

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

This unit of seven sessions in Isaiah is perfect to use at Christmastime. Consider using the first five sessions during Advent leading up to Christmas and the final two sessions (The Servant Songs) following Christmas. All are appropriate anytime during the year.

A Light to the Nations
Isaiah 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-11

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a series of sessions needs to have access to the "Introduction" article found at the beginning of each series (Bible Teaching #....). The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.
2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)
3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

Prior to this Coming Session:

Gathering Time Leader:

Bible Study Leader:

Worship Time Leader:

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A Light to the Nations – 14-37-06-en

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A number of songs are listed from which to choose for today's session. Singing about sharing the good news is a good way to express our desire to make that a reality. You may want to sing more today than is usual.

Music Sources:

"Shout to the North", *The Worship Hymnal*, #350; CCLI#1562261

"We've a Story to Tell", *The Worship Hymnal*, #356; CCLI#29420 Public Domain

"Tell the Good News", *The Worship Hymnal*, #360; CCLI#109876

"Song for the Nations", *The Worship Hymnal*, #365; CCLI#20340

"Trust and Obey", *The Worship Hymnal*, #500; CCLI#3273472 Public Domain

1

Copy this section for the Gathering Time leader.

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)

A Light to the Nations

Focal Text

Isaiah 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-11

Main Idea

The mission of God's Servant, whose identity is fulfilled completely only in Jesus, is to bring justice and salvation to all the people of the world.

Question to Explore

Can we count on anyone or anything to help the people of our world – all of them?

First thoughts:

Sing "Song for the Nations".

The verses of Song for the Nations capture the heart of today's lesson.

**"May we be a shining light to the nations,
A shining light to the peoples of the earth,
Till the whole world sees the glory of Your name,
May your pure light shine thro' us."**

Chris Christensen. Copyright 1986 Integrity's Hosanna Music.

We will study three servant passages in Isaiah. These passages are prophetic passages about the Messiah, but they also address the role of servanthood which the nation of Israel had largely failed to assume. They challenge us as modern day followers of Jesus to the role of servant which ultimately is a sharing of the light of the gospel with the whole world.

Closing the Gathering Time:

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

A Light to the Nations

Focal Text

Isaiah 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-11

Background Text

Isaiah 42:1-9; 49:1-6; 50:4-11

Main Idea

The mission of God’s Servant, whose identity is fulfilled completely only in Jesus, is to bring justice and salvation to all the people of the world.

Question to Explore

Can we count on anyone or anything to help the people of our world – all of them?

Teaching Aim

To lead the class to explain how Jesus ultimately fulfills the mission of God’s Servant and to identify implications of this truth for their mission and the mission of their church.

Introduction to your personal study:

The Hebrew word for “servant” means a person at the disposal of another to do his work, represent his interests, and carry out his will. Most people in the world have never had a servant, but many have been servants. It is often not an agreeable position if the person one is serving does not value the service or understand the personhood of the servant. But when we think of a servant of God, the word and the reality of servanthood is transformed. We serve at the disposal of God to do His work, represent his interests, and carry out his will with gladness. It is an honour, a privilege and a responsibility we take joyfully. Our lesson today emphasizes the many wonderful aspects of servanthood as it relates to service to God.

Background:

Review the background material given in the first session of this Unit: ***Receiving Good News from God***, 09-36-01-en, (the first session in Biblical Teaching #14).

Four passages in Isaiah 40-55 have been singled out by biblical scholars as “songs” celebrating the sacrificial life of a righteous servant of God who brings about the redemption of others (Ward, James M. *Review and Expositor*, “Isaiah”, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary: Vol. LXV, No.4, Fall, 1968, p. 433).

The identity of the servant has been much discussed, but Christians have generally interpreted these songs or poems, especially the last, to be prophecies of the ministry and death of Jesus. They have, therefore, been discussed more than any other prophetic literature of the Old Testament.

These four passages are not the only ones in Isaiah which speak of the servant of God. There are nineteen references to Yahweh’s servant (singular) and only six of those fall within the “servant” songs.

Focusing on the Meaning:

The passages which we will consider in two different lessons are Isaiah 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9 and 52:13-53:12.

The first servant song, poem, or speech is the climax of a dramatic dialogue between Yahweh, God of Israel, and the nations, that is cast in the form of a legal trial (41:1-42:4).

