

Building Community is a Piece of Cupcake!

Extend the Session: share the cupcakes with Others

Materials Needed

- Bible, small table, cloth, pillar candle, matches or lightstick
- **Resource 1, Prayer Bookmark** (see #1 in Prepare in Advance to make bookmarks), one for each participant
- Construction paper, various colors (or other colored copy paper)
- Laminating pouches and laminating machine
- Brown lunch bags with a variety of items, one for each team of five to six participants (see #3 in Prepare in Advance)
- Sheet of paper, one for each six participants
- Pen, one for each six participants
- Cupcakes, two per participant (see #2 in Prepare in Advance)
- Frosting, various flavors
- Cupcake decorations, various types of sprinkles
- Basket
- Song for opening prayer (suggestions include: "We Are One Body" by Dana Scallon (*Spirit & Song*, OCP), "Gather Us In" by Marty Haugen (*GIA Comprehensive*), or "Big House" by Audio Adrenaline)
- CD player

Prepare in Advance

1. Using **Resource 1**, cut along the dotted edges. Cut a piece of construction paper, or other colored paper, slightly larger than the bookmark. This will be the backing of the bookmark. Laminate the two pieces together to form a bookmark. Most schools and copy stores have laminating machines. If you cannot laminate the bookmarks, simply glue the two pieces (prayer and colored backing page) together.

2. Invite a few volunteers to gather early in the day to make the cupcakes. Another option is to invite parent volunteers to make cupcakes and bring them – unfrosted – to the session.

3. Fill brown lunch sacks, one for each small group, with ordinary items that they will use to design a community building game. Include a deck of cards and five or six other items. The contents of the lunch sacks do not need to be the same. Consider items such as tin of mints, pen, marker, business card, toy sunglasses, votive candle, post-it notes, large binder clip, dice, button, battery, etc.

3. Set up tables for sign-in and decorating cupcakes. Set up one or two tables with the cupcakes and decorating supplies. You will need a tray or box for the extra cupcakes, if you do the session extension. Have one or two people at the sign-in table with a check-in sheet and nametags.

4. Set up a prayer focus by covering a small table with a cloth. On the table, place a Bible marked at 1 Corinthians 12:12-20, candle and matches (or lightstick).

Session Outline

Welcome and Introductions (5 minutes)

As people arrive welcome them. Make sure everyone gets a name tag. Once everyone is there say:

Tonight we have gathered as a community of believers as we often do. This community is a place where everyone is free to share their faith. Although it's easy to share your faith here and feel like you are an important member here, it may not always feel like you are an integral part to the wider community of our city and country. Tonight we will focus on finding ways to share our faith with others and seeking connections we have with the rest of our community."

Opening Prayer (10 minutes)

Give each participant a **Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi** bookmark. Invite the participants to gather around the prayer table.

Gather

Sing opening song.

Prayer Leader: *(begin with the Sign of the Cross)*

Gracious and Loving God, you see us as we are, as you made us. Give us the courage to see ourselves as you see us. Amen.

Listen

Invite the reader to proclaim 1 Corinthians 12: 12-20. Allow a few moments of quiet reflection.

Respond

Ask students to share which part of the body mentioned in Paul's letter best represents them and the gifts they offer the Church. If your group is large, or time is a consideration, ask participants to share with a partner.

Send Forth

Read together the Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi.

Ice Breaker (10 minutes)

Put students into small groups of five or six and ask each group to "invent" a machine, using all the members of their groups. This machine should have moving parts, with each person playing a role in the machine to illustrate how everyone contributes to make something work. If the participants seem stuck, suggest some machines to them—cars, toasters, lawn mowers, electric toothbrushes, etc. Give groups about five minutes to work on creating their machine.

Once they have organized themselves into machines, have them show the group how their machine works. The other participants should guess which machine they are imitating.

Anything Can Build Community (30 minutes)

When every group has demonstrated their machine and the rest of the participants have guessed what it is, explain the next activity:

In a minute each group will be handed a brown lunch bag. Inside you will find a random collection of items. Your job, as a group, is to create and design a game or activity which uses all the contents of the bag and helps build community. Once your group gets its bag, you will have 15 minutes to design your game, test it amongst yourselves, and write down the rules that accompany your game. Select a spokesperson from your group to explain your game.

Distribute the brown lunch bags, a sheet of paper, and a pen to each small group. After the allotted time allow each group a chance to explain their game. If time allows, have each group lead the other participants through their game. Ask the adult volunteers to select their favorite game; ask the participants to 'vote' with applause.

Cupcake Decorating (15 minutes)

Invite the participants to gather around the tables that you have set up for the cupcake decorating. Use these or similar words to introduce this activity:

When I was a kid, my mom always made cupcakes for my birthday. On the day of my birthday, I got to bring cupcakes into my school class and that made my birthday special and important to me. Whenever I get to eat a cupcake, it brings me back to my childhood and all the ways that my family and friends made me feel special.

Tonight, we are going to take some time to decorate these cupcakes and use them as a way of telling someone else that they are important to us. Like a birthday celebration where all the attention goes on one person, this sharing of a cupcake with another is a chance to tell them that they are important to you. And, just like our opening Scripture story, to tell the other person how they build up the community. Sharing of this cupcake also gives us the chance to share our faith connection with this person. God is present in all of our relationships, and sometimes it is good to be explicit with someone about how they are a faith role-model to us, or how we pray for them, or how we have grown in faith because of knowing them.

Building community and sharing faith can be a piece of cake ... or a piece of cupcake! Each of you will decorate two; one to keep, reminding you of the importance of you and how God created you as a special and unique person and one to give away to someone who is important in your life. Decorate your cupcakes with symbols of your faith and friendship and when you give the second cupcake away take time to share the symbols on the cupcake.

Give the participants about ten minutes to decorate their cupcakes. Keep a close eye on the participants during this time so that that you don't end up with too much of a mess for clean up. For the last two minutes, ask the participants to help you with the clean-up.

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Put all the cupcakes in the middle of the room. Stand in a circle around these symbols.

Prayer Leader: *(begin with the Sign of the Cross)*

Dear God,

We stand in a circle tonight to symbolize the earth, which is filled with your people. Together we pray for the world in which we live.

Please offer any prayers you have now for our world... our response is **Lord, hear our prayer.** (Let the young people spontaneously voice their intentions.)

In the middle of this circle are the cupcakes we decorated—those that we will enjoy as our snack tonight and those that we will deliver to our friends and family. We offer our prayers for them ... our response is **Help us to love, Lord.** (Allow time again for their petitions.)

We thank you, God, for the gift of community—the people who love us, share faith with us, and challenge us to live as disciples of your son, Jesus. Help us in our journey to share our faith with those we meet and to build community beyond the walls of our church. In your name we pray. Amen.

Announcements and Refreshments enjoy a cupcake!

Prayer Bookmark

Directions: Cut along the dotted lines. Cut a piece of colored construction or copy paper slightly larger than the prayer card, to use as a backing. Laminate the two pieces together and trim the edges for a bookmark.

The Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy;

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much
seek to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

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