UNITED METHODIST WOMEN 2015-2016
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT DAYS

Leaders’ Guide

Preparation for All Worship Services and Plenaries

The following worship/plenaries were created for Leadership Development Days 2015-2016. They have been edited and adapted for members’ use as stand-alone themes with an outline, script and presentation slides.

If songs are to be projected on the screen, you must get copyright permission from the publisher.
Theme: Esther—Called to Lead for Such a Time as This

Purpose:

Discerning our unique call to leadership as United Methodist Women in the midst of concerns and critical social issues of our day.

Gathering Music—Please refer to the list of gathering music songs

Call to Worship—Identify a facilitator/leader

Sing

“Blessed Assurance,” The United Methodist Hymnal, 369

Scripture Reading: Esther 4:1-17

*To invite greater participation, assign a scripture reader and divide the group by the characters in Esther’s story. Whenever one of the characters is mentioned in the text, the reader pauses for each respective group to shout the following phrases:

Mordecai—“Great uncle!”
King—“All hail the king!”
Hathach, slaves, servants, maids, eunuchs—“Still resisting slavery!”
Esther/Queen—“For such a time as this!”
Haman—“Wicked man!”

Silent Reflection

*Take a moment to pause for silent reflection.

Reflection Questions

What time is this?
What is happening in your own community, country, or world that concerns you?
Where do you have opportunities to lead?

*Depending on the size of your group, you are welcome to use the accompanying handout titled “Leadership for Such a Time as This” for individual reflection. You have the option to then invite brief sharing in pairs, smaller groups (3-5 people), or short phrases in a large group setting depending on time allotted.

Prayer
Song

“O Lord Hear My Prayer,” *The Faith We Sing*, 2200

Benediction

Song

“Lift Every Voice and Sing,” *The United Methodist Hymnal*, 519

Theme: Esther—Personal and Collective Power

Purpose:

Worship explores how each character in Esther’s story understood his or her personal power, agency and influence given their varying proximity to the king and his throne and their varying influence within the community of faith. Likewise, participants are invited to examine their own power in society, be it professional, political, race or class privilege, historical and current influence as the collective body of United Methodist Women.

Gathering Music—Please refer to the list of gathering music songs

Call to Worship

Sing

“Be Thou My Vision,” *The United Methodist Hymnal*, 451

Community Prayer

Sing

“Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying,” *The Faith We Sing*, 2193

Scripture Reading: Esther 3:1-15

*To invite greater participation, assign a scripture reader and divide the group by the characters in Esther’s story. Whenever one of the characters is mentioned in the text, the reader pauses for each respective group to shout the following phrases:

Mordecai—"Great uncle!"
King—"All hail the king!"
Hathach, slaves, servants, maids, eunuchs—"Still resisting slavery!"
Esther/Queen—"For such a time as this!"
Haman—"Wicked man!"
Silent Reflection

*Take a moment to pause for silent reflection.

Sing

“I’m Gonna Live So God Can Use Me,” *The Faith We Sing*, 2153

Reflection Questions & Discussion

Power in Esther’s Story
*You are welcome to use the accompanying handout titled “Who Has the Power?” for individual reflection. Emphasize this moment will be used to examine how each character utilized their personal, familial, communal, political, or positional power to change, impact, or influence their situation. You have the option to then invite brief sharing in pairs, smaller groups (3-5 people), or short phrases in a large group setting depending on time allotted.

My Own Power
After examining power in the text, invite participants to examine the power they possess within as a person, a member of their family, job, church, political party, racial group, or socio-economic background. Invite them to use the back of the handout in the “Personal Assessment” section. Again, depending on time, participants are welcome to share aloud a few of their personal reflections.

Defining Power
Identify someone to present the definition and examples of power, its use for good and how it is abused/misused.

Our Power as United Methodist Women
Invite the group to think about collective power within United Methodist Women. Ask the group about how United Methodist Women have used their collective power to impact the lives of women, children, and youth for the better. If needed, you may prompt by asking, “What about collective purchasing power? Economic power? Institutional power? How has United Methodist Women influenced the greater Church through Mission u, National Mission Institutions, etc.?”

*Short Film*

“The League of Extraordinary Methodist Women”

Play YouTube video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UL-iXCJuaYU

Benediction
Closing Song or Hymn
“Be Thou My Vision,” The United Methodist Hymnal, 451

Theme: Esther—Building Power as Allies

Purpose:
In this reading of Esther, participants are encouraged to examine the risks Esther, Mordecai, and their community undertook to prevent and protect their people from violence and harm. Participants will also examine what it means to be an ally in God’s kingdom and how power is shared for the common good.

