

LIVING FAITH MUSEUM

EASTER VIGIL

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LEADER PREPARATION INFORMATION

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Living Faith Museum. You and your congregation are about to celebrate the rich and exciting tradition of the Easter Vigil. The celebrations of the Church year are filled with powerful symbols, stories, and rituals. Yet many of these faith practices can be abstract and difficult for children to understand. The exhibits of the Living Faith Museum are designed to engage children and their families in hands-on, concrete learning about the central stories and practices of the church year. Instead of scheduled education time, these exhibits are designed to offer an open and loosely structured space for families to play and grow together in faith. I hope you will find the Living Faith Museum a helpful addition to your congregation's ministries of worship and education.

The following pages contain instructions for how to prepare five exhibits in the Living Faith Museum. Each exhibit of the Living Faith Museum explores either a story or a theme that is central to the Easter Vigil. In the exhibit instructions, you will find lists of materials, preparation instructions, suggestions for how to set up a space in your building to serve as your Living Faith Museum, detailed instructions for how each exhibit is designed to work, and a list of intergenerational volunteer opportunities to help you select and recruit great people in your congregation to really make the Living Faith Museum come alive!

I encourage you to think beyond the instructions offered here. If something doesn't seem to fit in your congregation – change it! You can use one exhibit, five exhibits, or any number in between. You can even make up your own additional exhibits. Choose a time on Holy Saturday to have the museum open when families are available to come: perhaps 6-8 in the evening or sometime in the afternoon. Get the word out, invite families and encourage them to invite their friends. Then get your team ready. You will have fun with the children and families of your congregation while helping them to experience the rich and ancient tradition of the Easter Vigil!

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By participating in the Living Faith Museum, learners will have the chance to:

- observe, be taught in, and practice family prayer
- hear and retell two important Bible stories
- use paints to explore the images and meanings of Baptism
- bond as a family by creating family artifacts to take home
- celebrate God and participate in the joy of Easter

WHAT IS THE EASTER VIGIL?

On the night before Easter Day, Christians around the world gather to celebrate Christ's passage from death to life. The Easter Vigil brings an end to Holy Week with strong signs, stories, and rituals. Traditional Easter Vigil themes are new fire in the darkness, light spreading from the light of Christ, the waters of baptism, resurrection, and the feast of God's Kingdom. The Easter Vigil incorporates salvation stories from the Hebrew scriptures and the Christian gospels. 1500 years ago, the Easter Vigil was the primary Easter celebration for Christians and remained so for centuries. Many congregations today are reviving the Easter Vigil, judging it more profound than more modern rites like the Easter Sunrise Service. The Living Faith Museum offers you one option for incorporating this ancient tradition into the life of your congregation. If your congregation practices the full Easter Vigil at, consider hosting the Museum as an earlier option for families, or alternate the Museum and the full Vigil from year to year.

HOW IS OUR UNDERSTANDING OF GOD ADDRESSED?

The Easter Vigil exhibits of the Living Faith Museum hope to engage children and families in activities and play surrounding Easter themes and the story of Jesus's resurrection. It celebrates God as a God of abundant blessing and hope. The tradition

Easter Vigil texts provide the background for the exhibits of this museum.

SO WHAT MEANING WILL THIS HAVE FOR OUR LIVES OF FAITH?

God's abundant blessings are poured out upon all people and creatures. Experiencing this through the Living Faith Museum will build memories of God's Grace. The story of Jesus Christ's passage from death to life will be put into the context of other Biblical stories and the traditions of the Church.

NOW WHAT IS THE EASTER VIGIL CALLING US TO DO AND BE?

The Living Faith Museum of the Easter Vigil calls families to experience the wonders of God's love together. It teaches and encourages family prayer. It gives families experiences of God's abundant blessings. It encourages families to resist the prevailing culture of scarcity and to proclaim the abundance of God's love through their words and actions.

