



**Adventist Single Adult Ministries Day
May 19, 2018**

By Andrea Keele
Pastor Don Keele

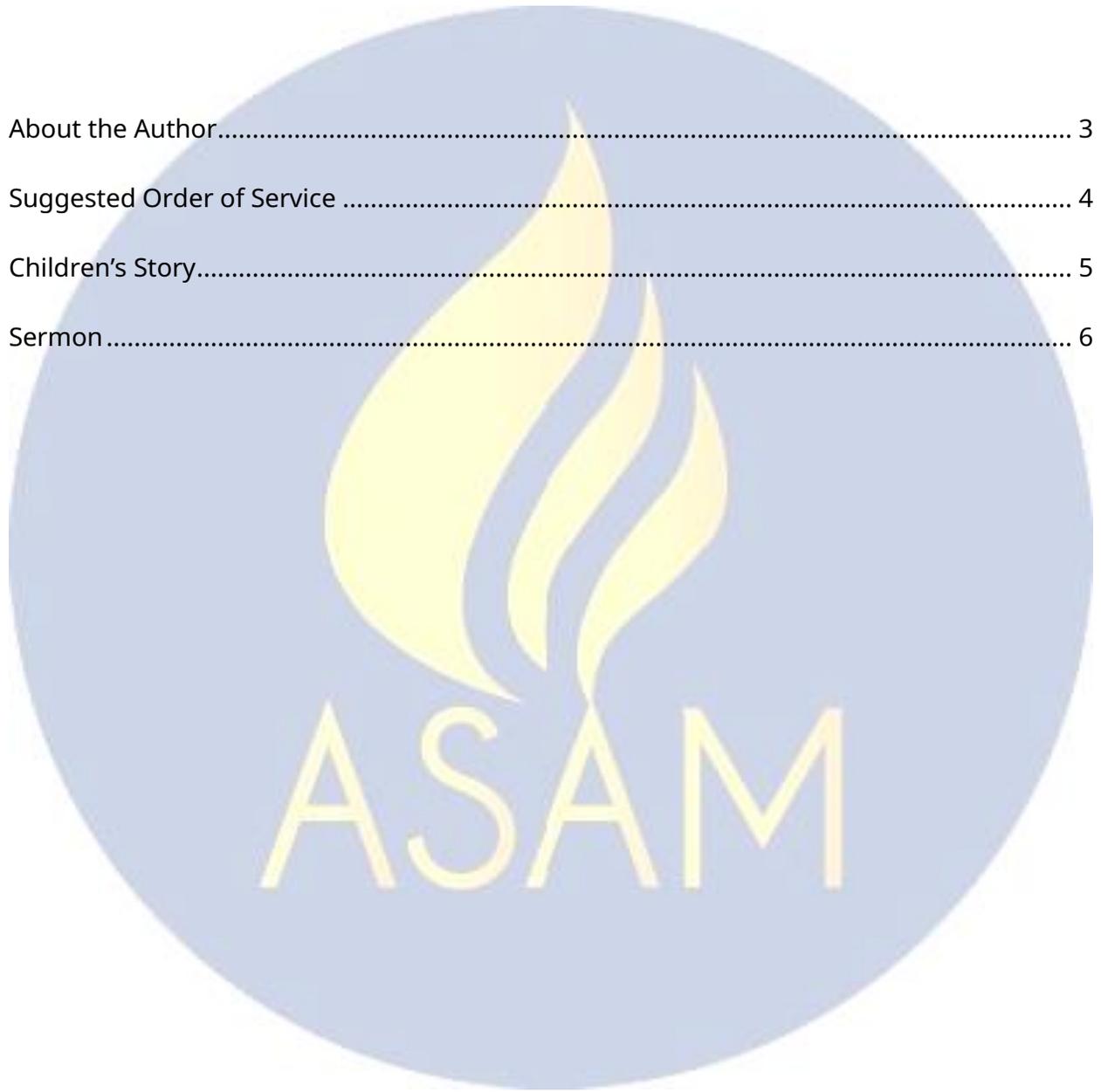
Resource Material for Local Church Leader

ASAM

Mission Statement: Reaching and empowering Single Adults to create Christ-centered safe places for fellowship, nurture and service.

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About the Authors



Andrea Keele works in the NAD Office of Volunteer Ministries supporting volunteer missionaries as a Long-Term Processing Assistant. She loves Jesus and loves people. In 2006, Andrea earned a B.A. in Religion from Southern Adventist University and later an M.A. in Christian Psychological Studies from Richmond Graduate University. One of her favorite things in life is meeting people from around the world and hearing their stories. This began through her own experiences as a volunteer missionary in New Zealand, Micronesia, and California, and continues through her current friendships and involvement in her church and local community in Maryland.



