INTRODUCTION

Resurrection Women is a spiritual growth retreat focused on theology of mission. It is designed to increase the understanding of and commitment to God’s mission to women, children, and youth. Materials have been developed by the Women’s Division and are on the Web for use in the conference, district, or local units.

It is anticipated that two women will be assigned to lead each retreat and will share the leadership as they will determine. A thorough understanding of all materials in this manual and the participant’s manual is needed by each leader. Each leader should be prepared to lead all parts of the retreat, if a weekend retreat is the goal. If a three-hour retreat on Resurrection Women is needed, please use the shorter version posted on the Web.
RESURRECTION WOMEN RETREAT – RESOURCES NEEDED

Physical Set-Up

All - Sound system – leader’s microphone, 3 mikes for Session II
All - Tables with chairs, no more than 8 persons per table
All - Altar – see later notes for worship centers
III - 3 meditation centers, life mapping place, labyrinth space, creative expressions space

Supplies For Session Activities

All - Name tags
All - Participant's manuals
II - Three large headscarves for costumes for play
   Script for play
   Small table, 3 chairs, pitcher, cups, bread, and cheese
III - Life mapping – paper and markers, directions
   Labyrinth – marked on floor, suggested readings/scriptures
   Meditation centers – 6 hymnals, 6 Bibles, posters of scriptures and hymns,
   CD player and meditative CD, poster for “door,” mounted pictures for each center
   Creative expressions – craft projects and supplies
III - DVD player with one or two monitors
   DVD “Resurrection Road”
   Study guide
IV - CD “Make Plain the Vision, Songs of Women” provided by facilitators
IV - Paper (poster size) and markers; way to duplicate overnight
IV - Icon on large paper
IV - Icon activity – old magazines, poster boards, markers & crayons, glue sticks, scissors
V - Prayer Calendar
V - Large sheets of paper
   3 x 5-inch (or 4 x 6-inch) cards
   Baskets to collect cards
   Bible, Response and New World Outlook, Prayer Calendar, UMW Web site addresses
V - “Stations” of small tables or stands
   Bread in small pieces and water in small cups; provision for replenishing
V - Evaluation forms and box for collecting them

Altar/Worship Center

I - Start with colorful covering with cross and candles
   Later, add cell phone, clock, pile of stuff, lighted candle, globe, flowers or plant, Bible
II - Remove “stuff,” leave attractive worship center
II - Altar may become small table for the play
III & IV - Attractive worship center
V - “Tools” from the group exercise
V - Loaf of bread, pitcher of water

Music and Worship

All - Song leader
All - Accompanist and piano/keyboard
All - Handout for musicians
All - Global Praise 1, Global Praise 2, The UM Hymnal

Participants needed

All - Worship center preparation
I - Call to Worship
    7 speakers (to put items on altar) - (may be combined into fewer speakers)
II - 3 women in play
IV - 2 for closing prayer
V - 4 for Service of Commitment
# RESURRECTION WOMEN RETREAT
## LEADERSHIP OUTLINE

|---------------|---------------|-----------------|

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### Session 2

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<td>Fourth Reflection Time</td>
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**Directions for Session 3 (early afternoon time):**

- Explain the labyrinth
- Directions for lunch (if any), Grace for lunch
Session 3

——— 21-37 31-33 Individual activities and reflections
——— 34 Debriefing
——— 23 34 DVD “Resurrection Road” (separate study guide inside the jacket of the DVD)
——— Announcements: Bring photo to Session 4

Session 4

——— 38-40 34-35 Visions of Justice—Characteristics of Resurrection Women: CD of “Make Plain the Vision, Songs of Women” segment 6
——— 40-41 35-36 Praying with Icons
— Individual Meditation
— Group Reflection
——— 41 36 Creation of an “icon collage”
——— 41-42 36 Closing Prayers

Session 5

——— 42 37 Morning Prayer
——— 43 37 Mission Opportunities
——— 43 37-38 Tools for the Resurrection Road
——— 44 38-39 Closing Service of Commitment
— Worship Center/Call to Worship
——— 44 38 Offering (of 3 x 5-inch cards)
——— 45-46 Scripture readings (3)/Proclamation of Power
——— 46 38-39 Service of Bread and Water
——— 46 39 Closing Prayer
COMMENTS AND NOTES FOR MUSICIANS
FOR RESURRECTION WOMEN RETREAT

Music is an important part of most religious experiences. This retreat is no exception. The music selected has been chosen to supplement and enhance the spoken and written words. The music will at times motivate; at times inspire; at times comfort; and at other times challenge. Please use only the music that has been selected and in the order suggested for there is a flow to the entire retreat which the music supports.

Some of these hymns are familiar, while others are new. You will need to learn all the music and be comfortable teaching it to others. Comments regarding teaching techniques are included when appropriate. Information about the hymn is also sometimes included to add perspective. This can be shared with the participants. Words to most of the hymns are included in the manual *Resurrection Women* and should be given to each participant. The theme hymn, “Hallelujah, Christ Is Risen!” is in the front of the manual.

If you feel the need to teach a song that is included in a worship or presentation prior to using the song, do so at the beginning of the “Hymn Sing.” If the pianist plays a new song through once even in the midst of a service/presentation, most of these songs will not need to be taught ahead of time.

The musicians are a part of the leadership of the retreat, but they are not the leaders. Be supportive of others; don’t take over the retreat; and remember it is to the glory of God that our singing takes place.

**MATERIALS NEEDED**

The pianist and song leader will each need a copy of *The United Methodist Hymnal, 1989; Global Praise 1; Global Praise 2*; and “Make Plain the Vision, Songs of Women” CD (2747) from Mission Resource Center for $12.95. *The UM Hymnal* may be purchased from any Cokesbury store or borrowed from a local church. The *Global Praise* books can be purchased from the Mission Resource Center at 1-800-305-9857 or missionresourcecenter.org for $12.95 each, plus handling and shipping costs. They are also available at Cokesbury.

Each will also need her own copy of the participant’s manual *Resurrection Women*. The leader needs to download the participant’s manual and make copies of it to be given to each participant in the retreat. Be sure to get your copy ahead of time, so that you are clear about the placement of the music. Note that all the songs and hymns cannot be loaded due to copyright permission. You need to obtain copyright permission for songs and hymns where words do not appear in the participant’s manual if you wish to download them. However, they may be found in *The United Methodist Hymnal, Global Praise* books, or *The Faith We Sing* and page numbers are listed.
NOTE: The following abbreviations are used throughout the rest of this manual.
The United Methodist Hymnal, 1989: UMH
Global Praise 1: GP1
Global Praise 2: GP2
Resurrection Women: RW

SESSION 1

HYMN SING

“O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing”
Words: Page 47, No. 2 RW
Music: Number 11 GP2
This hymn takes the familiar words of the Charles Wesley hymn and adds the phrase “blessed be the name of the Lord” or “blessed be the name.” This hymn was used in camp meetings in the 19th and 20th centuries. The leader would sing the Wesley words and the congregation would join in with the repeated words. This was a wonderful way for all to participate without hymnals and was especially important for those who could not read.
Tempo: Lively

“My Hope Is Built”
Words: Page 55, No. 25 RW
Music: Number 368 UMH

“Hallelujah, Christ is Risen!”
Words and Music: Pages 4-5, RW
This hymn consists of an unpublished poem of Charles Wesley with a tune by S T Kimbrough, Jr., arranged by Mary K. Jackson. It was chosen as the theme song of this retreat because of the emphasis on the courageous action of the women who experienced the resurrection of Jesus and their continued witness to that truth.
Teach by using the melody only several times. The tempo should be joyful. End the hymn with the refrain.

“Blessed Assurance”
Words: Page 56, No. 26 RW
Music: Number 369 UMH

“Jesu Tawa Pano”
Words: Page 53, No. 15 RW
Music: Number 36 GP1
This chorus comes from Zimbabwe and can be sung in a variety of styles. It can be slow and prayerful, or fast and joyful, or somewhere in between. Sing it first in the language of Zimbabwe and then in English. This hymn will be used several times during the retreat.
“This Little Light of Mine”  
Words: Page 58, No. 30 RW  
Music: Number 585 UMH

WORSHIP
“Christ Is Alive”  
Words: Page 54, No. 22 RW  
Music: Number 318 UMH

“Jesu Tawa Pano”  
Words: Page 53, No. 15 RW  
Music: Number 36 GP1  
Sing slowly and prayerfully.

COMMUNITY BUILDING
“Jesu Tawa Pano”  
Words: Page 53, No. 15 RW  
Music: Number 36 GP1  
Sing at a joyful tempo with enthusiasm.

CEREMONY OF THE OPENING OF THE RETREAT
“Be Silent”  
Words: Page 47, No. 1 RW  
Music: Number 2 GP2  
The hymn is the call to prayer and worship. Sing with feeling.