MUSEUM INSTRUCTIONS

Prepare to Play

You may want to prepare the space you have chosen for your Living Faith Museum by decorating for the season of Easter. Easter lilies, white fabric, and other touches can help create a unique environment. Choose a large open area to hold the Feast, Baptismal Watercolors, and Garments of Salvation exhibits. Pick a nearby room (one that can be made dark) to hold the Shadows of Creation exhibit. Use the sanctuary, chapel, or another area that has stage lighting as the theater for the Empty Tomb Storytelling exhibit. Create signs for each exhibit and try to make each exhibit area distinctive.

You will notice that in the instructions, each exhibit should have a “docent”. A “docent” is just a cool word for a museum guide. These people will help guide families through

each exhibit and will be invaluable to the success of the Living Faith Museum.

EXHIBITS

Gathering & Blessing: New Fire

At the entrance to the building, a welcome station is set up to welcome families to the Living Faith Museum. Families will be oriented to the exhibits in the building. Each family will receive a candle card. At each exhibit they visit, they will be able to color in one of the candle's flames. When the families have visited all the exhibits and are ready to go, they can bring their filled out cards back to the New Fire table to receive a candle of their own to take home. The docent will help light the candle, help the family pray around the candle, and then wish them well as they go home.

Materials

- ✕ Table
- ✕ Candle Cards (master copy provided)
- ✕ Candles for the table, including one to serve as the Christ Candle
- ✕ Candles for families to take home

Preparation

- Make plenty of copies of the candle cards.
- Set up table near the doorway. Decorate the table with candles & other items. Put the candle cards on the table. Place the stash of family candles in an easy to reach location.

Intergenerational Volunteer Opportunities

- Welcoming docents – one or two friendly people who know the building well

and are comfortable with leading prayer.

Play

- The docents will welcome families to the Living Faith Museum as they come in. They should give each family a candle card and explain that at each exhibit they will be able to fill in the flame for one of the candles. They should give a short explanation of where the exhibits are located and orient new families to the building. Tell families that when they have visited all the exhibits and are ready to go, they can bring their filled out cards back to the welcome table to receive a candle of their own to take home.
- When families come back with filled candle cards, the docent will light a family candle from the Christ Candle and give it to a member of the family to hold. Then the docent will lead the family in prayer around the candle by asking them to "Repeat after me". Use words similar to the following:

*Eternal giver of life and light,
Your glory shines in Jesus tonight.
With your light you make us new,
You make us children that love you.
And as we go out in the dark,
Place your fire within our hearts.
Bless us, keep us, hold us tight.
And help us make the world all right.
Amen*

- The docent will wish families well as they go home.

Exhibit I: Shadows of Creation

In this exhibit, families will have the opportunity to see and hear the story of Genesis 1:1-2:4a (the first story of creation) through a shadow puppet show. Then families will have the opportunity to try creating their own shadow puppets and stories.

Materials

- ✕ Lamps
- ✕ Paper shadow puppet materials
 - cardboard boxes for making frame
 - wire, chopstick, or similar item for holding up puppets
 - thick cardstock for making puppets
 - scissors
 - tape
- ✕ Script (provided)
- ✕ Sign announcing the showtimes
- ✕ Marker

Preparation

- Read Genesis 1:1-2:4a to familiarize yourself with the story.
- Create your shadow puppet theater.
 - Go to <http://www.squidoo.com/shadow-puppets> to learn about shadow puppetry.
 - Using cardboard boxes, make a puppet “stage” by cutting out a window to frame the light.
 - Make scenery backdrops and puppets for the creation story.
 - Scenery
 - Sky
 - Earth
 - Sun/Moon
 - Puppets

- plants
 - stars
 - fish
 - birds
 - farm animals
 - wildlife
 - crawling things
 - people
- In a separate room, set up the shadow puppet stages. Make one lamp the main stage and have alternate lamps available if you expect a lot of families.
 - Arrange a seating area for the audience to sit in.
 - Place extra puppet making-materials on a table for children and families to make their own puppets.
 - Decide how often during the open hours of the museum the show will be performed (maybe every 20-30 minutes) and create a poster with the showtimes on it to be placed outside of the puppetry room.