Gathering Music—Please refer to the list of gathering music songs

Scripture Reading: Esther 5:1-8

*To invite greater participation, assign a scripture reader and divide the group by the characters in Esther’s story. Whenever one of the characters is mentioned in the text, the reader pauses for each respective group to shout the following phrases:

Mordecai—“Great uncle!”
King—“All hail the king!”
Hathach, slaves, servants, maids, eunuchs—“Still resisting slavery!”
Esther/Queen—“For such a time as this!”
Haman—“Wicked man!”

Silent Reflection
*Take a moment to pause for silent reflection.

Reflection Questions

*You have the option to invite brief sharing in pairs, smaller groups (3-5 people), or opening the questions to the entire group depending on your group size and the time allotted.

Good rule of thumb is that if the group is larger than 10-12 people, breaking up into pairs or small groups allows more participation and interaction.

Why do you think Esther proposes a banquet instead of immediately petitioning the king with her pressing concern? (Group setting depending on time allotted.)
Sing

“We’ve Come This Far by Faith,” Songs of Zion, 192, Abingdon Press

Scripture Reading: Esther 6:1-3, 11, 14; 7:1-7

*You are welcome to continue with the participatory reading style outlined above.

Reflection Questions

What impact do you think serving not just one, but two meals may have had in influencing the king to lend his ear to Esther and ally with her, Mordecai and her people?
How does Esther ask her people to support her? How are they her allies?
What qualities of an ally do you notice in the text?

*You may want to compile a list from the group on newsprint or sheet of paper. Invite members to commit deepening one of these qualities as a spiritual practice.

Theme: Esther—Preparing for Leadership

Purpose:

Participants in this worship will reflect on not only Esther’s story of courage but on the courage of those who supported her efforts to save her people. Participants will identify both the roadblocks that may arise as well as the supports they will need when answering the call to leadership.

Gathering Music—Please refer to the list of gathering music songs

Opening Song

“Heleluyan,” The United Methodist Hymnal, 78

Call to Worship

Sing

“We Wa Wa Wa Emimimo,” The Faith We Sing, 2124

Congregational Prayer
Scripture Reading: Esther 4:1-17

*To invite greater participation, assign a scripture reader and divide the group by the characters in Esther’s story. Whenever one of the characters is mentioned in the text, the reader pauses for each respective group to shout the following phrases:

Mordecai—“Great uncle!”
King—“All hail the king!”
Hathach, slaves, servants, maids, eunuchs—“Still resisting slavery!”
Esther/Queen—“For such a time as this!”
Haman—“Wicked man!”

Silent Reflection

*Take a moment to pause for silent reflection.

Reflection Questions

Esther’s Support
What supporters did Esther have?
What were their names, positions and how did they support her?
What did she do to prepare for this call to lead “for such a time as this”?

*You have the option to invite first brief sharing in pairs, smaller groups (3-5 people), or posing the questions to the entire group depending on your group size and the time allotted. Good rule of thumb is that if the group is larger than 10-12 people, breaking up into pairs or small groups allows more participation and interaction. If time permits and you want to hear responses from the larger group, take a few minutes to invite “shout-outs” – brief phrases in response to the questions.

My Support
What supports do you have?
How do you prepare for leadership opportunities?
*Invite personal reflection in a journal or notebook. Offer a few moments for brief “shout-outs.”

Sing

“For Everyone Born,” For Everyone Born, GBGMusik

Activity: Roadblocks

Materials Needed: tongue depressors, markers or pens, clothespins (2 per person)
Purpose:

When answering the call to leadership, there may come setbacks or roadblocks. It may feel like resistance internally or externally, delays, or detours. This activity will give participants a moment to name the roadblocks they face and how we might support each other in overcoming them.

Instructions

1. Take 2-3 minutes to identify the roadblocks we encounter when we answer the call to lead as Esther did.

2. With the marker, write one roadblock on a tongue depressor provided.

3. Take 2 clothespins and attach one to each side of the tongue depressor so that it stands up like a roadblock.

4. Once everyone has completed their roadblock, exchange them with another.

5. Invite participants to pray briefly for one another, that they may be of support now or in the near future.

6. *Optional: Depending on who the group is and their relationship to one another, you can encourage participants to commit to once a month, on a specific day and time to pray for one another.

Unison Prayer

Sing

“We Are Marching in the Light of God/Siyahamba,” The Faith We Sing, 2235

Benediction