“Jesu Tawa Pano”  
Words: Page 53, No. 15 RW  
Music: Number 36 GP1  
The participants probably will be able to sing this without the words in front of them this time. Before the last verse hum a verse and then sing the last verse with joy and expectation.

SESSION 2

HYMN SING
“Jesus in the Morning”  
Words: Page 48, No. 4 RW  
Music: Number 53 GP2
“Santo, Santo, Santo”
Words: Page 54, No. 19 RW
Music: Number 49 GP1
Sing first in Spanish and then in English.

“Standing on the Promises”
Words: Page 56, No. 27 RW
Music: Number 374 UMH

“Turn Your Eyes upon Jesus”
Words: Page 55, No. 24 RW
Music: Number 349 UMH

“As Your Children, Lord”
Words: Page 51, No. 11 RW
Music: Number 5 GP1

**WORSHIP**

“Morning Has Broken”
Page 58, No. 32 RW
Music: Number 145 UMH

“Tino Tenda Jesu”
Words: Page 53, No. 17 RW
Music: Number 45 GP1
This is a Shona language hymn out of Africa. It should be sung prayerfully.

“O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing”
Words: Page 47, No. 2 RW
Music: Number 11 GP2
Stand and sing with enthusiasm.

**BIBLICAL DRAMA**

First Reflection Time

“When, Like the Woman at the Well”
Words: Page 60, No. 36 RW
Music: Hymn Tune LAND OF REST Number 269 UMH
Play the music through once so that the tune is recognized.
Second Reflection Time
“Break Open the Jar”
Words: With Joy Our Spirits Sing, Page 61, No. 37 RW
Music: Hymn Tune KREMSER Number 131 UMH
Play the music through once so that the tune is recognized.

Third Reflection Time
“The First One Ever”
Words: Page 59, No. 34 RW
Music: Number 276 UMH
This hymn is not the easiest one to sing, but the message is strong.

SESSION 3

GATHERING SONGS
“He Lives”
Page 54, No. 21 RW
Music: Number 310 UMH

“Hallelujah, Christ Is Risen!”
Words and Music: Pages 4-5, RW

CLOSING HYMN
“As a Fire Is Meant for Burning”
The Faith We Sing (#2237), Page 61, No. 38 RW
Music: Hymn Tune BEACH SPRING Number 581 UMH
Play the music through once so that the tune is recognized.

SESSION 4

HYMN SING
“Surely the Presence of the Lord”
Page 55, No. 23 RW
Music: Number 328 UMH
“Lord, We Need Bread”
Words: Page 48, No. 3 RW
Music: Number 42 GP2
This hymn comes from Germany and is written by a United Methodist pastor, Harmut Handt. The music comes from a young Swiss musician, David Plüss, who is also United Methodist and was the pianist at several United Methodist Women Assemblies.

“Nurtured by the Spirit”
Words: Page 50, No. 9 RW
Music: Number 115 GP2
This hymn was written as the theme song for the International Youth Convocation of the General Board of Global Ministries in 1999. The writer and composer is Per Harling, a Swedish Lutheran pastor and one of the song leaders at the 2002 Assembly of United Methodist Women. The hymn should be sung with enthusiasm.

“Tino Tenda Jesu”
Words: Page 53, No. 17 RW
Music: Number 45 GP1

“Guide My Feet”
Words: Page 54, No. 20 RW
Music: Number 68 GP1

CLOSING WORSHIP
“Day Is Dying in the West”
Words: Page 60, No. 35 RW
Music: Number 687 UMH

SESSION 5

HYMN SING
“Take Time to Be Holy”
Words: Page 57, No. 29 RW
Music: Number 395 UMH

“My Lord! What a Morning”
Words: Page 53, No. 18 RW
Music: Number 48 GP1
“Pray for Peace”
Words: Page 48, No. 5 RW
Music: Number 58 GP2
Play the music through once, and then sing the hymn several times with feeling.

“Here I Am, Lord”
Page 58, No. 31 RW
Music: Number 593 UMH

“Break with the Hungry Your Own Bread”
Words: Page 51, No. 12 RW
Music: Number 10 GP1
Note how the phrases are repeated in sequence and the message that is shared.

**SERVICE OF COMMITMENT**

“Have Thine Own Way, Lord”
Words: Page 57, No. 28 RW
Music: Number 382 UMH
The page number will have to be announced since it is omitted from the manual.

“Hallelujah, Christ is Risen!”
Word and music: Pages 4-5, RW

“What Gift Can We Bring”
Words: Page 58, No. 33 RW
Music: Number 87 UMH
The page number will have to be announced since it is omitted from the manual.

“For Sake of Life”
Words: Page 52, No. 13 RW
Music: Number 25 GP1

Note: During the Service of Bread and Water, the pianist can play a series of hymns that have been used during the retreat. People may sing along, hum, or listen in silence. Close this part of the service with the hymns below.

“Lord, We Need Bread”
Words: Page 48, No. 3 RW
Music: Number 42 GP2

“Hallelujah, Christ is Risen!”
Words and music: Pages 4-5, RW
SESSION 1

HYMN SING

All hymns used in the retreat are listed in the “Resurrection Women Sing” section of the participant’s manual. Words are included in most cases, along with the source of the music. You need to take Global Praise 1, Global Praise 2, and The United Methodist Hymnal with you to each retreat. Copies of all three of these musical resources should be provided to the pianist and song leader to use in the retreat. Let the conference leadership select the two persons to lead the music, but make it very clear that the music used is to be that which is found in the retreat book.

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OPENING WORSHIP

WORSHIP CENTER: Prepare a traditional worship center with a cross and candles. The candles can be lit by someone during the hymn sing.

Participants:

- Ask someone to lead the Call to Worship and the Prayer Time. Provide the leader with the specifics from the Prayer Calendar for this day.
- Ask three people to read the scripture in dialogue format. One person is the narrator, one is Mary, and one is Jesus. The scripture in this format is an appendix to this session and should be duplicated for the readers.
INTRODUCTION TO THE RETREAT
(Led by the Retreat Leader)

Why have we come? Popcorn response from entire group plus leader suggestions should include:
• Seeking a better understanding of self and relation to God;
• Sense of self-discipline—a part of spiritual journey—pushing my beliefs;
• Companionship with friends;
• Always come to this event;
• Need a spiritual experience—restoring my soul;
• To leave behind the normal in my life—concentrate on myself and God.

What we must do individually and collectively:
• Separate ourselves from the ordinary/daily life—cell phone off, newspapers not available, no TV while here. Even within this space, we will, at times, need to separate from each other. Create a sacred space—do this in the evening worship.
• Create a space where we respect each other—our ideas, questions, beliefs.
• Cease complaining and don’t exhibit our negative attitudes.
• Remember that we are children of God, resurrection women, who believe in Jesus Christ as Savior, and women committed to participating in God’s mission in our world.

Why do we have this topic/centering phrase/theme?
• Biblically based;
• Center of our Christian faith and experienced by women through the ages;
• A call to involvement in God’s mission;
• Expands the purpose of United Methodist Women—we do what we do because we are resurrection women—women of faith;
• Helps us do theology;
• Increases our ability to articulate faith and live it out.
COMMUNITY BUILDING

The leader of this can be the conference spiritual growth person, or someone else.
Divide into groups of six to eight persons and stand together.

Step One:
Share with your group what you would like them to know about your name (origin, family connections, nickname, etc.). After everyone has shared, do this litany with each person participating.

I am (the name you want to be called).
I am a blessed child of God.

The group says:
You are (the name given).
You are a blessed child of God.

Step Two:
Move to a new group of six to eight persons. Recall biblical stories when God called persons by name. Share the litany above with everyone in this group.

Step Three:
Move to a new group. What does it mean to “participate in God’s mission”? Share the litany above with everyone in this group.

Step Four:
Return to your seat. Everyone says aloud at the same time:

I am (the name you want to be called). I am a blessed child of God.

Sing “Jesu Tawa Pano” (page 53)

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION AND PREPARATION FOR RETREAT

Instruction: Each person is to answer the questions in her book individually. Ten minutes will be allowed for this and it is to be done in silence. (If it appears that people need a longer time, give it.)

See pages 9-10 of the participant’s manual for the exercise.
ANNOUNCEMENTS
Make whatever announcements are necessary prior to the ceremony.

CEREMONY OF THE OPENING OF THE RETREAT
Prepare the worship center with colorful cloths, removing the cross and candles used in the opening worship. Be sure the center is a table that is large enough to hold the several symbols that are used within the service. See pages 10-12 of the participant’s manual for the service.

Choose several participants as the leader and speakers within the service.