Intergenerational Volunteer Opportunities

- Puppeteers – a few junior or senior high youth or fun-loving adults
- Puppet creators – crafty youth or adults to create the puppets and the stages
- Docent – someone to encourage people to try making shadow puppets themselves

Play

- The docent will enthusiastically welcome learners to the exhibit and encourage them to sit down in the audience seating area.
- The docent or a narrator will introduce the play and help learners to quiet down

in order to hear the performance.

- The puppeteers will perform the first story of Creation (Genesis 1:1-2:4a).
- After the performance is over, introduce the puppeteers and have them take a bow to the audience.
- The exhibit is now open for free play. The docent and puppeteers will help learners to try making shadow puppets for themselves. Let the learners self-direct and encourage them to take turns being puppeteers and audience members. Answer any questions about the story that they may have.
- When families are ready to move on, the docent should give them the marker to fill in one of their candle flames.

Exhibit II: Garments of Salvation

One of the classic symbols of baptism and new life in Christ is a fine new set of clothes. In this station, families will be able to dress up in new clothes and take a family picture of themselves decked out in the garments of salvation. They will be able to mount their picture on construction paper and decorate the border.

Materials

- ✕ Construction Paper
- ✕ Polaroid Camera and Film
- ✕ Tape or glue
- ✕ Markers to decorate the borders.
- ✕ Clothes and jewelry for dressing up.
- ✕ Marker for coloring in candle flame.

Preparation

- Read Isaiah 61:1-4, 9-11
- Gather fine clothes, robes, and jewelry either from congregation members or from your local thrift shop.
- Gather other supplies and have them organized at a table or set of tables.
- Make posters with the words from Isaiah 61:10 and hang them up around the exhibit.

Intergenerational Volunteer Opportunities

- Clothes and jewelry – congregation members will get a kick out of seeing everyone play dress up in their old clothes.
- Photographer – someone able to take a good family photo.
- Docent – someone able to explain the project, help families find the proper supplies, and answer any questions.

Play

- The docent will enthusiastically welcome learners to the exhibit and explain the exhibit to the families, saying something similar to the following:

At Easter we learn about God who helps those who are poor and heals the brokenhearted. When God raised Jesus from the dead, Jesus traded in the clothes of his death for a shining robe of victory. When we were baptized, we too were wrapped in the clothes of Christ's victory. God looks at us and sees us in our finest. Now is your chance to dress up in your finest salvation garments. Everyone should find some fine clothes and put them on. Then we'll take a picture of the whole family together and you can take it home with you!

- Families are freed to dress up in their finest salvation garb.
- When everyone is dressed, the photographer will take their picture and direct them to attach it to the construction paper and decorate it as they wish. Perhaps writing "Alleluia!" or "Our Clothes of Victory".
- The docent will give them the marker to color in a candle flame when they are

finished.

Exhibit III: Baptismal Watercolors

Baptism is a primary Christian symbol of death and rebirth and is central to the Easter Vigil. Jesus's story of resurrection is our story of new life. At this exhibit families will be invited to create baptismal images using watercolors.

Materials

- ✕ Watercolor paints
- ✕ Paintbrushes
- ✕ Images of water
- ✕ The baptismal font and/or other bowls of water
- ✕ Paper
- ✕ Cups for brush water
- ✕ Marker (for candle flame)

Preparation

- Read Romans 6:3-11
- Arrange paints and materials on table.
- Hang up images of water around the table.
- Set baptismal font and/or other bowls of water nearby

Intergenerational Volunteer Opportunities

- Docent – someone able to explain the project.

Play

- The docent will enthusiastically welcome learners to the exhibit. He or she will invite families to paint watercolor pictures by saying something similar to the

following:

On Easter Christ defeats death by being resurrected to new life. In baptism we share in Jesus's resurrection. Using the water as your inspiration, paint something that reminds you of Easter and your baptism.

- Families are free to paint. To make the connection to baptism even stronger, have families fill up their water cups for painting from the baptismal font itself.
- When families are done, the docent will give them the marker to fill in a candle flame.