The first scene which we studied in the second of this series on Isaiah (Isaiah 40:1-11) contains a series of four prophetic messages transmitted from God to his people. Unnamed messengers are to announce to Jerusalem that the sin which had led to her captivity has been forgiven and her atoning service finished. A second message is to declare the coming revelation of God’s glory to all men. The writer himself proclaims the third announcement, namely, the eternity of God’s word in contrast to the transience of man and of man’s righteousness. Finally, Jerusalem, having received the good news (the gospel) is exhorted to relay it to all the cities of Judah and thence, to the world (all flesh).

***“Here is my servant, whom I uphold,
My chosen one in whom I delight;
I will put my Spirit on him
And he will bring justice to the nations.***

***He will not shout or cry out,
Or raise his voice in the streets,***

***A bruised reed he will not break,
And a smouldering wick he will not snuff out.
In faithfulness he will bring forth justice;***

***He will not falter or be discouraged
Till he establishes justice on earth.
In his law the islands will put their hope”***

Isaiah 42:1-4

It is not difficult to apply these words to Jesus and his life. These verses are quoted in Mathew 12:17-21: ***“This was to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: ‘Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations. He will not quarrel or cry out; no one will hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out, till he leads justice to victory. In his name the nations will put their hope.’”*** It is also easy to see this as a model for us as servants today.

First we are aware of the *chosenness* of the servant. Servant is generally not a term of honour, but in this case it becomes an honour to be chosen by Yahweh and upheld by him. The servant has God’s Spirit on him. He will act with God’s power and discernment. His goal will be to bring justice to the nations, but he will do that in a quiet manner instead of by force and noise.

He will treat gently the “bruised reed” and will not snuff out the “smouldering wick”. That is, he will understand and seek out those whose faith is small and weak. That attitude was reflected in the writings of Watchman Nee, a Chinese mystic of the 1930’s and 1940’s who attempted to forge an indigenous Chinese Christian witness independent of foreign missions and traditional denominations. “We have said that a cry to God from the heart is sufficient. Because the Holy Spirit has been poured out upon all mankind, a cry is enough. I always believe that the Holy Spirit is *upon* a person when I preach to that person. I do not mean that the Spirit is *within* the hearts of unbelievers, but that He is outside. What is He doing? He is waiting, waiting to bring Christ into their hearts. He is like the light. Open the window-shutters even a little, and it will flood in and illuminate the interior. Let there be a cry from the heart to God, and *at that moment* the Spirit will enter and begin His transforming work of conviction and repentance and faith.” (Watchman Nee in Foster, Richard J. and Smith, James B., Eds. *Devotional Classics*, HarperSanFrancisco, 1993, p. 342).

Again, the emphasis is upon the bringing of justice even when that is difficult to do. The servant will not falter or be discouraged until justice is established. The specific content of justice is not stated, but it will be achieved quietly (verse 2), without violence (verse 3) and as a result of torah (verse 4) which is both instruction and law. The primary means

of justice, therefore, are education and legislation. Its source is the spirit of God (verse 1) and its range is universal (verse 4) (Ward, "The Servant Songs in Isaiah", p. 437).

The second servant song to be considered in this lesson is from Isaiah 49:1-6.

***Listen to me, you islands;
Hear this, you distant nations;
Before I was born the Lord called me;
From my birth he has made mention of my name.***

***He made my mouth like a sharpened sword,
In the shadow of his hand he hid me;
He made me into a polished arrow
And concealed me in his quiver,***

***He said to me, "You are my servant, Israel,
In whom I will display my splendour"***

***But I said, "I have laboured to no purpose;
I have spent my strength in vain and for nothing.
Yet what is due me is in the Lord's hand,
And my reward is with my God."***

***And now the Lord says-
He who formed me in the womb to be his servant
To bring Jacob back to him
And gather Israel to himself,
For I am honored in the eyes of the Lord
And my God has been my strength –***

***He says:
"It is too small a thing for you to be my servant
To restore the tribes of Jacob
And bring back those of Israel I have kept.
I will also make you a light for the Gentiles,
That you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth"***

Isaiah 49:1-6

Verse 1 emphasizes that the Servant of the Lord was called from His mother's womb. When we remember the angel's announcement to Mary of the coming of Messiah (Luke 1:26-38) and think of the impact that had on the life of this young, Judean woman we understand the meaning of this passage. God's purpose for the life of Jesus existed from the foundation of the world and it was expressed in human terms to Mary. The Servant was preserved by God to speak God's word (verse 2). Israel was also a servant whose task was to glorify God (verse 3). It was an honour to be the Servant of

God and God was the one who gave strength for the task (verse 4). His mission was the restoration of Israel (verse 5) and the preaching of salvation to the entire world (verse 6).