Carry with you the following symbols, or have them collected ahead of time by the conference coordinator of spiritual growth:
- Cell phone
- Clock
- Pile of stuff (papers, date book, etc., from a purse)
- Candle and matches
- Globe of the world
- Flowers or plant
- Bible

SESSION 2
MORNING PRAISE AND PRAYERS:
HYMN SING

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Worship leaders can be chosen from the participants. The Call to Worship can be read antiphonally.

**BIBLICAL DRAMA**

This dialogue will be presented by three women. They must be selected ahead of time, receive the script by mail, and have time to rehearse. As they rehearse together, they should work to include some “stage business” or movement, so that this becomes more than a reading. This must be well done! The narrator should be one of the retreat leaders.

**Supplies:** If possible, each person should have a mike.

**Setting:** Three chairs in a semicircle. Small table, with simple bread and cheese, a water pitcher, and three small cups.

**Costumes:** Biblical head scarves (coverings) of different colors

**Participants:** Mary Magdalene

Joanna

Ruth, a young neighbor

**ACT I**

**Mary:** It’s nice to be able to sit down and visit. It’s been a difficult and busy time since Pentecost and I am so tired. I am not as young as I used to be. Oh, excuse me—do you know each other? (Looking at Ruth, gestures toward Joanna.) This is Joanna. Her husband is Chuza—he is Herod’s steward. Don’t let that scare you, for Joanna is one of us. I have known her since we were children together in Magdala and she and I are both disciples of Jesus. (To Joanna.) This is Ruth, my neighbor, who is trying to get me to share some of the stories about our work with Jesus. I decided that today was the day to tell the stories, but I knew I needed Joanna’s support and insight. So here we are!

**Ruth:** I am sooooooo excited! I can’t believe that I am in the same room with the two of you. I have heard so much about Jesus, but the stories have always been secondhand—told by people who heard them from someone else. Today, I will get the real stories from the people who experienced them. (With enthusiasm.) Oh, this is wonderful.
Joanna: *(Laughing.)* Calm down, Ruth. You’ve got too much energy for me today. I will help Mary tell the stories, but let’s do it at a slower pace. I, too, am tired, but once I can get a drink of water and rest my feet, I will be ready to get into my storytelling mode. *(Pours water for all of them and then sits and puts up her feet.)* Now, this is much better. *(Drinks.)* Mary, where shall we start?

Mary: It is best to start at the beginning. About three years ago, Joanna and I were invited by our friend, Susanna, to go with her to hear Jesus. He was speaking near a small town not too far from here, so we decided to make it a day’s outing. Both Joanna and I were experiencing some hard times with depression and illness, and I am sure Susanna saw this outing as a way to get our minds off our troubles. Through a friend’s invitation, we both were able to start our lives anew. Ruth, we were healed! Since then, our lives have been simplified. Because of Jesus, we have become stronger, and able to work through our problems. Listening to Jesus has allowed us to find new directions for our lives. On that first day, we became disciples of Jesus. We heard his stories, we followed his teachings, and our lives have been renewed. Our faith has helped us to endure all the strange and terrible things that have happened recently.

Joanna: Oh, yes, we received healing, and as Mary says, we received so much more from Jesus. We have been given a new purpose to our lives—we are able to be of service to the Messiah. Moreover, we are no longer just tolerated as women, but truly appreciated and valued for who we are. From that first day, many of us women became part of the group that journeyed with Jesus. We assisted in finding lodging and food, in controlling the crowds, and in bringing the sick and needy to Jesus. We were daily companions, doing what women must do in our society, but also receiving strong affirmations of our abilities to understand the teachings of Jesus.

Mary, remember the story that Jesus told about the woman who lost one of her coins? Some of the men could not understand what the woman was so upset about, but we knew and were able to see it as an important story about finding what or who is lost. In that story, as well as in the one about the lost sheep, Jesus told us about God’s concern for each of us and his plan of salvation for all “who are among the lost.” I believe we all are lost at one time or another.

Mary: Jesus was the best storyteller I have ever heard. He was able to get his message across with stories—simple stories that each of us could understand, and which appealed to all the crowds of people. People would follow him for days just to hear him teach. Sometimes they came without food or drink, yet they didn’t want to
leave his presence. Remember the time that the men in our group got so nervous because there was no food for a large crowd? I found the little boy whose mother had packed him a lunch, and I took him to Jesus. I just knew Jesus would know what to do and he certainly fed all those people.

Ruth: Oh yes, I heard about the feeding around the village the next day. The boy’s mother said Jesus took her son’s fish and bread, blessed them, and distributed them to thousands of people. She told me that there were even some leftovers. It was a surprise to everyone—I know the men were amazed. I think the boy’s name is Stephen. He certainly won’t forget that day when his lunch became the “miracle lunch.”

Mary: Ruth, there are so many stories we could tell, but I really want to concentrate right now on what happened just before the crucifixion.

Joanna: Wait a moment, Mary. There is one experience I want to share with Ruth that happened on a day when Jesus was teaching and preaching in Judea. He had upset the Pharisees so much that it became necessary for him to return to Galilee. He took the route through Samaria. Who knows why he chose to go that way, since everyone knows that most Jews despise the Samaritans. Jesus was tired and sat down at Jacob’s Well, near Sychar, while the men went to get food. We women were sitting under the trees, trying to stay out of the hot sun.

Mary: Yes, and while we were sitting there, a Samaritan woman came to draw water. Now you know that a Jewish man should not ask a Samaritan woman for a drink, but Jesus did. Goodness, he broke two laws just like that—he talked to a woman and he asked a Samaritan for a drink. He was always breaking what he considered to be unnecessary laws. But, on with the story…this woman was smart, and she asked Jesus why he was asking her for water. As a Samaritan, she also knew he shouldn’t. However, they continued to talk, and soon it became a theological discussion about Jacob, the value of Jacob’s water, and the value of the “living water” that Jesus offers. This Samaritan woman was not bashful or shy, and she persisted in questioning him, and even had the nerve to ask Jesus for his “living water.”

Joanna: We who were watching from the shade were really surprised when Jesus asked her to get her husband. She told him that she had no husband and Jesus nodded in agreement, saying that indeed, she had had five husbands. Later, when we told others about this conversation, people were shocked. They were even shocked to hear that she was at the well in the heat of the day. Some thought she was
a sinner, shunned by the village women, while others felt she was rejected and discouraged because she was barren, and she was tired of the taunts because she had no children. I didn’t know the woman, and there was no one to tell us about her situation, but it didn’t matter to Jesus. The two continued in their conversation, covering many things, including places of worship, how to worship God, and proper attitudes in worship, as well as Jesus’ vision of the world. I do believe that Jesus had one of his longest private conversations with anyone that day when he talked with the Samaritan woman by the well.

Mary: When the men returned with food, they were amazed to find Jesus talking with the Samaritan woman. They overheard the last part of the conversation when the woman said, “I know that the Messiah is coming who is called Christ,” and Jesus responded immediately: “I am he.” When she heard that, the woman ran into the village to tell her neighbors, urging them to come and see Jesus, the Messiah. Of course, people were soon crowding around Jesus, and believe it or not, our group stayed with the Samaritans for two days while he taught them. Many of the listeners became his followers, and some even joined us for the rest of the journey.

Ruth: That’s a powerful story! It says to me that the message of Jesus is open to all—to Jew and Gentile alike. I also think that the woman was changed. People in the village listened to her, and challenged her understanding of Jesus’ message. She explained what had happened to her, and repeated her conversation with Jesus many times. She certainly understood his message and was willing to tell others. Because she explained it so well, many people became believers.

Joanna: You, too, have understood the message of this experience, Ruth. Jesus really outlined his vision of the world for her. A world that includes everyone—a world in which everyone is respected. He led us to understand that we are to worship God in spirit and truth and that we must share the Gospel—that’s the “living water” that Jesus talked about—and that everyone must teach and witness to Jesus’ message. Powerful, indeed!

Mary: Thanks for slowing me down, Joanna. That was a very important experience for all of us and should not be forgotten in the midst of all the rest. I’m getting hungry. Let’s have some cheese and bread before we continue.
**First Reflection Time**

**Narrator:** While Mary, Joanna, and Ruth take time for some food, let us take a little time to read the story of the Samaritan woman in John 4:3-42. Please read to yourself this story found on pages 15-16 in your manual and then consider the reflection questions in silence. You might want to write some comments. (Allow 15 minutes for this period of reflection.)

**Song:** “When, Like the Woman at the Well” (page 60)

**ACT II**

**Joanna:** That is very good cheese, Mary. Did you bake the bread?

**Mary:** I got the cheese several days ago from my cousin. She has lots of goats, so she always shares some of the cheese she makes with me. In return, I give her vegetables from my garden. Ruth made the bread. You really are a great baker, Ruth. Your bread is always a special treat for me.