Exhibit IV: Empty Tomb Storytelling

Easter centers around the story of Mary and the disciples returning to the tomb on the third day to find it empty. In this exhibit families will be able to take part in the retelling of this primary story.

Materials

- ✕ Props
- ✕ Costumes
- ✕ Script (provided)
- ✕ Marker for coloring in candle flame.

Preparation

- Read John 20:1-18
- Set up a separate room as a theater, perhaps using the sanctuary.
- Use props to set the stage for the scene of the empty tomb. Primary scenery items are the empty tomb and the folded garments on the bench where Jesus laid.
- Have costumes available for each character (Mary, Jesus, Peter, Disciple Jesus)

loved, Angel #1, Angel #2).

Intergenerational Volunteer Opportunities

- Narrator – someone able to dramatically read the story of the empty tomb.
- Docent – someone able to explain the project, help families find the proper supplies, and answer any questions.

Play

- Outside the theater room, the docent will tell families that there need to be at least 12 people to enter the exhibit and encourage them to group together with other families to form groups of at least 12.
- When at least 12 people have been gathered, the docent will lead the group into the theater room.
- Learners will be instructed that they will be retelling the story of Easter morning, twice. Help the learners select six actors or actresses from the group. The others will be audience members.
- Help actors pick roles (Mary, Peter, Disciple Jesus Loved, Angel #1, Angel #2, Jesus) Provide costumes for the actors and/or actresses, and help them get ready. Remind them to pay attention to the story, because they will have to act it out on their own the second time through!
- Narrator reads the script of the story of the empty tomb while the actors do their best to act it out.
- Audience applauds at the end. Actors take a bow.
- Using either the same actors, have the group retell the story one more time. This time they have to tell it themselves – without scripts! The narrator can help the actors along if they get stuck.

- Audience applauds *even more* at the end. Actors take a *big* bow.
- The docent will give them the marker to color in a candle flame when they are finished.

Exhibit V: Feast!

The Easter Vigil ends with the great Eucharistic feast, representing the Feast of eternal life. At this exhibit, families will be able to mingle and feast to celebrate the new life of Christ.

Materials

- ✕ Table Tents
- ✕ Tables
- ✕ Food (Wine for adults; Cheese, Meats, Crackers; Milk for Children; Cookies, Sweets)
- ✕ Table decorations
- ✕ Stereo and Festive Music

Preparation

- Read Isaiah 55:1-11
- Set tables and decorate for a fine feast.
- Play festive, celebratory music.
- Make table tents with scripture verses. (provided)

Intergenerational Volunteer Opportunities

- Servers – people to help restock food and fill drinks.
- Docent – someone to explain the exhibit and invite families to the feast.

Play

- The docent will enthusiastically welcome learners to the feast, saying something similar to the following:

Through Jesus, God gives us the gift of life that we have not earned. Come and celebrate God's abundant gift of life. Feast! Eat! Drink! Enjoy the life that God gives to you through Jesus! At each table there is a table tent with a prayer. Gather around a table together and pray together the table prayer. Then eat and drink and enjoy each other and the gifts of God.

- Families gather at a table, pray together, and are free to eat and drink as they like.
- When families are ready to move on, the docent will give them the marker to color in a candle flame.

Empty Tomb Script

(based on John 20:1-18 of CEB)

Early in the morning on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. She ran to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said:

"They have taken the Lord from the tomb and we don't know where they've put him."

Peter and the other disciple left to go to the tomb. They were running together, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and was the first to arrive at the tomb. Bending down to take a look, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he didn't go in.

Following him, Simon Peter entered the tomb and saw the linen cloths lying there. He also saw the face cloth that had been on Jesus's head. It wasn't with the other clothes but was folded up in its own place.

Then the other disciple, the one who arrived at the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. They didn't yet understand the scripture that Jesus must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to the place where they were staying.

Mary stood outside near the tomb, crying. As she cried, she bent down to look into the tomb. She saw two angels dressed in white, seated where the body of Jesus had been, one at the head and one at the foot. The angels asked her:

"Woman, why are you crying?"

She replied:

"They have taken away my Lord, and I don't know where they've put him."