In Chapter 42, God was the speaker while in Chapter 49, the Servant was the speaker. Isaiah 49 is the testimony of the Servant. Isaiah 49:1-6 begins and ends by stressing the universal scope of the Servant's mission:

“Listen to me, you islands; Hear this, you distant nations; (verse 1)

I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, That you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth” (verse 6).

We live in a multicultural, multifaith world. We value tolerance for all cultures and faiths. Yet we still live with the mandate and hope that distant nations and all people to the ends of the earth may know about, understand, and commit to Jesus as Saviour. Those nations may have come to live across the street from us and the mission enterprise may express itself in different ways in today's world, but just as Jesus' coming was a light to the nations so is his ongoing presence the hope for the world.

“Verse 2 was written in Hebrew poetic language and form. Notice the first half of verse 2. The Servant compared his words to a sharp sword and testified that He was hid with the shadow of God's hand. In the second half of the verse, the Servant compared himself to a polished shaft (arrow or spear) and testified that God had hid Him in His quiver. Two ideas thus are presented. For one thing, the Servant testified that God equipped Him to speak words that are like a sharp sword or a polished spear. Second, God protected the Servant.” (Broadman Comments 1995-96, *52 Ready-To-Teach Bible Study Lessons*, p. 150).

Verse 3 speaks of the servant as Israel. It is easy to feel confusion about who the Servant is. Is the Servant Jesus or Israel or ourselves? We need to understand that “the chosen people were called to be God's servant people. They were especially chosen to be a blessing and to be priests to all nations. However, as the history of Israel unfolded, the prophets recognized that most Israelites were too sinful to fulfill God's purpose. Finally, prophets like Isaiah came to see that the call to Israel was to be ultimately fulfilled in one Servant, who was of Israel, but whose mission was to all people. Thus we have passages that refer to Israel as God's servant, for this was God's intent, but God's mission would be fulfilled not by the nation as a whole but by one perfect Israelite” (Broadman Comments 1995-96, *Ready-To-Teach Bible Study Lessons*, p. 151).

Verse 4 reflects the discouragement the Servant can feel with lack of response from those to whom He ministers, but the ultimate answer to that discouragement rests in the fact that the work of the Servant ultimately belongs to God. This is a particularly encouraging word for today's Servants who may labour in difficult places with little response to the gospel. There are only a few places in the world today where the

gospel is eagerly received and Satan is at work to make that more difficult. The writer is praying today for missionary friends who are serving in such a place. However, violence in the city where they live has made life very difficult and only recently their home was broken into. The husband was at home recovering from surgery; the intruders were frightened away, but the constant reality of danger is present.

Verse 5 uses God's own words to make three points. (1) The Lord formed the Servant from the womb (see verse 1) (2) The Lord gave His Servant the mission of gathering Israel and (3) The Lord promised to provide honour and strength to the Servant.

Verse 6 declares that the mission of gathering Israel is not the entire mandate to the Servant. The Servant will be a light to the Gentiles, salvation to those to the ends of the earth. Isaiah understood, as most Israelites did not, that God's plan for the beginning was that the Israelites would be used to call all people unto Him. Most Israelites, however, saw God's choice of them as a privilege, not as a responsibility. This human tendency to be blind to God's plan of redemption can be seen in modern day Christians as well.

Acts 13:46-47 quotes Paul and Barnabas speaking to Jews who would not believe that Jesus was the Messiah: ***"We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. For this is what the Lord has commanded us 'I have made you a light for Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.'"***

We see then in this passage this basic teaching. The Servant, Jesus, came to bring salvation to the Jews and to the Gentiles. The Servant, Israel, was chosen to share God's light with other nations, but failed to do so. The Servant, the modern day Christian, continues to have the privilege and responsibility to share the Good News with the world. The mark of true greatness is to serve others.