**Joanna:** Thanks for sharing your lunch with me. Now, back to the storytelling. In the weeks just before Passover, Jesus tried to tell all of us that he was going to die and then be resurrected. We didn’t understand what he was talking about. Instead, the men started vying for the top spots in the earthly kingdom they thought Jesus was going to establish. He told them that he was not that kind of king, that he came to serve and not to rule. He must have become very discouraged with us at times. However, Jesus kept on healing and teaching, and we followed him.

**Mary:** We were with Jesus when he made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem with children running alongside, and people waving palm branches at him. He was riding on a little donkey, and people were throwing their coats in front of him, and shouting “Hosanna.” It was as if Jesus was a king going into the temple, but, somehow, it didn’t quite feel right to us.

**Joanna:** Yes, we knew we were being watched by enemy eyes. Roman soldiers were everywhere, watching us closely, prodding people along with their weapons. We know that the Roman government was keeping a close eye on Jesus since he’d been proclaimed “king” by his followers. They didn’t want anyone challenging the governing structure. Any prophet was considered a threat, and Jesus was believed to be especially dangerous to the Roman government. In addition, the Pharisees didn’t want the people to follow Jesus. They considered him a threat.
to their leadership. There were rumors that they were trying to figure out how to get rid of Jesus, and were plotting with the Roman government to do just that.

**Mary:** For safety’s sake, we would return each night to Bethany, where we stayed with friends, and then we’d go back to Jerusalem each morning. Jesus did a lot of teaching in the area around the temple. He also ran those out of the temple courtyard who were using it as a marketplace. This really enraged the priests and scribes. Jesus said to them and to all of us: “My house shall be called a house of prayer; but you have made it a den of robbers.” However, it really didn’t do much good—the next morning all the sellers and buyers were back in their usual places.

**Joanna:** Part of that week, we spent time just outside the treasury. There were a lot of rich people putting in large amounts of money in honor of the Passover. Mary, you remember when Jesus saw that poor widow put in two small coins? He said that she had put into the treasury everything she had, thus doing much more than all the rich people. I’m glad he said that, for sometimes the rich people I have to associate with are overly proud of their giving.

**Ruth:** I have also heard that Jesus foretold that the temple would be destroyed and that the Son of Man would come in great power. I still don’t understand how he knew those things. Didn’t he also warn everyone to be alert to what was happening around them?

**Mary:** He most certainly did. He also talked about betrayal, and even told Peter that he would betray him, just as Judas did. Oh my, once again I am getting ahead of the story. But, back to two days before the Passover. By that time, things were getting heated up in Jerusalem. The Roman soldiers were more aggressive than ever, viciously breaking up small groups of people who were talking together. I heard that the priests and scribes were also talking among themselves, even outside the temple. I overheard a man in one group say that Jesus had to be eliminated. He added that it had to be done now, and in such a way that the people would support it. I was very upset, but still, I returned to Bethany with the rest of our group without saying anything.

**Joanna:** That was quite a night. Jesus decided to have dinner with Simon, the leper. Once again, he was breaking all the rules, and this time, all of us were joining him. Simon provided a great meal for everyone. Mary, Susanna, and I, along with some other women, helped Simon’s wife serve the food and drink. Everything went well, and we had just finished clearing the table when in walked a woman with a jar of
ointment of nard. Now, you know how expensive nard is and would you believe, she broke the jar and poured the oil on Jesus’ head. She never said a word to him or to anyone else, but as you can imagine, the rest of us had plenty to say.

Mary: We were really upset, even accusing her of wasting the oil instead of selling it and giving the money to the poor. But, once again, Jesus saw her action in a different light. He calmed us down and told us that she was preparing him for his burial. He saw beauty, love, and courage in her act, and he accepted it as a gift of love and compassion. He even said, “Truly I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her.” I was amazed and I think everyone else was, too. This woman—I still don’t know her name, even though I had seen her among us at times—defied every tradition regarding the behavior of a woman in the presence of men. It’s obvious that her action was well-planned and deliberate. She knew Jesus, and understood some things the rest of us had missed—by anointing Jesus, she thus proclaimed him the Messiah.

Ruth: Perhaps she really gave Jesus two gifts: the first, a gift of love and compassion; and the second, a gift of proclamation and prophecy. She was really a gutsy woman. She did what she felt was needed, and that takes courage and commitment. Have you seen her since?

Joanna: No, she disappeared that evening, and no one has seen her since. I am going to remember her for a number of things. I think she is a model of commitment, of faith, and of willingness to take a risk. She understands how to live a life of love in action in the midst of the pain and hurt of our community.

Mary: She certainly took a risk. She may or may not have known how Jesus would respond, but she knew that the men, and many of the women, in our group would not approve of her action. Yet she took the risk because she felt she had to do it for the sake of Jesus. She did what she could. She knew she probably couldn’t convince his followers, and certainly not the religious leaders, that he was the Messiah. Because she is a woman, she is voiceless in the public and private world of our society. Nevertheless, she did what she could and planned it well, used her resources, and succeeded. We need more women—and men—like her.

Joanna: I sincerely hope and pray that I have learned from this unknown woman what it means to be a follower of Jesus.
15-MINUTE BREAK
Narrator begins when people are back from break.

SECOND REFLECTION TIME

Narrator: Let’s interrupt this conversation for a few more minutes and reflect on what we have heard. Listen to the reading of Mark 14:3-9. (Read the story as printed in the participant’s manual.)

Let us enter into a period of silent prayer, thanking God for this woman, praying for yourself that you may model her commitment, and seeking guidance for the areas in your life that demand risk-taking and courage. (After period of silence.) Hear us in our prayers, in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Now please share briefly with your neighbor regarding the reflection questions found on page 18 in your manual.

Song: “Break Open the Jar” (page 61)

ACT III

Joanna: Now comes the most difficult part of our time spent with Jesus. After we left Bethany on that last morning, things started to happen very fast. Preparations were made for the Passover, which Jesus shared with us all. He was very subdued that evening, with a determination about him that I had never seen before. He told us that one of us would betray him—of course, as we all know now, that was Judas. He also told Peter that he would deny Jesus three times before that next morning. That, too, came to pass.

Mary: The most important thing that happened that evening was when, after dinner, Jesus took bread and broke it, and lifted the cup of wine and blessed it. He shared both the bread and the wine with all of us. He said that the bread represented his body and the wine, his blood. He told us that he was the new covenant. I didn’t understand it then, and even now, I do not fully understand it, but I know that Jesus was giving of himself for all of us. With the bread and wine, he was giving us a way of remembering him. I just hope that we continued to share in this covenant as he intended.
Ruth: Wasn’t Jesus arrested right after the Passover meal? I remember hearing that you all had gone to Gethsemane because Jesus wanted to pray. It was there that Judas betrayed him and then the guards took him away.

Mary: You are right. That was a terrible night. We followed a short distance behind Jesus and his captors. We were afraid, yet still wanted to be as near as possible. Everyone was alert to the slightest noise, question, or look. We were scared. We did not want to be arrested. It was during this time that Peter denied even knowing Jesus. That disappointed all of us, even though Jesus had told us it would happen, and, of course, Peter was crushed. In the morning, they took Jesus before Pontius Pilate, the local ruler for the Romans. I saw Jesus only at a distance, but even so, I could tell that the soldiers had beaten him during the night.

Joanna: I heard later that Jesus chose to neither affirm nor deny that he was the Messiah to Pilate. Pilate didn’t like that, of course, and he decided to turn him over to the crowd to determine his fate. I have also heard that the scribes and priests had prompted the crowd, so that they would yell, “Crucify him!” The small group of Jesus’ followers in that crowd were really upset, but there was nothing they could do. In fact, most of the crowd were not against Jesus, but no one could do anything to save him. I am certain that the ones crying for his death had been paid—someone must have promised them something. Whatever happened, they succeeded in convincing Pilate to have Jesus flogged and crucified.

Ruth: There was nothing you could have done. It must have been terrible, watching it all happen. The soldiers mocking him, whipping him, and, at the same time, the crowd yelling, “Crucify him.” I understand that Simon the Cyrene was forced to carry the cross up the hill. I can hardly talk about it and I wasn’t even there. Even so, I can imagine in my heart what happened.

Mary: Yes, Ruth, I pray I never experience something like that again. I had never seen a crucifixion. Such a cruel way to die, yet the Romans do this to all their so-called criminals. It is ugly, inhumane, and extremely brutal. Two small-time criminals were crucified at the same time as Jesus, and they suffered long, agonizing deaths. Jesus’ death came in just over three hours.