Don Keele Jr. is an associate youth director for young adult ministries at the Georgia-Cumberland Conference with over three decades of experience in professional ministry, especially youth ministry. His daughter, Andrea, is thankful that she has also had a lifetime of benefitting from his journey with Jesus and his ministry experience, including his assistance with this sermon.

Suggested Order of Service

Introit:

Opening Prayer

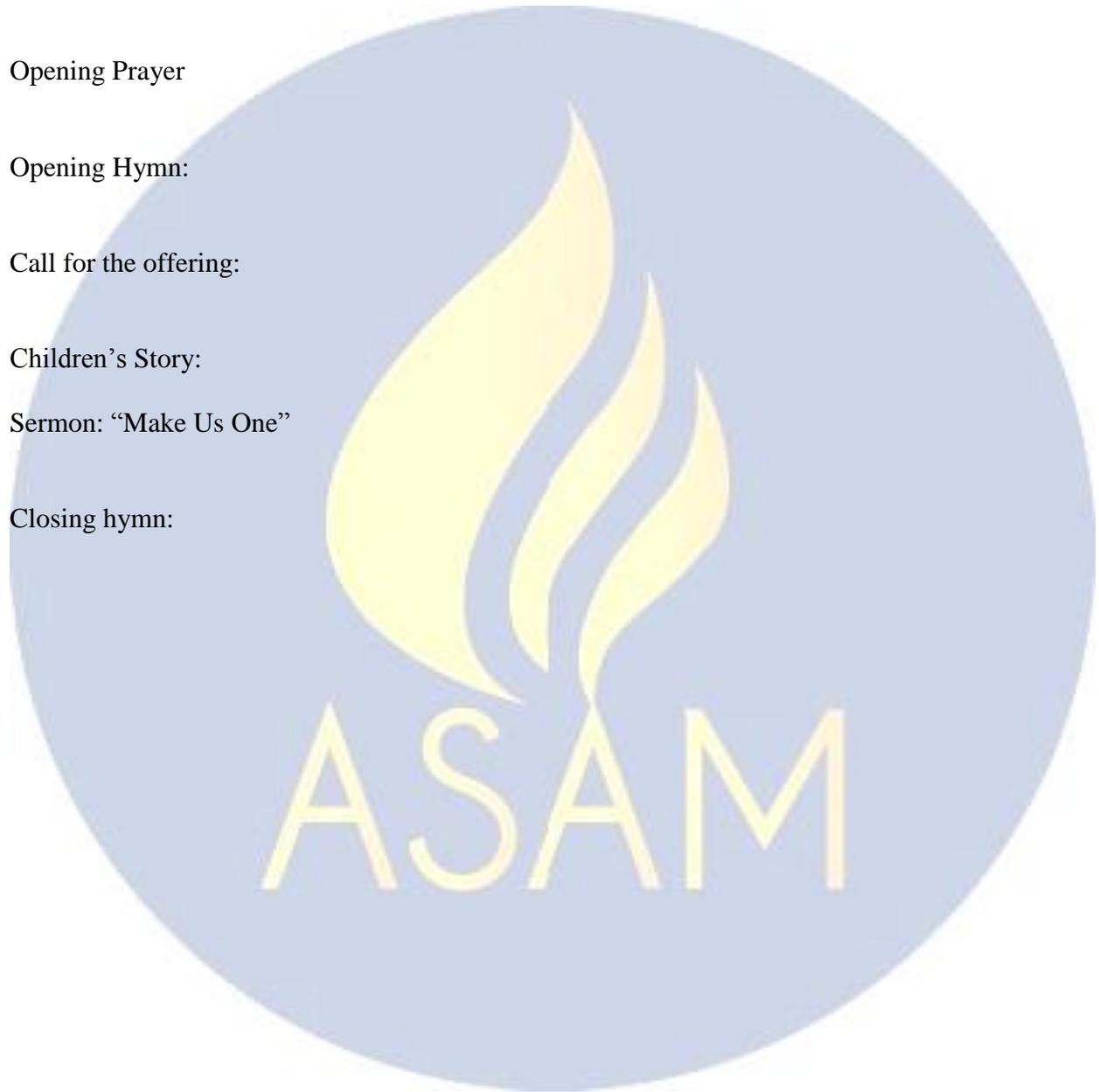
Opening Hymn:

Call for the offering:

Children's Story:

Sermon: "Make Us One"

Closing hymn:



Children's Story

We All Are One

by Dr. Pamela Consuegra

Scriptural Focus: “Now you are the body of Christ and each one of you is a part of it” (1 Corinthians 12:27, NIV).