The third passage for consideration is Isaiah 50: 4-11. These verses might be entitled "The Servant's Faithfulness". Verse 4 examines the disciple and teacher; verses 5-6 sees Christ as the obedient sufferer and verses 7-9 consider divine help and vindication for the Servant. Verse 10 is a strong call to trust God and verse 11 describes the destiny of those who refuse God's light and live around their own fires.

***The Sovereign Lord has given me an instructed tongue,
To know the word that sustains the weary.
He wakens me morning by morning,
Wakens my ear to listen like one being taught.***

***The Sovereign Lord has opened my ears,
And I have not been rebellious;
I have not drawn back.***

I offered my back to those who beat me,

***My cheeks to those who pulled out my beard;
I did not hide my face
From mocking and spitting.***

***Because the Sovereign Lord helps me,
I will not be disgraced.
Therefore I set my face like flint,
And I know I will not be put to shame.***

***He who vindicates me is near.
Who then will bring charges against me?
Let us face each other!
Who is my accuser?
Let him confront me!***

***It is the Sovereign Lord who helps me.
Who is he that will condemn me?
They will all wear out like a garment;
The moths will eat them up.***

***Who among you fears the Lord
And obeys the word of his servant?
Let him who walks in the dark,
Who has no light,
Trust in the name of the Lord
And rely on his God.
But now, all you who light fires
And provide yourselves with flaming torches,
Go, walk in the light of your fires
And of the torches you have set ablaze.
This is what you shall receive from my hand:
You will lie down in torment.***

Isaiah 50:4-11

The Servant is a disciple – one who learns of God and then turns to teach others. This is a daily – morning by morning – and lifelong process. Jesus as the Servant exemplified this ministry of teaching and encouragement. We, as Servants, need to continue in His example.

Jesus was an obedient sufferer. But the slights, however large or small, did not cause him to desist from his task. He knew that “the Lord God will help me”.

The language of Isaiah 50:8-9a is that of a courtroom and trial. We see that in these words

He who vindicates me is near.

***Who then will bring charges against me?
Let us face each other!
Who is my accuser?
Let him confront me!
It is the Sovereign Lord who helps me.
Who is he that will condemn me?***

This reminds us of Romans 8:33-34

***Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen?
It is God who justifies.
Who is he that condemns?
Christ Jesus, who died more than that,
Who was raised to life is at the right hand of God
And is also interceding for us.***

Isaiah refers to Jesus, the Servant, whose Sovereign Lord helps him in all trials, but we can apply that same assurance to each servant of the Lord who suffers false charges and insults.

We are admonished to trust in the name of the Lord and obey or “stay upon the Lord” as some translations say. “Trust and Obey” is an old, old hymn which captures the meaning of this passage.

To fail to follow the light and trust in the Lord is to rely upon one’s own ability, one’s own light and in the sparks that fly from the man-made fire to do damage to those around it. “You shall lie down in sorrow” maintains verse 11. “Lie down” refers to death, but some of these people who choose their own path will experience sorrow before death. It is a sorrow which has no relief, because the person has deliberately chosen to follow his/her own desires. These people have reaped what they sowed.

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:

As the leader or guide for this coming session, your task will be to lead the class to explain how Jesus ultimately fulfills the mission of God’s Servant and to identify how this truth should impact and focus each person’s own mission for God as well as the mission of their church.

For Personal Reflection:

What have I learned from this study?

What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?

What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

A Light to the Nations

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc. Children who stay with their parents in the Youth/Adult study should have the material on worship as suggested in **The Children's Corner** at the beginning of this **Unit** of studies. (Ask your leader who downloads the studies for those suggestions).

Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.

Focal Text

Isaiah 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-11

Background Text

Isaiah 42:1-9; 49:1-6; 50:4-11

Main Idea

The mission of God's Servant, whose identity is fulfilled completely only in Jesus, is to bring justice and salvation to all the people of the world.

Question to Explore

Can we count on anyone or anything to help the people of our world – all of them?

Teaching Aim

To lead the class to explain how Jesus ultimately fulfills the mission of God's Servant and identify implications of this truth for their mission and the mission of their church.