As soon as she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she didn't know it was Jesus. Jesus said to her:

"Woman, why are you crying? Who are you looking for?"

Thinking he was the gardener, she replied:

"Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him and I will get him."

Jesus said to her:

"Mary."

She turned and said to him in Aramaic:

"Rabbouni" (which means Teacher).

Jesus said to her:

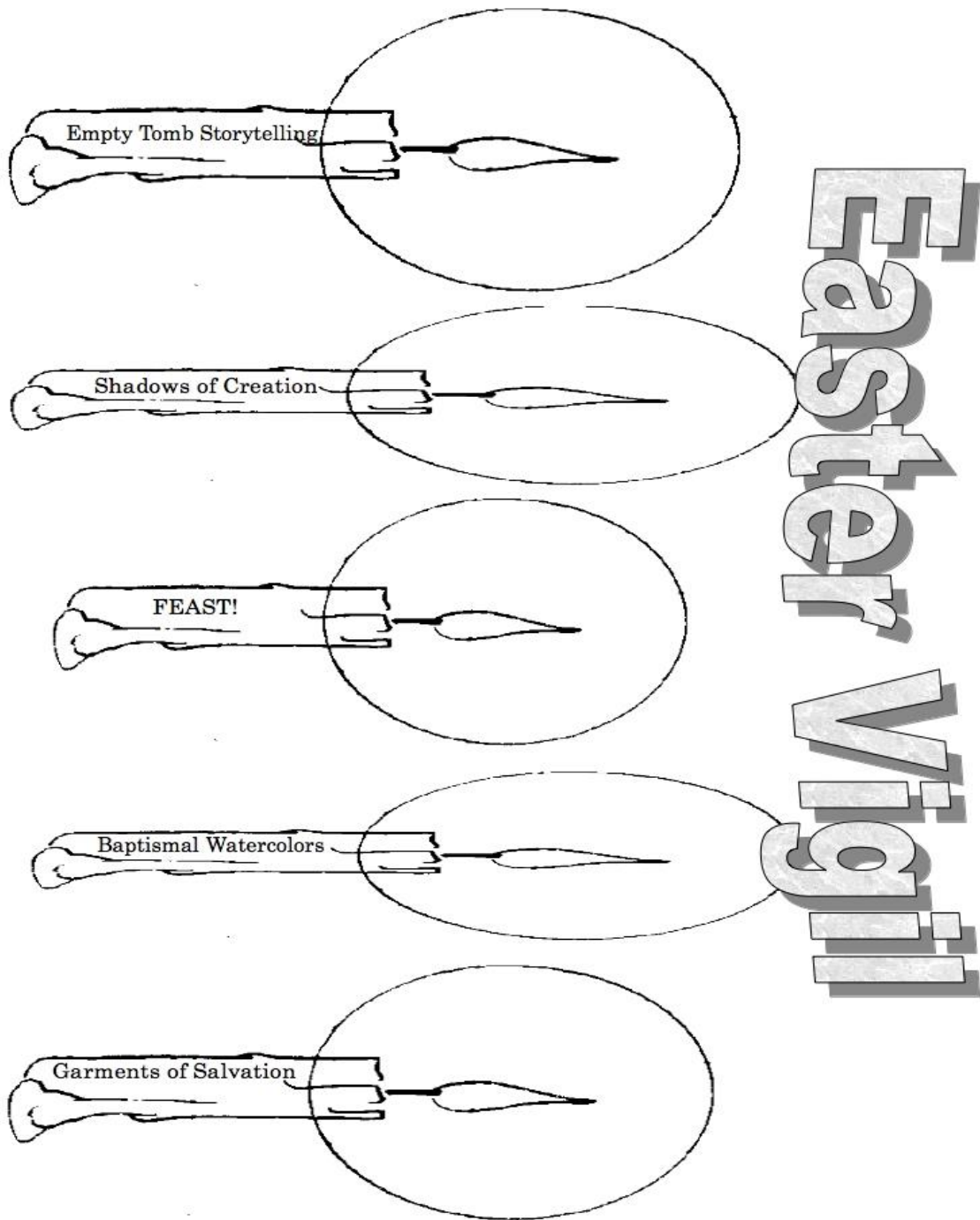
"Don't hold onto me, for I haven't yet gone up to my Father. Go to my brothers and sisters and tell them, 'I'm going up to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

Mary Magdalene left and announced to the disciples:

"I've seen the Lord! Let me tell you what he said to me."