Preparation Needed Ahead of Time: Prior to the story, have a child lie down on a large piece of cardboard or paper so that you can trace the outline of his/her body. Then cut out the outline. Once you have cut it out, cut the body part pieces into a simple “body puzzle.” (I would suggest about six body parts: left arm, right arm, head, left leg, right leg, torso) Place the puzzle pieces in a large bag and hide until ready to use.

Good morning children! Our Bible verse for the worship service this morning is from the book of Corinthians. In his letter, Paul encourages the believers to all work together as one unit. He said that in the same way a body is made up of many parts, each of us is like a part of the body of Christ – his church. I'll show you what I mean.

I have a big puzzle for us to work on this morning. (Bring out the body puzzle pieces. Hold up some individual puzzle pieces.) What is this? Yes, it's an arm. If an arm was all by itself would it be much good? Right. It wouldn't. What's this? Yes, it's a leg. Would a leg be much good all on its own? Etc.

It's pretty easy to see that each part of the body needs each other. Let's see if we can put this puzzle together. (Hand out the different parts to various children and let them help you assemble the puzzle on the floor)

You see, all of these body parts need each other to function properly. They each do different things but when you put all of the puzzle pieces together it makes a whole. In the same way, each one of us has different gifts and talents. Trying to use our gifts alone doesn't really work. We need other people's gifts and talents and other people need our gifts and talents. God made us to be together like different parts of the same body.

One person may play the piano and another sing. One person may tell a story and another preach. It takes all of us working together. We need each other and we need to be together in unity if we are going to be effective in telling others about our best friend, Jesus.

Prayer: Ask a child to pray and ask Jesus to help us work together so that we can tell others about Him and go home to heaven soon.

"Make Us One"

By Andrea Keele

The shadows grew long around the four figures sitting against the old city gates. The hot wind swirled dust around them, and they covered pulled their rags closer to protect their faces. The four could hardly be recognized as men. Leprosy had ravaged their bodies, along with the famine that plagued their city. An enemy army had camped outside the city, cutting them off from their crops, intending to starve them until they surrendered.

This group of men had already lost everything—their health, their families, their social status, and now their food. All they had left was each other's stories and company, but the stories were fading as their hunger grew. They sat in silence, waiting for another day to pass, another night to come, with little hope of change on the horizon—for them or their people.

Suddenly, one sat up a little straighter. "Why should we sit here waiting to die?" his gravelly voice broke the silence.

"What?" his friend asked.

"Why should we sit here waiting to die? Look, we can either sit here until we starve to death or go out and surrender to the enemy. Maybe they'll let us live, and give us some food. If not, we would have died anyway."

So, at twilight, the four figures set off on their dangerous mission. If you'd like to follow along in the story, you're welcome to turn to 2 Kings 7. I'll pick it up at verse 5, reading from the New Living Translation:

So at twilight they set out for the camp of the Arameans. But when they came to the edge of the camp, no one was there! For the Lord had caused the Aramean army to hear the clatter of speeding chariots and the galloping of horses and the sounds of a great army approaching. "The king of Israel has hired the Hittites and Egyptians to attack us!" they cried to one another. So they panicked and ran into the night, abandoning their tents, horses, donkeys, and everything else, as they fled for their lives.

When the men with leprosy arrived at the edge of the camp, they went into one tent after another, eating and drinking wine; and they carried off silver and gold and clothing and hid it.

Let's stop there for a minute, and imagine the scene. These guys are running in and out of tents grabbing everything in sight, stuffing their mouths, until finally they remember...Back to verse 9:

Finally, they said to each other, "This is not right. This is a day of good news, and we aren't sharing it with anyone! If we wait until morning, some calamity will certainly fall upon us. Come on, let's go back and tell the people at the palace."

So they went back to the city and told the gatekeepers what had happened."

The story continues with the gatekeepers shouting the news to the palace workers, who wake up the king. The king sends scouts, and discovers that the army truly *has* vanished, leaving behind much-needed food and supplies. So the news is announced to the people, the gates are opened, and the city was saved!

Amazingly, the heroes God used to save this city were the ones no one would have guessed—those who were unacceptable to their community. No one else would have dared to do what they did—but God uniquely qualified them for the job, not despite their circumstances, but *because* of their circumstances.

There is a great hunger in the world today, a hunger for hope, for the Word of God, for the love of Jesus. But how often do we disqualify ourselves because of our circumstances?

"Lord, if I just had more money, I could really make a difference."

"If I had a more outgoing personality, or a more respectable career, I could make a difference."

"Lord, if You gave me a spouse, or kids, or fill-in-the-blank, I could make a difference."