Connect with Life:

Ask the question which we are to explore to introduce today's lesson:– "Can we count on anyone or anything to help the people of our world – all of them?" Give time for response.

Guide the Study:

Define the word servant as: “a person at the disposal of another to do his work, represent his interests and carry out his will.”

Discuss how willing one would be to be “a servant”?

Describe the “servant songs” of Isaiah as discussed in the background material. Comment that these are generally interpreted to be prophecies of the ministry and death of Jesus. They also may be seen as guides to servanthood for followers of Christ.

Refer back to the second in this series of studies of Isaiah.

Remind participants of this: Isaiah 40: 1-11 contained four prophetic messages transmitted from God to his people. Unnamed messengers were to announce to Jerusalem that the sin which had led to her captivity has been forgiven and her atoning service finished.

A second message is to declare the coming revelation of God’s glory to all men. The third message contrasts the eternity of God’s word to the transience of man and of man’s righteousness. Finally, the good news is to be shared with all the world.

Have someone read Isaiah 42:1-4.

Point out that this prophecy is commented upon in Matthew 12:17-21. Have someone read that passage.

Seek answers for this question: What are the characteristics of the servant in these passages? (Chosenness: Covered and upheld with God’s spirit; Acts with God’s power and discernment; Brings justice to the nations in a quiet manner.)

Comment: The emphasis is upon the bringing of justice even when that is difficult to do. The servant will not falter or be discouraged until justice is established.

Have someone read the second servant song from Isaiah 49:1-6.

Urge someone to answer: Is the concept of chosenness repeated in this passage? (Yes, “before I was born the Lord called me”).

Add: In this passage is the role of the servant an honoured one? (found in verse 6)

Now ask: How widespread is the ministry of the servant? (Reread verse 1 and verse 6)

Encourage a discussion: Does this passage speak to our task today? (Yes, we are servants of Christ who must carry the message of salvation to the ends of the earth).

Ask: What special equipment or preparation is given the Servant? (Verse 2 indicates that we are given words to speak – sharp sword and polished shaft - and the protection of the Lord – hidden in the shadow of his hand and concealed in his quiver).

Comment that Isaiah again uses poetic language to convey his meaning.

Search for an answer: How is Israel described in verse 3?

Continue: What is the hope of the Servant in face of discouragement? (the work of the Servant ultimately belongs to the Lord).

Summarize with this basic teaching: The Servant, Jesus, came to bring salvation to the Jews and to the Gentiles. The Servant, Israel, was chosen to share God's light with other nations, but failed to do so. The Servant, the modern day Christian, continues to have the privilege and responsibility to share the Good News with the world. The mark of true greatness is to serve others.

Have someone read Isaiah 50:4-11.

Ask for comments on this question: In verse 4, what would be the characteristic of the Servant? (a teacher and a learner who is constantly - morning by morning - being taught).

Say: Being a servant and doing the work of a servant as we relate to others becomes our way of life and fulfills our commitment to following God's will for us as long as we live on earth.

Ask: How many references to The Sovereign Lord do you find in this passage? (There are four times where this strong image is used.

Seek comments: How do those words "The Sovereign Lord" make one feel.

Tell the group: In verses 5 and 6 there are prophetic images of how Christ will suffer. Today we can look back on this as completed prophesy, that is, it actually happened.

Then ask: So, from today's view, what relationship can we see between these verses and the suffering of Christ?

Have someone read verses 8-9a and another person read Romans 8:33-34.

Now ask: What is the similarity in these verses?

Encourage Application:

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Ask someone to share an answer to this: What must one who walks in darkness do to be saved? (Trust in the name of the Lord and rely on God)

Ask: What is the ultimate outcome for those who refuse to trust in the name of the Lord? (Their own sins will lead to destruction).

See if there are any final comments or questions regarding the Bible study.

Close by asking someone to pray for wisdom as each person and the church as a complete congregation seek to be Christ's servants.

Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

Youth!!! Take Ten

Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

A Light to the Nations Isaiah 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-11

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

How to Find a Place for Servantness

A seventy year old man who had a remarkable career of service around the world through governmental agencies recently shared how important his early mission experiences were to the formation of his character and the trajectory of his life. He grew up on a small ranch and most of his church experience was in a country church where summer missionaries came to do Vacation Bible School. Later, the pastors of the larger church (though still small) where he attended as a youth impacted his life. In university, he went to New York City as a summer missionary and later on his own to Guadalajara, Mexico to work with a missionary there. He was part of a university student group which emphasized service to the community around them. Each Sunday afternoon, a group of those students of which he was a part held a Bible study and recreation time in a poverty-stricken community near the university.

It is not too soon for you as a young person to begin to consider opportunities to share the gospel with people of other cultures. Where would you personally go to have opportunities for service?

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***A Light to the Nations***
Isaiah 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-11**Beginning the Service:**

Sing “Song for the Nations”, “We’ve a Story to Tell to the Nations” and “Trust and Obey”

Offering:**Praying for the World:**

Since our emphasis today is on sharing with the world, the prayer request should have additional meaning.

Ahmadiyya is an Islamic sect begun by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad who claimed to be the promised Islamic messiah or “Mehdi.” Although this Indian Muslim died in 1915, ten million Ahmadiyyas around the world continue to practice his teachings. They are often persecuted by orthodox Muslims as a heretical sect that does not follow the teachings of the Koran. The Ahmadiyyas believe that Jesus was crucified on a cross, but that he was taken down from the cross still alive and that He traveled to the east where he died at the age of 120.

Ask the Father to open the eyes of the Ahmadiyya followers enabling them to see and recognize the truth of the Gospel. Pray for them to turn from half truths to place their lives into the hands of Jesus Christ who died on the cross, was raised on the third day and forever lives to be their Lord and Saviour!

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God’s call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to

give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

Trust and Obey
Psalm 84:12
Lord of Hosts, happy is the person who trusts in You!

Introduction:

Our theme for today has been “A Light to the Nations”. We have considered three of four Servant Songs from the book of Isaiah. In each of the three songs, we have seen the emphasis on the fact that the message of God’s love is to be a light to the nations of the world. We read

*Here is my servant, whom I uphold,
My chosen one in whom I delight;
I will put my Spirit on him
And he will bring justice to the nations.*

*He will not falter or be discouraged
Till he establishes justice on earth.
In his law the islands will put their hope.*

Isaiah 42:1,4

*Listen to me, you islands;
Hear this, you distant nations.*

*I will also make you a light for the Gentiles,
That you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.*

Isaiah 49:1,6

*Let him who walks in the dark,
Who has no light,
Trust in the name of the Lord
And rely on his God.*

Isaiah 50:7

We have emphasized this basic understanding. The Servant, Jesus, came to bring salvation to the Jews and to the Gentiles. The Servant, Israel, was chosen to share God’s light with other nations, but did not do so. The Servant, the modern day

Christian, continues to have the privilege and responsibility to share the Good News with the world.

There is a reason for this. The person who trusts in the name of the Lord and relies on God will have eternal salvation and will experience true happiness on this earth. Psalm 84:12 tells us: ***“Lord of Hosts, happy is the person who trusts in You!”***

We have observed that Isaiah said again and again ***“The Sovereign Lord says....”*** The Lord of Hosts is another way of expressing the strength, power and might of the Sovereign Lord. And that Sovereign Lord of the Universe waits to give to each person on earth the happiness that comes with trusting in Him.

The old hymn “Trust and Obey” expresses it this way.

When we walk with the Lord
In the light of His Word,
What a glory He sheds on our way!
Let us do His good will;
He abides with us still,
And with all who will trust and obey.

Not a burden we bear,
Not a sorrow we share,
But our toil He doth richly repay;
Not a grief or a loss,
Not a frown or a cross
But is blest if we trust and obey.

But we never can prove
The delights of His love
Until all on the altar we lay;
For the favour He shows
And the joy He bestows
Are for them who will trust and obey.

Then in fellowship sweet
We will sit at His feet,
Or we'll walk by His side in the way;
What He says we will do,
Where He sends we will go,
Never fear, only trust and obey.

Chorus:
Trust and obey,
For there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus,

But to trust and obey.

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Call to Commitment:

Isaiah said about Jesus, "***I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, That you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.***" It is part of the happiness we experience as those who trust and obey that we can share in the proclamation of the Good News of the Saviour to the ends of the earth.

Concluding the Service:

Sing again "Song for the Nations"