Joanna: I know that God was with him through it all. It was dark from noon until three. Jesus cried out for God, and God heard him, for he died shortly afterwards. I was weak and stunned. It was the beginning of a terribly long and sad Sabbath.
Mary: After Jesus’ death, Joseph of Arimathea was allowed to take his body from the cross, and then took it to his own tomb. Jesus’ mother, Mary, and I followed Joseph to the tomb, and saw that he wrapped Jesus in linen, laid him in the tomb, and then sealed the door with a huge stone. I felt as though the world had ended and Mary, of course, was distraught. We left the tomb together, and after I helped Mary into her house, I came back here. I spent the Sabbath weeping and crying out to God. There are really no words to describe my hurt, anger, sadness, and disappointment. Early on the day after the Sabbath, I decided that I would go to anoint Jesus’ body. It was only proper, and Jesus deserved a decent burial. I found several of the women, including Joanna, and we went to the cold, dark, burial grounds. Together, we walked slowly, but I was first at the tomb. Was I surprised! Someone had rolled aside the stone, the door was open, and the tomb was empty.

Joanna: I heard Mary cry out, and then she ran past us, calling out that she was going after Peter and John. Someone had taken Jesus’ body. We stopped, then stared in amazement at each other. We sat down to wait to see what would happen next. Sure enough, John arrived first, looked into the tomb and saw the linen wrappings, but no body. He didn’t go in. Then Peter came, and he entered the tomb, and saw that, indeed, it was empty. Neither man knew what had happened nor did they know what to do. Who could or would have taken Jesus’ body? They stood there talking to Mary for a little while, but soon decided that they could do nothing, left, and returned to their homes.

Mary: I was so mad! Those men wouldn’t help me look for Jesus’ body, nor go to the authorities. Alone, I stood outside the tomb, crying. Suddenly I noticed two angels inside the tomb. They asked me what was wrong. I told them in no uncertain terms that someone had taken Jesus, my Lord, and I needed to know where he was. Just then I saw a man walking nearby—perhaps the gardener. Maybe he knew where the body was. Loudly, I asked him where he had put the body.

Joanna: Oh, yes, she was really upset. The rest of us could hear her as we approached the tomb. Yet we hesitated to go nearer, because we were not sure what was happening.

Mary: Then, Ruth, the man called me by my name. He said, “Mary,” and I realized he was Jesus. Everything changed in that instant. Jesus was there, somehow not quite the same, but he was definitely there in the garden with me. He told me to go find the men and women of our group, his disciples, and to share with them his message of love, liberation, and unity, of hope, wholeness, and justice. He told
me, Mary of Magdala, to spread the good news of his resurrection. You bet I did just that, and continue to do so.

**Joanna:** Once again, Mary ran toward us. We heard her before we saw her, because she was laughing and crying at the same time. She was so excited. We stopped her long enough to hear her say that she had seen Jesus. Then on she went, to find Peter and John and the rest of our group, to share with them what Jesus had said to her.

**Mary:** It was quite a day. I could hardly believe what happened. The others had trouble believing what I had to say, too, but I did exactly what Jesus told me. I told the disciples everything Jesus said.

**Ruth:** I can vouch for your telling everyone. Before long, the word had spread through the village that Jesus was alive. Some believed you, and others thought you were crazy. When I heard your story I believed it, for I know you would never invent such a thing.

**Third Reflection Time**

**Narrator:** Let’s take another break at this point. What would have been your reaction to Mary’s story? What questions would you have asked? What would have been the determining factor in your belief of her story? The questions are found on pages 18-19 in your manual. Share with your neighbor briefly.

**Song:** “The First One Ever” (page 59)

**ACT IV**

**Mary:** Yes, I was the first person to see and experience the risen Lord. I am glad I was given that opportunity, but with it has come a great deal of responsibility. Every day since, I have been asked to retell the story. But I have also had to answer some difficult questions about how and why these things happened, and once even the local religious authorities tried to trick me into saying it was all a hoax. I don’t know all the answers, but I believed then, and I still do, that Jesus is with us all the time, even as we sit here talking.

**Joanna:** Ruth, that’s the other important event that took place. Several other times Jesus appeared to his disciples—to two of us who were going to Emmaus, to Simon, to all of us while we were in Jerusalem, to Thomas who doubted his resurrection until
Jesus showed him his wounds. Each time he appeared, he told us he would send a comforter to be with us at all times. His appearances took place during a span of about 40 days. He told us to stay in Jerusalem until the Feast of Pentecost.

Mary: We did just that. We found rooms with friends, and spent a lot of time in prayer and trying to understand just who and what Jesus was. At one time, he said something that has stuck with me: “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” This business of witnessing is my task and responsibility from here on. I must tell others my story for I have experienced God’s power.

Joanna: You are right, Mary. We must all—all of us who are followers of Jesus—be witnesses to what God has done in our lives and in the world. Remember that Jesus left us soon after he said those words. Somehow, we were different, calmer, and ready for what would happen to us and around us. Peter even assumed some leadership and Matthias replaced Judas. Mary, Jesus’ mother, was with us through it all. Everyone cared for her, but she is a strong woman, and was soon offering prayers, and interpreting what Jesus had said. Then, when Pentecost came…

Ruth: I was there. I saw it and experienced the wind, the fire, and everyone talking in their own language. It was marvelous. Jesus was right. The Holy Spirit came upon everyone and we were all blessed.

Mary: The comforter, the Holy Spirit, the sense of God’s presence—whatever you want to call the spirit we sensed—came, but it also laid responsibility on each of us. It means that we must witness and tell the story of Jesus. I think the work has just begun. Pentecost was just last week, and already, preaching and teaching is being done in the name of Jesus. Our energy and resources are needed to do what Jesus commanded. We are to witness today and always.

Joanna: I’m ready.

Ruth: I’m ready, too. May God help us and may the Holy Spirit be with us as we witness to the good news of Jesus, the Christ.
Fourth Reflection Time

Narrator: Let us thank Mary, Ruth, and Joanna for sharing with us. I think they have set the stage for us to further examine our role as resurrection women. Let us pray together the unison prayer found on page 19 in your manual.

Now it is time for each of us to do some reflection on what we have heard and seen. In your manual you will find a series of reflections on pages 20 and 21. Please find a pen and paper, and let’s spend the next 15 minutes in silent reflection around these questions and remarks.

Leader: It has been a good morning. We thank God for this time.
(At this point announcements may need to be made and the noon prayer given.)

Session 3

Optional Activities:

The mission coordinator for spiritual growth or someone else needs to collect all the materials needed for the various optional activities listed below. She should have women within the conference donate the materials and bring them to the retreat. The items listed under each activity are the things needed for that activity.

1. Individual Reflection Time

Included in the participant’s manual are seven individual reflection pieces. The individual may choose one or more of the pieces for their own reflection and may choose where they want to do it. Remind people that this is an individual activity.

2. Life-Mapping Activity

Instructions are given in the participant’s manual. Multiple colored pencils, pens, or markers are needed.

3. Meditation Centers

Three rooms are to be prepared. Each should contain five to six chairs and one or more small tables. Light should be sufficient for reading. No more than six persons should be in each room at a time. Silence is essential. A poster should be prepared listing suggested scriptures for meditation in each room. Another poster should be prepared listing suggested
hymns for meditation around each topic. Have six Bibles and six United Methodist Hymnals in each room. The pictures should be matted and placed around the room.

**THE CROSS**

**Scriptures:**


**Hymns:** All are in The United Methodist Hymnal

“’Tis Finished! The Messiah Dies” ............... No. 282

“O Sacred Head, Now Wounded” .............. No. 286

“Were You There” ........................... No. 288

“In the Cross of Christ I Glory” ................. No. 295

“Beneath the Cross of Jesus”................... No. 297

**Pictures:** Have pictures of Christ on the cross.

**THE RESURRECTION**

**Scriptures:**


**Hymns:** All are in The United Methodist Hymnal

“Christ the Lord Is Risen Today” .............. No. 302

“The Day of Resurrection” ........................No. 303

“Camina, Pueblo de Dios” ...................... No. 305

“Thine Be the Glory” ........................... No. 308

“He Lives” ...................................... No. 310

“In the Garden” ................................. No. 314

**Pictures:** Have pictures of Jesus and his resurrection. The picture on page 40 could be matted and placed on the wall of the room.
PENTECOST

Scriptures: Acts 2

Hymns:
All are in The United Methodist Hymnal
“Filled with the Spirit’s Power” ....................No. 537
“Wind Who Makes All Winds That Blow” ........No. 538
“See How Great a Flame Aspires” ...............No. 541
“O Breath of Life” ...............................No. 543
“Like the Murmur of the Dove’s Song ..........No. 544

4. Labyrinth Walk:
A labyrinth is a tool for meditation and reflection. It has been in existence for some 4,000 years and has become a symbol of life and wholeness. The labyrinth is often confused with a maze, which requires the solving of a problem/puzzle. In contrast, the labyrinth is a path into the center of the design and back out again. To enter a labyrinth is to embark on a journey that represents one’s spiritual journey. Along the way time should be taken for prayer for an open heart and a willingness to serve God. The labyrinth walk should be done deliberately and unrushed. It should be done with a mind open to the will of God. The labyrinth walk is a sacred journey.

