



COMMUNITY SERVICES DAY

Sabbath School Program

May 12, 2018

**Gary Swanson, Retired Associate Director
Sabbath School Personal Ministries Department**

Scripture Focus: Romans 12: 4-5

Suggested Musical Selections:

The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal

No. 582 “Working, O Christ, With Thee”

No. 572 “Give of Your Best to the Master”

When we serve the community outside our church, we need to know what we have to offer to meet the needs of the external community. We need to assess and then use the diverse kinds of tools that we have inside the church community to serve the outside community. After we assess the various skills and talents of our Sabbath School members, we should then assess the needs in the community so that we will know what specific ways we can use the tools within the church to build up the kingdom of God outside the church.

This program is meant to encourage a more diverse response by the local church to the needs in the community and a mobilization of ever more skills and talents of the members of the Sabbath School. It outlines biblical principles on which Sabbath School members may respond more readily, using their respective, God-given abilities. An illustration of the various kinds of tools used in construction seeks to demonstrate the many roles that members may fulfill in their community outside the church. For most presenters, preparation for this illustration will necessitate familiarization with the various kinds of hand tools and maybe even power tools in the work of carpentry. Or, if possible, invite a carpenter or a contractor to help with the presentation.

Good morning and welcome to this special Sabbath School program on community service. This morning we are going to explore the importance of the idea that God has gifted each of us with distinctive qualities and skills. Each of us is a singular creation of God. And each has a unique role to play in His church as it seeks to serve its community.

Call on volunteers to list the names of Jesus’ original twelve disciples. If possible, write these names on a flipchart or blackboard. Then ask members to think about which individual of the twelve disciples they think they are most like. If any are willing to share their thoughts on this, allow time for it. Point out that it’s important to realize that Jesus selected disciples, each of

whom had dramatically different gifts, though they may not themselves have realized they had these gifts.

Based on the kinds of tools—hammer, saw, screwdriver, plane, drill, level, etc.—that you have collected for this presentation, share information similar to the following about the various kinds of tools that are used in carpentry or construction projects.

As we know, Jesus was the son of a carpenter. So we may assume that He Himself may have learned the skills of carpentry.

But maybe you have heard the expression, “To someone who’s only tool is a hammer, everything looks like a nail.” This is a way of saying that we too often don’t take individual differences into consideration in the way we undertake a task—or in the way we wish to serve others.

There are many kinds of tools. And each has its own specific task in the construction of a piece of furniture—or of a building.

- A hammer is used to fasten things together.
- A screwdriver is another tool used to affix component parts of a project to one another.
- A saw makes cuts of materials to fit in varying degrees of precision.
- A plane smooths surfaces and shaves them to fit.
- A level assures that a surface is parallel or perpendicular to the ground.
- A drill creates smooth holes through which wires may be threaded.

Call on volunteers to offer creative ways in which there may be a spiritual application for each tool as it is presented.

In some ways disciples are like these hand tools. Each of us has a responsibility that only we can personally fulfill in the task that Christ has given us to do. And notice that the function of many of these kinds of tools is such that their service will not be apparent in the final product.

The apostle Paul used another illustration to show the differences among the disciples of Christ. He described the different parts of the human body. “For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others” (Rom. 12:4, 5, NIV). The role that each Sabbath School member may play in service to the community is essential to its completion. None is more important than another.

Diversity is actually intended to be a stimulus to unity of effort. Raymond Woolsey explains how these seemingly opposing aspects of the human experience may work together in service to others under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. “Part of the work of the Holy Spirit,” he writes, “part of our sanctification, is to learn to move together in the church of God. Notice this counsel: ‘I have been instructed by the Lord that in this work there is no such thing as every man’s being independent. . . . His people must draw together.’—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 489. In this next statement we can see how both apparent extremes can be harmonized: ‘There are

victories to be gained if *we present a united front* and *individually seek the Lord* for strength and guidance.’—*Ibid.*, p. 505. (Italics supplied.)”*

Furthermore, Ellen G. White wrote: “If we are His disciples, . . . the strife to be first will no longer exist” (*Youth’s Instructor*, Dec, 8, 1898). She was trying to point out that everyone has a role to play as a disciple of Jesus in the service to the community. Truly knowing Jesus—having a relationship with Him—will cause us to realize that there is no such thing as an ordinary disciple. Everyone has a place in God’s church that only he or she can fulfill in the church’s important mission of demonstrating Christ’s love through community outreach.

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* Raymond H. Woolsey, *Joy in the Morning* (Washington, D.C.: Review & Herald, 1978), p. 207.