serve your people.
As we leave this place, may we listen to this call.
May we have ears to hear the cries of those with great need and respond.
May we have eyes to see opportunities to serve and love your children.
May we have hands and feet that are willing to help our brothers and sisters around the world.
May we have minds to creatively find ways to address needs in our community.
May we have knowledge of the gifts you have given us to see where we can best utilize them to aid others.
May we have hearts to live as your servants in any way you call us to serve. Amen.

By Roger and Kathy Edmark, BVS Unit #319

One: What did God give to us?

All: Light that cannot be extinguished!

One: What did God share with us?

All: Love that has no end!

One: What does God expect of us?

All: To love God back and love our neighbor!

One: What did God tell us to do?

All: To go and serve sharing his love with everyone!

One: Go and serve one another!

By Roger and Kathy Edmark, BVS Unit #319

One: Though I wish for peace, I see little peace.

All: Let me be peace!

One: Though I want a world that treats people fairly, I see so many not given a chance.

All: Let me be justice!

One: Though I wish for a world full of compassion, I see too many not caring about their brothers and sisters.

All: Let me be mercy!

One: Though I wish that all relationships could be healed, I see so few caring to make amends.

All: Let me be forgiveness!

One: Though I want a world full of love, I see so many not loving each other.

All: Let me be love!

One: Be the difference the world needs!

All: Amen

By Tori Bateman, BVS Unit 316

Leader: Go now and engage with the world as servants.

People: When we serve, we grow as individuals.

Leader: Go now and speak up in support of peace and justice.

People: When we serve, we grow as a community.

Leader: Go now and use the gifts God has given you to serve others.

People: When we serve, we grow in faith.

creative readings

By Jenn Dorsch-Messler, Director of Brethren Disaster Ministries

(either as one person or two people alternating lines)

Wake up, get going!

Don't lose a minute where you are!

You have been given much from the Lord, but don't sit on it.

Complement your faith.

Build on what you have received.

But how do you do this?

With good character,
spiritual understanding,
alert discipline,
passionate patience
reverent wonder,
warm friendliness,
and generous love.
Generous love!

All these fit into and develop each other.

Actively seek them and no grass will grow under your feet.

If these qualities are growing in your life there is much reward.

You will mature daily in your experience with Jesus.

So, wake up, get growing!

By Emmett Witkovsky-Eldred, BVS Unit #321

Note: While the readers recite this scripture jam, they will be building a pyramid to display the building blocks for a relationship with Jesus. The visual effect will be best if the blocks are large and colorful. Consider using something like a shoebox for the blocks. Feel free to label the blocks as well "Stage directions" are offset and in italics. A diagram below demonstrates what the final structure should look like.

1: God has given us everything that we need.

2: Everything?

3: Everything. Every tool for building a life that is pleasing to God...

1: Is already tucked away in our toolbox, right where it should be.

2: Then what are we waiting for?

3: You're right. Let's not lose another minute.

1: Let's not wait another second.

2: Let's get started.

1: We build upon what we've been given.

3: Our faith is a firm foundation.

(1, 2, 3 place four blocks in a row, the base of a pyramid, to represent faith.)

2: Add on to that good character.

(2 places a block on top of the base, leaving room for two more.)

1: And spiritual understanding.

(1 places a block next to good character, leaving room for one more.)

3: And don't forget alert discipline.

(3 completes the row by adding a third block.)

(1, 2, 3 step back and ponder the structure for a moment.)

2: I think we can do better.

3 and 1: Yep.

2: We can complement all of that with passionate patience.

(2 places another block to make a new row, leaving room for one more.)

1: And reverent wonder.

(1 completes the row by placing a second block.)

3: Not to mention warm friendliness.

(3 places another block to make a new row, leaving room for one more.)

1, 2, 3: And generous love.

(1, 2, 3 place the final block to complete the row.)

(1,2, 3 step back and ponder the tower once more).

1, 2, 3: Much better.

2: These are the building blocks to a mature life of faith.

1: Each one supports the next.

2: Each one builds off of the last.

3: Each one fits in with the others.

1: Each one adds something new and unique.

3: Keep them activated.

2: Keep them growing.

1: Don't let grass grow underneath your feet.

3: That way, no day will pass without its reward.

2: What's the reward?

1: Isn't it obvious?