Then she told them what he said to her.

Candle Card



Shadows of Creation Script

(based on Gen 1:1-2:4a of CEB)

(turn lights off)

When God began to create the heavens and the earth, the earth was shapeless and the seas were dark, and God's wind swept over the waters. *(make blowing sound)*

God said, "Let there be light." *(turn lamp on)* and so light appeared. God saw how good the light was. God separated the light from the darkness. *(place lamp behind shadow puppet frame)* God named the light Day and the darkness night. Evening came, then morning: The first day. *(hand signal "1")*

God said, "Let there be a dome in the middle of the waters to separate the waters from each other." And that's what happened. *(place sky backdrop into frame)* God named the dome Sky. Evening came, then morning: The second day. *(hand signal "2")*

God said, "Let the waters under the sky come together into one place so that the dry land can appear." And that's what happened. *(place earth backdrop into frame)* God named the dry land Earth and he named the gathered waters Seas. God saw how good it was. God said, "Let the earth grow plant life: vegetables, fruits, and all kinds of plants all over the earth." And that's what happened. *(use plant puppets)* The earth produced plant life: vegetables, fruits, and all kinds of plants. God saw how good it was. Evening came, then morning: The third day. *(hand signal "3")*

God said, "Let there be lights in the sky to separate day from night. They will mark events and tell time and seasons. They will be lights to shine on the earth." And that's what happened. *(place sun/moon backdrop into frame and use star puppets)* God made the stars and two great lights: the larger to rule over the day and the lesser to rule over the night. God put them in the sky to shine on the earth, to rule over night and day, and separate day from night. God saw how good it was. Evening came, then morning: The fourth day. *(hand signal "4")*

God said, "Let the waters swarm with living things, and let birds fly high in the sky." And that's what happened. *(use fish and bird puppets)* God created all the sea animals and all the birds with wings, each according to its kind. God saw how good it was. Then God blessed them: "Be fertile and multiply and fill the waters of the seas and the multiply on the earth." Evening came, then morning: The fifth day. *(hand signal "5")*

God said, "Let the earth produce every kind of living thing: farm animals, crawling

things, and wildlife.” And that's what happened. *(use animal puppets)* God made every kind of wildlife, every kind of farm animal, every kind of crawling thing that crawls on the ground. God saw how good it was. Then God said, “Let us make people in our image to resemble us so that they may take charge of the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the farm animals, all the earth, and all the crawling things on earth.” And that's what happened. *(use people puppets)* God created human people in God's own image, in the divine image God created them, male and female God created them. *(use all puppets as appropriate during the blessing)* God blessed them and said, “Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and master it. Take charge of the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and everything crawling on the ground. I give you all the plants on earth that are vegetables and fruits. These will be your food. To all wildlife, to all birds of the sky, and to everything crawling on the ground – to everything that breathes – I give all the green grasses for food.” And that's what happened. God saw everything that had been made: it was supremely good. Evening came, then morning: the sixth day. *(hand signal “6”)*

The heavens and earth and all who live in them were completed. On the sixth day God completed all the work, and on the seventh day God rested from all the work that had been done. God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all the work of creation.

This is the story of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

Feast Table Tents

<p style="text-align: center;"> Thank You, God For your love so sweet! Thank You, God For the food we eat! Thank You, God For this rich feast! And for Jesus, Who on this night, From death has been released. From death we are released! AMEN! </p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"> "All of you who are thirsty, come to the water! Whoever has no money, come, buy food and eat! Without money, at no cost, buy wine and milk! Why spend money for what isn't food, and your earnings for what doesn't satisfy? Listen carefully to me and eat what is good; Enjoy the richest of feasts!" <i>Isaiah 55:1-2</i> </p>	