5. Creative Expression:
Have a conference person assemble a variety of supplies that can be used for creative expression. Included might be colored paper, crayons, markers, fabric, paints, drawing/painting paper, clay, scissors, sewing thread, and needles, etc. Someone should be assigned to work with the women who choose this activity to assist them in finding what they need. Women may work alone or in groups of two or three. The focus should be on the theme Resurrection Women.

PLENARY SESSION 2:30 P.M.

Gathering Songs:

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<tr>
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<td>“Hallelujah, Christ Is Risen!”</td>
<td>4-5</td>
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DEBRIEFING OF OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Leader: Please spend the next 15 minutes in groups of three to four persons sharing your insights, learnings, questions, etc. from your optional time. Allow each person in your group time to share. You will not need to report back to the total group.

DVD: A DVD entitled “Resurrection Road” will be shown at this time. A study guide for the DVD is inside the jacket of the DVD.

CLOSING HYMN

“As a Fire Is Meant for Burning” (page 2237, The Faith We Sing)

SESSION 4

HYMN SING

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<td>“Surely the Presence of the Lord”</td>
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<td>“Lord, We Need Bread”</td>
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<td>“Nurtured by the Spirit”</td>
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<td>“Tino Tenda Jesu”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Guide My Feet”</td>
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VISIONS OF JUSTICE

Have the CD “Make Plain the Vision, Songs of Women” ready for use. On that CD is the segment entitled “Visions of Justice” (Segment 6). Have a CD player provided by the conference and hook it up in such a way as to provide good amplification. Have the entire group listen to this segment and do the reflections found in the participant’s manual. Allow about five minutes for individual reflection and then do the group sharing, as suggested.
Characteristics of Resurrection Women

During the next 20 minutes, we want to concentrate on the characteristics or attributes of resurrection women in today’s world. Have each woman write a one-sentence description of a resurrection woman. Encourage the participants to recall the biblical stories from the drama and the video segments as a basis for their understanding of a resurrection woman. The writing should be done individually and then shared in small groups of five to seven persons. Each group should put its list on paper in order to share with the entire group. (Be sure to provide paper and markers for each group.)

Once the groups seem to be finished, bring them back together to share their lists. Hopefully included in the lists will be some of the following:

- Risk taker
- Lives out of a faith perspective
- Committed to participating in God’s mission
- Seeker and worker for justice
- Open heart, open mind
- Welcomes diversity and is comfortable with it
- Spiritually growing
- Witness in word and/or deed
- Open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit

If some of the above are not included in any of the lists, build them into your own summary as possible additions. Be careful that the list does not become too idealized, thus leaving some women feeling that they are not resurrection women.

If possible, have the final list compiled and duplicated overnight, so that each participant can take a copy home.

Praying with Icons

Individual Meditation:

This particular activity will be entirely new to most participants. Therefore, time needs to be taken prior to the time of individual meditation to explain the concept of an icon. The following material from the June 2002 column, “Responsively Yours,” in Response, can help the participants understand the use of icons in the Orthodox tradition. Put these ideas into
your own words and share them with the group. Then move into a period of individual silent meditation (five minutes). The icon to be used is on page 25 of the participant’s manual.

Icons have a unique place in the prayer life of Orthodox Christians. An icon is a stylized symbol, a sign, an abstract scheme. It is not meant to be a resemblance, but a means of grace for the believer. Icons are made during a time of fasting and prayer, and the painter is seen as a tool of God. For those who use icons in their prayer life, the icon becomes a way to see into and beyond the image, to see God and to receive God’s grace, strength, help, and healing.

GROUP REFLECTION

In small groups have the participants reflect on the three questions in the manual. You might ask for feedback on the second question from anyone who would like to share.

CREATION OF AN “ICON COLLAGE”

Needed for this are scissors, glue, copies of *Response* and *New World Outlook*, other magazines, and poster board. You also might have available crayons or markers in case a group wants to use them. Each individual should also have a picture of herself that she is willing to contribute to the collage. (In the pre-retreat mailing, each individual should be asked to bring a picture of herself that will not be returned. (For those who forget, be prepared to take a Polaroid/digital camera picture early in the retreat.)

In small groups, the participants are to create an “icon collage,” which communicates the qualities of resurrection women in mission. The individual pictures should be incorporated in the collage.

Allow about 20 to 25 minutes for this and then display the “icon collage.” Ask people to walk silently from icon to icon and meditate on what they see and/or feel.

Have the group share their insights from what they have seen.

CLOSING PRAYERS

Have this led by two participants as found in the participant’s manual.
SESSION 5

HYMN SING

<table>
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<td>&quot;Here I Am, Lord&quot;</td>
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MORNING PRAYER

Since there is a major worship experience in this session, the morning prayer can be limited to the birthdays, countries, and programs listed in the *Prayer Calendar* for this day.

MISSION OPPORTUNITIES

In small groups, have the participants answer the question, “Where are resurrection women needed today?” Have them list 10 to 12 of these places, programs, issues, concerns, etc. This should be done in a short period of time. Then share the lists in popcorn fashion, with several women scattered around the room putting the items on paper as they are reported. The printing on the paper should be large so that it can be read.

After all items have been named, move into a period of silent prayer for the items listed. After about two minutes of silence, ask each participant to identify in her own mind her own point of witness/service from the lists. This should be something that could be done in the next six to twelve months. Each participant should write this in her book and on a 3 x 5-inch card, then continue in prayer. Close the time with a simple “Amen.”

TOOLS FOR THE RESURRECTION ROAD

Divide the group into groups of four to five people and assign each small group one or more of the “tools” listed below. Each group is then given 10 minutes to prepare a skit on how the resource can be used to assist us on our resurrection road.

- Bible
• Prayer, including the *Prayer Calendar*
• Daily time with God
• Bibliography on mission
• Reading Program
• *New World Outlook* and *Response*
• Justice action opportunities (select several that are important today). Include Women’s Division *Action Alerts*.
• Giving opportunities: volunteer work and financial giving
• Wesley’s list of disciplines, including fasting
• Supportive community group/unit
• Web site of United Methodist Women (www.unitedmethodistwomen.org)
• Women’s Division (www.umwmission.org)
• On-Line Communities, Facebook, and Twitter

Have presentations made by each group and have fun doing it. This is serious, but also can be done in a lighthearted manner.

**Closing Service of Commitment**

The service is clearly outlined in the participant’s manual. Note that the worship center contains symbols of the “tools” used in the previous exercise. Select at least four women to participate in the service.

**Offering:** At this point, participants should bring their 3 x 5-inch cards (point of witness/service) to the worship center. If the group is large and/or movement is restricted, pass offering plates to receive the cards and then present them at the worship center.

**Service of Bread and Water:** One or more stations for serving the bread and water should be established prior to the service. At the stations should be a plate of small pieces of bread and small paper cups of water. An attendant should be assigned to each station to refill the bread plate or pour more water. Persons should go to the stations in pairs and serve each other.

*Example:* A and B go to the station. A gives B a piece of bread and says, “When I was hungry…” and B responds, “You gave me something to eat.” B then gives A a piece of bread and says, “When I was hungry…” and A responds, “You gave me something to eat.” A then gives B a cup of water and says, “When I was thirsty…”
and B responds, “You gave me something to drink.” B then gives A a cup of water and says, “When I was thirsty…” and A responds, “You gave me something to drink.” Both women then return to their seats.

This is not a quick process, so enough time and plenty of stations should be provided. During the process, the hymn, “Lord, We Need Bread” (page 48), should be sung, and if the group is large, the song leader should indicate several other songs to sing.

*The print on the following page is provided for framing.* Go in Peace!
Empty Tomb on Resurrection Morning

The entrance of a replica of the tomb where Jesus was buried with the stone rolled away. http://www.istockphoto.com/stock-photo-68974561-entrance-to-the-tomb-php
MINI RESURRECTION WOMEN RETREAT

A THREE-HOUR RETREAT

OPENING WORSHIP

Call to Worship: Psalm 8 on page 743-44 in UMH
Hymn: “Morning Has Broken” #145 UMH
Prayer: Dear God, we are thankful for this day.
   We are blessed with your presence and we thank you.
   We thank you for health and healing…
   We thank you for friends and families…
   We thank you for food and shelter…
   We thank you for the beauty of your creation…
   We thank you for the resurrection of Jesus…
   We thank you for all who have witnessed to that resurrection…
   May our time with you today be holy and renewing.
   In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen

PART 1: (ABOUT 1 HOUR)

BIBLICAL MONOLOGUE

Setting: One comfortable chair with a pitcher of water and a glass on a small table
Costume: A plain one-color piece of material that can be used as a head scarf
Cast: Mary Magdalene

Audience is to imagine that they are friends of Mary, visiting in her home and listening to her story.
ACT I

My, it is good to be able to sit down and visit. It’s been a difficult and busy time since Pentecost and I am so tired. Why I said I would tell my story about Jesus today, I don’t know, but here we are and I think I need to get started. Is everybody comfortable? Great!