They can feel like legitimate barriers, but the truth is, if God can use diseased outcasts to save their city, He can use you, whatever your circumstances are, to make an impact for His Kingdom. God has a place and a purpose for every one of His children. No one, not even outcast lepers, are beyond His grace and His calling. In fact, God often overlooks the "qualified" in order to call those who don't think they're ready or good enough.

"Remember, dear brothers and sisters," says Paul in 1 Corinthians 1:26-29, "that few of you were wise in the world's eyes or powerful or wealthy when God called you. Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful. God chose things despised by the world, things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important. As a result, no one can ever boast in the presence of God."

Something beautiful happens when we realize God isn't picking His team based on anything *we* have to offer: we are free to live right where we are, fully surrendered and repurposed by God's grace.

But what could be even more beautiful? Let's take a look at 1 Corinthians 12:12—

"The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit."

Let's skip down to verse 27 of the same chapter:

"All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it."

Somehow we've come to the point in our society and even within the walls of our church, where we totally mistrust anyone who isn't exactly like us. We look with suspicion on those who look differently, speak differently, or believe differently than us. But isn't that the point of what Paul is saying here? That God created each of us to be different from each other so that together the sum total of our efforts can be more, as well as reach more for God, than we could alone.

What could be more beautiful than one person allowing God to re-purpose their life? Paul says a group of individuals that are each sold out to God. A group of individual people who each, allow God to re-create them into a family of believers, a Body made up of many parts, many lives living their stories of grace together. Christ becomes more beautiful, more real, because YOU—as well as I—that is WE are each a part of it.

God takes all of our unique personal stories, our failures and our journeys of healing, and pieces us all together in this thing called the Church—the Body of Christ. Our singleness, our marriages, our families, our broken relationships, and even our tragedies ***do not define us***. We are redeemed and repurposed, as Ephesians 2:10 says, as *"God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago."*

Don't miss this. Christ is more fully and clearly displayed to the world He wants to reach...not in our strengths, but in our weaknesses. Not in our similarities, but in our diversity. Not in our independence, but in our dependence on Him, and our interdependence on each other. But we can't seem to get there, oftentimes, precisely because of the way we choose to view each other.

At a meeting of the American Psychological Association, Jack Lipton, a psychologist at Union College in Schenectady, NY, and R. Scott Bulione, a graduate student at Columbia University, presented their findings on how members of the various sections of 11 major symphony orchestras perceived each other.

The percussionists were viewed as insensitive, unintelligent, and hard-of-hearing, yet fun-loving. String players were seen as arrogant, stuffy, and un-athletic. The orchestra members overwhelmingly chose "loud" as the primary adjective to describe the brass players. Woodwind players seemed to be held in the highest esteem, described as quiet and meticulous, though a bit egotistical.

Interesting findings, to say the least! With such widely divergent personalities and perceptions, how could an orchestra ever come together to make such wonderful music? The answer is simple: regardless of how those musicians view each other, they subordinate their feelings and biases to the leadership of the conductor. Under his guidance, they play beautiful music. (Quoted from the magazine *Today in the Word*, June 22, 1992)

The point is quite obvious, isn't it? When we individually submit ourselves to Christ as the head of the body, we can suddenly come together to beautifully represent Him to those around us. We can put aside petty differences and the church becomes His masterpiece of Love to a dying world. No one can do it alone. It has to be done together as we each become the person He is calling us to become in Him.

Candle-light flickered in the open windows on a cool, spring evening. Another group of hungry men sat and ate together. They were different ages, from different trades, and held different politics. Some were single, others had spouses and children. And all of them struggled to get along. About the only thing they had in common was Jesus. But that was enough.

Jesus poured all the love and service He could into that Last Supper with His disciples. He washed their feet. He shared a sacred meal. He tried to explain that in a few hours, His life would end, but His sacrifice would mean their salvation. It would mean that *they belonged*. They belonged to their Father, to each other, and to His Kingdom.

And then Jesus prayed an unbelievable prayer in John 17:21—

"I am praying not only for these disciples, but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. I pray that they will be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me."

In that prayer, Jesus brought *us* to the table with His disciples. He prayed for us to be one—as Jesus was one with His Father. That we—old and young, married and single, different ages, nationalities, professions, and politics—that we, as believers in Jesus, would be one, as Jesus and the Father are one. And that’s how the world will know who Jesus really is.

It’s probably the boldest prayer ever prayed, but if Jesus can pray it, so can we. If there was ever a prayer God would want to answer, it’s the prayer of His own heart. I invite you to pray with me now as we close.

Dear Jesus,

We want to join You in Your prayer and ask that You would make us one. Help us not to see each other’s differences as reasons to separate—but as reasons to come together to show the world a more complete picture of You. Thank You for Your grace in our lives that redeems and repurposes our stories. We love you. In Your name we pray, Amen.