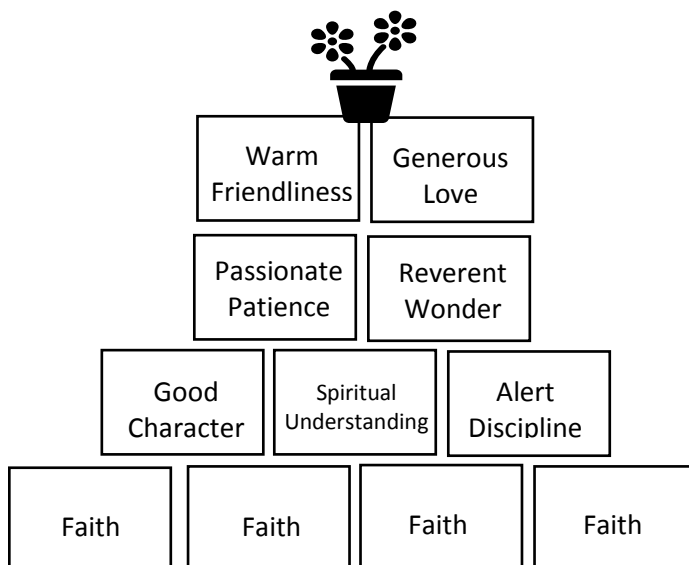
(1 places a bright flower/flower arrangement on top of the pyramid.)

3: With each of these bricks, we build up in ourselves a temple.

1: A sanctuary,

3: A home,

1, 2, 3: For Jesus.



reflections

By Greg Davidson Laszakovits, BVS Unit #214

What's the polite way to say this...? He wasn't one of the youngest guys on the team. And he was banged up with a number of minor, but painful, injuries. But there we were, the church softball team knotted up in a close game in the later innings. He was on first. His teammate hit a single and he was "all in" going from first to third in what everyone knew would be a close play. He slid and knew it would be painful. As he slid, the ball ricocheted away from the third baseman. He quickly popped up and limped home as fast as he could for the go ahead run.

What if we lived our lives more like that? All in. Focused. Willing to endure a little pain for the good of the team, whether the team is small or global. What if we saw our service to the world like that. Let's be that focused and committed to serving one another and a world in need.

God, we are grateful that we have you and a community with which we can give our best in service. May we do so in this time of worship.

By Stephen Miller, BVS Unit 316

In the second book of the Bible that shares his name, Peter the Apostle tells his readers to not lose a minute building on their basic faith with good character traits. Upon my initial reading of this verse, its message seemed simple enough: that the religious life is most full when one's spirituality is complimented by moral action. As I continued to ponder the passage, however, I found myself drawn to its first few words and the subtle urgency behind them. Don't lose a minute.

It's easy to forget that we as humans are not eternal beings, airily riding the ebb and flow of time without constraint or destination. If such an existence were true, the 'minutes' Peter describes would be both limitless and worthless. Our time in this world is finite, and with that sometimes-difficult truth comes one of God's greatest gifts: the will to make the most of life. It is this will that calls us to grow and nurture the growth of others, so that we all might mature in our experience of God.

By Caitlin O'Quinn, BVS Unit #319

Growth can come at any point in our lives. God gives us the tools we need to grow, but we must decide to use them. I am currently volunteering in Japan on an organic farm which is called the Asian Rural Institute. I want to relate my experience here so far to the growth of a plant. The first thing a plant needs is to be sown into good soil. If the plant is sown in an area that is bad for growth, then of course it will die within a few days and the planter will never see its beauty. This is the same for us. If we spend our lives only present in toxic environments where we are unhappy then we will get sick more easily and not enjoy the world as much as we could. I personally relate to this because I went from being stressed in college to being happy working hard daily. The schedule here starts every day at 6:30 am and we end around 6:30 pm. Most people would see this as being stressful, but I have found the work to be very rewarding. I have helped plant in the fields and then a week later I have been able to see the sprouts popping up. It gives me a lot of joy to know that I helped grow the food that we eat.

The next step is to be watered. If a plant does not receive water, it will wither. We also need to be watered. And this happens by reading scripture, praying, or through fellowship with others. Here at ARI, fellowship is a major part of the lifestyle. We eat together, worship together and live together. This can really help a person grow because we are challenged to live closely with people from completely different cultures than our own. It gives us a new view on how to think about the world and God.

The third step is for the plant to be fertilized. At ARI we use a type of fertilizer called bokashi. This fertilizer does not use any chemicals. I think the plants grow better with this natural kind of fertilization. We are

fertilized through our beliefs and actions in Christ. If we trust God in everything we do and know that God will lead us to where we need to be, then growth can become the best part of our lives. Like a seedling does from a plant. If we do not grow, then we cannot spread God's love. Growth is good, we just need to trust God's timing.