So let’s start at the beginning.

About three years ago, Joanna (she’s the wife of Chuza, Herod’s steward) and I were invited to go with our friend, Susanna, to hear Jesus. Both Joanna and I were experiencing some hard times with depression and illness, and I am sure Susanna saw this outing as a way to get our minds off our troubles. Through a friend’s invitation, we both were able to start our lives anew, for we were healed! Since then our lives have been simplified and we have become stronger, and able to work through our problems. Listening to Jesus has allowed us to find new directions for our lives. On that first day, we became disciples. We have heard his stories, we follow his teachings, and our lives have been renewed.

We became part of a group of women that journeyed with Jesus. We assisted in finding lodging and food, in controlling the crowds, and in bringing the sick and needy to Jesus. We were daily companions, doing what women must do in our society, but also receiving strong affirmations of our abilities to understand the teachings of Jesus. We heard his stories, observed his healings, and experienced his questioning of the religious authorities.

There is one experience that I especially want to tell you about today. Jesus decided to go through Samaria on his way back to Galilee. Who knows why he chose to go that way, since everyone knows that most Jews despise the Samaritans. Jesus was tired and sat down at Jacob’s Well, near Sychar, while the men went to get food and we women sat under the trees.

Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water. Now you know that a Jewish man should not ask a Samaritan woman for a drink, but Jesus did. Goodness, he broke two laws just like that—he talked to a woman and he asked a Samaritan for a drink. This woman was smart, and she asked Jesus why he was asking her for water. She also knew he shouldn’t. However, they continued to talk, and soon it became a theological discussion about Jacob, the value of Jacob’s water, and the value of the “living water” that Jesus offers. This woman was not bashful or shy, and she persisted in questioning him.
I was really surprised when I heard Jesus ask her to get her husband and she told him she had no husband. Then Jesus said that she had had five husbands. Now those of us sitting around were really shocked and began to speculate as to why she was at the well in the heat of the day. Some thought she was a sinner and shunned by the village women, while others thought she was tired of being harassed by the community for being barren. We never did learn her true situation, but it made no difference to Jesus. They continued their conversation and talked about places of worship, how to worship, proper attitudes in worship, and Jesus’ vision of the world.

Well, when the men arrived with the food you can imagine their surprise to hear the woman say: “I know that the Messiah is coming who is called Christ,” and Jesus responded immediately: “I am he.” When she heard that, the woman ran into the village to tell her neighbors, urging them to come and see Jesus, the Messiah. Of course then the place got really crowded, and we ended up spending two days in that village. Many of the people became his followers, and some even joined us for the rest of our journey.

Stop for discussion and reflection.

**QUESTIONS**

**Self reflection:**
1. When has Jesus shared “living water” with you?
2. What part of my life is dry and thirsty today?

**Group discussion:**
3. Who do I see as an outcast today? How can we share the Gospel with them?

**ACT II**

There is so much I could tell you about our three years with Jesus, but we have limited time so I have decided to move right into the resurrection story. But first let me remind you of the story about that unnamed woman who poured a whole jar of nard on Jesus while he was dining with Simon early in the week of Passover. All of us were upset with her, but Jesus saw her anointing him as a gift of love and compassion, and a gift of proclamation and prophecy. She took a great risk because she felt she had to anoint Jesus for the sake of Jesus. She knew he was the Messiah and she understood how to live a life of love in action in the midst of the pain and hurt. She was a committed woman.

Now, back to that terrible week after the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. I will not dwell on it, but just say that I do not want to experience any more crucifixions. It is a cruel way to die and should not happen to anyone!
After Jesus’ death, Joseph of Arimathea took his body to a tomb. Jesus’ mother, Mary and I followed Joseph to the tomb, and saw that he wrapped Jesus in linen, laid him in the tomb, and sealed the door with a huge stone. Mary was distraught and I helped her to her home. I spent the Sabbath weeping and crying out to God. I was angry, hurt, sad, and disappointed. Early the day after the Sabbath, I decided to go to the tomb with several of my friends. To our surprise the stone was rolled aside, the door was open, and the tomb was empty.

Now I was mad, and ran to find Peter and John. All they did was run to the tomb, look in, and agree with my assessment. Men! They didn’t know what happened, or what to do, so they left. They wouldn’t even help me look for Jesus’ body or go to the authorities. Alone, I stood outside the tomb, crying. Suddenly two angels appeared inside the tomb. They asked me what was wrong. I told them in no uncertain terms that someone had taken Jesus, and I needed to know where he was.

Just then I saw a man walking nearby—perhaps the gardener. Maybe he knew where the body was. Loudly I asked him where he had put the body. And then he called me by my name. He said, “Mary,” and I realized he was Jesus. Everything changed in that instant. Jesus was there, somehow not quite the same, but he was definitely there in the garden with me. He told me to go find the men and women of our group, his disciples, and to share with them his message of love, liberation, of unity; of hope, wholeness, and justice. He told me, Mary of Magdala, to spread the good news of his resurrection. You bet I did just that, and continue to do so. Before long the word had spread through the village that Jesus was alive. Some believed me and others thought I was crazy.

Stop for discussion and reflection.

Questions for Reflection
1. How would you have reacted to Mary’s story?
2. What questions would you have asked?
3. What would have been the determining factor for you to have believed the story?

Recall with the group that the stories of the Resurrection within the Gospels are not the same. In some of the stories Mary is accompanied by several other women. It was from these stories that Charles Wesley wrote his hymn, “Hallelujah, Christ is Risen!” It is here that we get the term “Resurrection Women.” Let us read or sing this hymn together.

Hymn: “Hallelujah, Christ is Risen!”
ACT III

Yes, I was the first person to see and experience the risen Lord. I am glad I was given that opportunity, but with it has come a great deal of responsibility. Every day since, I have been asked to retell the story. But, I have also had to answer some difficult questions about how and why these things happened, and once even the local religious authorities tried to trick me into saying it was all a hoax. I don’t know all the answers, but I believed then, and I still do, that Jesus is with us all the time, even as we sit here talking.

Jesus appeared several other times to his disciples and the rest of his followers. He told us he was going to send a comforter to be with us. He also told us to stay in Jerusalem until the Feast of Pentecost and this we did. We spent a lot of time in prayer and trying to understand just who and what Jesus was. At one time he said something that has stuck with me: “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” This business of witnessing is my task and responsibility from here on for I have experienced God’s power.

Jesus left us soon after he said those powerful words. We all were different, calmer, and ready for what would happen to us and around us. Peter assumed some leadership and Matthias replaced Judas. And then came Pentecost—what a day that was! There was wind, fire, and everyone talking in their own language. It was marvelous and the Holy Spirit came upon everyone and we were blessed.

O yes, the comforter, the Holy Spirit, the sense of God’s presence—whatever you want to call the spirit we sensed—came, but it also laid responsibility on each of us. It means we must witness and tell the story of Jesus. I think the work has just begun. Pentecost was just a few weeks ago, and already, preaching and teaching is being done in the name of Jesus. Our energy and resources are needed to do what Jesus commanded. We are to witness today and always.

Stop for discussion and reflection.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. Where do you see yourself in these stories that have been shared?
2. Has your faith been challenged and if so how?
3. How does the gift of the Holy Spirit enable me to witness and to participate in God’s mission today?
PART 2 (ABOUT 1 HOUR)

JUSTICE WORK

Using the CD “Make Plain the Vision: Voices of Women,” play for the entire group segment 6, entitled “Visions of Justice.” Make sure that the CD player is adequately amplified so that everyone can hear. Have the issues below posted somewhere in the room.

Issues addressed in the songs:
- Women’s suffrage
- Labor organizing
- Slavery
- Temperance movement
- Legislative responsibilities of elected officials
- Women’s movement
- Civil rights movement

At the completion of the segment, identify the songs sung with the issue it depicts. Then have the group reflect on the following questions. This can be done individually, in groups of 2-3, or with the entire group, depending on the size of the group. If it is done in smaller groups, allow time for feedback and sharing.

