



EncourAGING & Equipping Congregations for Older Adult Ministry

Bless The Years; Resources For Worship in a Congregation

Discipleship has no expiration date, no formal retirement age. Taking a Sunday each year to celebrate the older adults of the congregation is a way to affirm their ongoing participation in the life of the church, and the important role they play as disciples.

You'll need to pick an appropriate age at which to invite their participation, and that may be different from Congregation to Congregation. It will not be uncommon for people of whatever age group you choose to declare, "But I'm not old!" or some variation of that phrase. No problem! We don't have to "feel old" before we can celebrate the years. Encourage those individuals to participate anyway. As Rich Bimler says, "Aging - it's the only way to live!"

The following is designed for use in a regular worship service or in other appropriate settings, fitting the various parts of the worship as you choose to use them. Ask those present who are in the designated age group to come forward and receive a blessing at some point in the worship service.

1. Gathering: Job 12:12 "Wisdom is with the aged, and understanding in length of days." Today we honor the older adults among us. We focus our attention on what God does with and through our older brothers and sisters. We seek direction so that we may all grow older with meaning, purpose and hope.

2. Songs/Hymn suggestions:

Borning Cry, John Ylvisaker

Take My Life and Let It Be

My Hope is Built on Nothing Less

On Christ the Solid Rock

Our God Our Help in Ages Past

10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord, by Matt Redman)

Blessed Assurance

3. Responsive Invocation:

Pastor: In the Name of God the Father

People: Our Creator who blesses our years.

Pastor: In the Name of God the Son (+)

People: Our Redeemer who blesses us with forgiveness.

Pastor: In the Name of God the Holy Spirit

People: Our Sanctifier who blesses our years with gifts to put into service.

ALL: Bless the Years! Amen

4. Prayer of the Day

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: God of our yesterdays,

People: Forgive, for the sake of the Compassionate Christ, all our stumbling, our forgetting, our straying, our accidental and our deliberate misdeeds, and bless what, by your grace, we did well.

Pastor: God of our todays,

People: Grant us power to be present with your people, to be your hands and feet this day wherever you lead.

Pastor: God our our tomorrows,

People: Give us hope, give us vision, give us courage and be our companion that we may treasure each passing day as a gift from you - a gift to be celebrated in your service and the service of your church and your world.

5. Readings:

Genesis 12:1-9; 18:1-14

Romans 12:1-21

Luke 2:22-38

6. The Prayers

Pastor: Remembering God's marvelous work and living in hope, let us pray for the wellbeing of families, for the elders among us and for all people according to their need. (a brief silence)

Pastor: Loving God we rejoice in the gifts of time and age. We rejoice in the relationships that bind us and we give thanks.

ALL: For mothers and fathers who love unconditionally, for brothers and sisters who glow closer each year, for friends who rejoice and cry with us, for the people of the church who extend God's care.

Pastor: We pray for the older adults in our community.

ALL: For those with wealth and those impoverished, for those with strength and those weakened or ill, for those with family support and those alone, we ask your blessing and nurture.

Pastor: We pray for those who care for older adults.

ALL: For families who provide daily care and support, for church members who minister to spiritual and physical needs, for volunteers who call and visit, for all who provide professional care, Give them strength and compassion.

Pastor: With gratitude we praise you for the families of our church, for children, youth, parents and grandparents.

(Continue with local prayer concerns as desired...)

7. Blessing the Years: (invite the appropriate group to come forward to the front of the church to receive a blessings and use these words or some of your own)

Pastor: This day we gather to celebrate the years and to bless them. Your years! The years when you were growing up, learning, raising a family, working hard, doing life on a daily basis until all those years have brought you here. And the Lord has blessed you with many years. Sometimes we wish some of them could have been different. Sometimes we feel blessed by where the Lord lead us. Perhaps we are happy with who and where we are now, perhaps we have some regrets. But through it all, God was with us. And he promises to stay with us until the end. We thank God for your service, for your witness and for the ongoing gifts you share as disciples of Christ. You have blessed us. We pray the Lord's richest blessings on you this day and for all the days and years still to come, whatever they bring.

8. Benediction:

Pastor: Keeper of our years, send us forth renewed by your Spirit; Bless the years behind us as examples of your sustaining grace; bless this day as we are filled with your power; and bless the years ahead of us that, by your power, we can be a blessing to the world we live in.