1. How is addressing these issues “witnessing to Jesus” and being in mission?
2. Which of the songs really spoke to you?
3. How can music help to motivate people to be in mission?
4. Where, when, and how have you been involved in similar issues?

CHARACTERISTICS OF RESURRECTION WOMEN

During the next 20 minutes, we want to concentrate on the characteristics or attributes of resurrection women in today’s world. Have each woman write a one-sentence description of a resurrection woman of today. Encourage the participants to recall the biblical stories they have heard today as well as the stories behind the songs that they have just heard.

The writing should be done individually and then shared in small groups. The goal is to list the characteristics/attributes/attitudes of resurrection women. Then the lists should be shared with the entire group.
Hopefully included in the list will be some of the following:

- Risk taker
- Lives out of a faith perspective
- Committed to participating in God’s mission
- Seeker and worker for justice
- Open heart, open mind
- Welcomes diversity and is comfortable with it
- Spiritually growing
- Witnesses in word and/or deed
- Open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit

Be careful that the list does not become too idealized, thus leaving some women feeling that they are not resurrection women.

**Praying with Icons**

Have in several places in the room pictures of the icon. [Note: This icon will need to be part of the materials available for this retreat and it is easily duplicated.] Read or say in your own words the content of the paragraph below since this activity will be new to most of the participants. Then have a period in which each person is looking at the icon in silent meditation (no more than 5 minutes), followed by small group discussion of the following three questions:

1. What did you see in the icon?
2. What qualities are communicated by the icon?
3. How do you see resurrection in the icon?

Depending on the availability of time, you might have each group share their responses to the second question.

“The practice of praying with icons comes from the Orthodox tradition. Icons have a unique place in the prayer life of Orthodox Christians. An icon is a stylized symbol, a sign, an abstract scheme. It is not meant to be a resemblance, but a means of grace for the believer. Icons are made during a time of fasting and prayer, and the painter is seen as a tool of God. For those who use icons in their prayer life, the icon becomes a way to see into and beyond the image, to see God and to receive God’s grace, strength, help, and healing.”

“Responsively Yours” in Response, June 2002.
PART 3 (ABOUT 1 HOUR)

MISSION TODAY

In small groups answer the question: Where are resurrection women needed today? You might rephrase the question to read: Where are resurrection women needed today in your local community, in your state, in our nation?

Make a list of the places/programs/issues/concerns, etc. in popcorn fashion from the groups. You can do this using several list writers if the group is large.

Determine if any particular item on the list needs further explanation and if so try to provide it. Then have a period of silent prayer for the items listed. After the prayer time ask each participant to identify in her own mind her own point of witness/service from the lists. Try to be specific including a time frame of no more than a year. Each person should write her item on a 3 x 5-inch card and keep it for use later in the retreat.

TOOLS FOR THE ROAD

Assign a group of 2-5 people one or more of the tools listed below for them to prepare a brief skit on how the resource can be used to assist us on our resurrection road.

- Bible
- Prayer including the Prayer Calendar
- Daily devotions
- Reading Program including Response and New World Outlook
- Justice action opportunities (select several that are important today from the Web site)
- Giving opportunities: volunteer work and financial giving
- Supportive community group
- Web site of United Methodist Women and other technological resources

Enjoy hearing and seeing the skits.
CLOSING SERVICE OF COMMITMENT

Worship Center

Place on a table a brightly colored cloth and a lit large candle. Also place on the side of the table or on a nearby table a plate of small pieces of bread, a pitcher of water, and small cups.

The Gathering

As the group sings “Have Thine Own Way, Lord” (#382 UMH), have the items used in the tools activity brought to the altar and placed there in an attractive manner.

Call to Worship

Leader: As the women brought spices to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus
All: may we also be the bearers of compassion and care.

Leader: As the women who came to the tomb were witnesses of the Resurrection
All: may we also be witnesses.

Leader: As the women left eagerly to tell what they had seen,
All: may we also be eager to share the love of Jesus that we have experienced.

Leader: As the Resurrection reminds us…
All: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Hymn

“Hallelujah, Christ Is Risen!”

Scripture

Acts 2:1-12

Proclamation of Power (in unison)

Jesus’ crucifixion left us with sadness and sorrow, but his resurrection gives us hope and renews our faith. Pentecost and the precious gift of the Holy Spirit give us power for the journey. We have been saved by faith and are empowered to witness to God at work, in our lives, and in our world.
Narrative (This can be read by one or more people.)

Jesus’ true identity became known in the breaking of the bread and in prayer following the walk to Emmaus. Whom do we welcome? Do we find Jesus in unexpected places?

On the beach in the early morning, Jesus’ identity became known to his disciples who were fishermen as he gave them fishing advice and prepared them breakfast. Do we meet people where they are? Do we understand their livelihoods? Whom do we invite to our tables?

At the tomb, Mary Magdalene was distraught. Thomas wasn’t present at one of Jesus’ appearances and he needed proof. Peter was still dealing with having denied Jesus. To each of these people Jesus brought hope, faith, and loving forgiveness. Whom do we know who needs these messages?

Now we will share in a service of bread and water. These simple elements are essential to survival. They remind us of the words of Jesus, “When I was hungry…” and “When I was thirsty….” Jesus also told us that he was the bread of life and the source of living water. Do we hear the voices of those who are hungry? Do we hear the cries of those who are thirsty?

Service of Bread and Water

Let us come forward now, quietly considering the questions we have just heard and our experiences of this retreat. Let us bring and place on the altar our own point of witness/service that we identified earlier and wrote on the card.

Serve each other in pairs. When sharing the bread, the person giving says, “When I was hungry…” and the person receiving says, “You gave me something to eat.” When sharing the water, the person giving says, “When I was thirsty…” and the person receiving says, “You gave me something to drink.”

Closing Prayer (in unison)

Like the disciples in Jesus’ day, men and women, old and young, rich and poor, tax collector and fisherman, we join in fulfilling Jesus’ invitation to be fishers of people. We offer ourselves to God as resurrection women—women who will share the message of Jesus’ love within our sphere of influence, through our point of witness and service. Empower us, O Holy Spirit, to be bold in the faith. Amen
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:
THEOLOGY OF MISSION


__________. *Traditional Beliefs of United Methodists*. (Span. M3057, $3.00; Kor. M3058, $3.00; English M3011, $5.00; Mission Resource Center.)

Dharmaraj, Glory E. *Concepts of Mission*. New York: General Board of Global Ministries, The United Methodist Church. (Spanish #2992, $1.00; English #2820, $7.50; Mission Resource Center.)


General Board of Global Ministries. *Reflect, Rekindle, Renew: Meditations Shared By Deaconesses and Home Missionaries*. (#2943, $4.00, Mission Resource Center.)


RESOURCES

The following resources are available from the Mission Resource Center or Cokesbury at the indicated prices plus postage and handling. See last page for ordering information.

Century + in Mission United Methodist Women Learning CD-Rom
(#3635) Mission Resource Center ........................................ $35.00

*Global Praise 1:
Songbook (#2572) Mission Resource Center ............................... $12.95
CD (#2565) Mission Resource Center .................................. $12.95

*Global Praise 2:
Songbook (#2918) Mission Resource Center ............................... $12.95
CD (#2921) Mission Resource Center .................................. $12.95

*Global Praise 3:
Songbook (#3650) Mission Resource Center ............................... $14.95
CD (#3638) Mission Resource Center .................................. $12.95

Make Plain the Vision, Songs of Women
CD (#2747) Mission Resource Center ................................ $12.95

Poster, Purpose of United Methodist Women
(M3062) Mission Resource Center ........................................ $1.50

Prayer Calendar. Mission Resource Center ................................ $11.00

“Resurrection Road” DVD (M3066) Mission Resource Center ........ $9.00

(Eng. #3849; Span. #3659; Kor. #3658) Mission Resource Center ................ $4.50

*Sing The Wondrous Love of Jesus: Women Hymn Writers and their Songs
by Joyce D. Sohl. General Board of Global Ministries, The United Methodist
Church, 2003 (#2409) Mission Resource Center ............................ $15.95

Ten Best Books on the History of United Methodist Women CD Rom
(#2829) Mission Resource Center ........................................ $40.00

“Through the Corridors of Mission” DVD (M3025) Mission Resource Center .... $4.99

*These items are also available at Cokesbury,
A United Methodist Women Web Resource Produced by the Women’s Division
General Board of Global Ministries
The United Methodist Church

For resources, please mail order with check payable to:
Mission Resource Center
1221 Profit Drive
Dallas, TX 75247-3919

To shop online:
WEB ADDRESS: www.missionresourcecenter.org
Call toll-free 1-800-305-9857

To order from Cokesbury, see address/phone below:
Cokesbury
201 Eighth Avenue, South
P.O. Box 801, Nashville, TN 37203-3919
1-800-672-1789