



# Living with Respect

## A Worship Service on "Living in Right Relationship" - The Mission Theme for 2005-2007

*Adapted from "Living with Respect," Children of The Dancing Sun, Vol. IX*

This service invites all ages to consider how we might live in respectful relationship with all people and with nature. It could be used for a **Children's Sunday service (November 20, 2005)** or any other time during the year. It links biblical and Traditional First Nations understandings with personal and community experiences. You are invited to use or adapt portions of the service to suit your congregation and local context.

Remember to strive for a mix of ages and ethnicities in the planning and leading of the service.

### Planning

- \* Plan well ahead and allow for rehearsal time.
- \* Invite children to create prayer cards for the Prayers of the People. To create the cards, give each child a 4" x 6" index card. On half of one side of the card invite them to write about a situation from their personal lives or from the broader context that shows people are not caring for, not respecting one another or creation, creating a division between people and/or people and nature (younger children may dictate to an older child or adult). On the other half of the card, they might name some action they might take to alleviate the situation. On the back of the card, invite them to draw a picture of the situation. The drawings might be used as bulletin covers. If possible, hang a line

of wool or string on the communion table or elsewhere in the sanctuary. As each prayer is read, the card can be clipped to the line with a clothes pin as a visible symbol of the hurts and divisions of the world and how our actions might bring about right relationship.

- \* Acquaint yourself with the Bible story. (Genesis 4:1-16)
- \* Invite a child and/or adult to practise reading the story "Reaching Out in Kindness" (see page 12). The child and/or adult might read or relate the story. Or two people might dramatize it.
- \* Ask four volunteers to rehearse the playlet "Am I My Brother's, Sister's Keeper?" (see page 11).
- \* Think about your own cultural traditions and community stories and where possible incorporate appropriate stories from your own context. Invite the children to share their stories too.

### GATHERING

#### Prelude

#### Call to Worship

Leader: Loving God, you are present at all times and in all places, around us and inside us.



**People:** We thank you today for all that you have made, for all our brothers and sisters in creation.

**Leader:** Enlighten us so we may find our way clearly.

**People:** Help us to walk side by side in harmony with all our brothers and sisters in creation.

(from a poem by Ellen Cook)

### Hymn

“Make Me a Channel of Your Peace” (*Voices United* 684)

### Prayer

Creator,  
We have so many conflicts in our lives—  
When we work and play together—  
In our families, in our schools, in our community relationships.  
Help us to respect one another, knowing that all life is sacred.  
Amen.

### Hymn

“O God of Every Nation” (*Voices United* 677)

## PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

**First Reading:** Genesis 4:1-16

Use the playlet, “Am I My Brother’s, Sister’s Keeper?” (page 11) to dramatize the story, or read it from a children’s story Bible.

**Epistle:** Ephesians 4:25-32

**Gospel:** Matthew 25:31-46

*(Matthew is the lectionary text for Children’s Sunday, November 20. The reading might be used to contemplate the ways that we care for ‘the least of these,’ including children and others vulnerable to those with power. The Genesis text and the reading from Ephesians work very*

*well together to consider the consequences of conflict that result in anger, violence, and disrespect for life, as well as forgiveness and God’s mark of redemption. Consider incorporating the story “Reaching Out in Kindness,” page 12, to contextualize the Genesis reading. An adult or child might read or relate the story, or two actors might act it out. Children will understand the feelings of dislike and jealousy for siblings whom they may love quite deeply. If your congregation would be willing, engage them in devising other endings for the Genesis story and for some other current-day situations: they might be global, national or personal situations.)*

## RESPONSE

### Prayers of the People

Ask the children’s permission to use the prayer cards they have prepared to create the Prayers for the People. Include a congregational response such as:

**May all your children live in right relationship, O God.**

### Offering

Offerings play a key role in the Genesis story as well as in the Matthew text. In the First Nations tradition, nothing is taken without an offering being made. Use the invitation to offering to talk about the importance of giving God our best at all times and in all places.

### Hymn

“When I Needed a Neighbour” (*Voices United*, 600)

### Act of Commitment

Invite the congregation to stand and, if possible, make a circle around the worship area. Ask them to engage in the following actions as you read “Scoop up Strength and Love” (see page 10). Suggest that they move very slowly, pause and hold each position, repeat the words with their eyes closed, and open their eyes for the last line.



## Scoop up Strength and Love



Scoop up Strength and Love  
from Mother Earth  
*(Bend down and make a scooping motion with hands and arms.)*



And give to Father Sky  
*(Hold both arms up, palms turned toward the heavens, face looking up.)*



Pull down Strength and Love from  
Father Sky



and give to your Self.  
*(Bring open palms down to chest height.)*



Think:  
The Creator gives from Father Sky

and Mother Earth,

to you  
*(Draw hands across chest.)*

intending you to be a Bridge  
*(Stretch hands in front of you.)*

stretching out and giving to One Another.  
*(Join hands with one another.)*



Amen.

Reproduced with permission from *All My Relations, Sharing Native Values Through the Arts*, Canadian Alliance in Solidarity with Native Peoples, Toronto, 1988.



## Hymn

“May the God of Hope Go with Us” (*Voices United* 424)

## Charge and Blessing

Let us go into the world with our arms outstretched to be a bridge of right relationship with one another and all of creation.

### Am I My Brother's, Sister's Keeper?

#### The Story of Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:1-16)

**Adam & Eve:** We had two beautiful sons, Cain and Abel.

**Adam:** Abel was a shepherd, a keeper of sheep.

**Eve:** Cain tilled the soil and grew crops.

**Adam & Eve:** One day, both of our sons brought an offering to God.

**Adam:** Cain brought something he grew.

**Eve:** Abel brought the very best and fattest of his flock.

**Adam:** Abel knew that God loved him and his offering because he had given his very best.

**Eve:** But Cain felt that God didn't love him or his offering, and this made him very angry and jealous. Perhaps in his heart he knew that he had not given of his best.

**God's Voice:** Cain, why are you so angry? If you gave your very best from your heart, of course I will love you and accept your offering.

**Adam & Eve:** But Cain didn't talk to God or anyone. Rather, when he was alone in the field with

his brother, Cain attacked and killed his brother Abel.

**God's Voice:** Cain, where is your brother, Abel?

**Cain:** How should I know? Is it my job to take care of my brother?

**God:** Your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground. It's like a voice telling me what happened. As punishment, from now on, the ground will not grow crops for you.

**Eve:** Cain became a wanderer on the earth with no where to go.

**Adam:** Cain became very afraid and cried to God: "This punishment is more than I can bear. When I wander around the earth, anyone who meets me can kill me."

**Eve:** God felt compassion for Cain and put a mark on his head as a warning to anyone who met him not to kill him or they would be severely punished.

**Adam & Eve:** So Cain settled in another country and built a city in which to live. Soon he had a son and he named the city Enoch, after his son. God blessed us with another son too. And we called him Seth.

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## Reaching Out in Kindness

by Annette Loutit

I grew up with lots of brothers and sisters. My parents were always busy, always working. From the time we were young, we didn't like our brother. We thought our mother liked him better. We were mean to him because we thought he got everything he wanted. We teased him about being mother's favourite.

We never thought about how he felt. Now that I'm grown up, I feel sorry that we treated him badly and that he suffered alone with no one to talk to. He was good to our mother when she felt sad.

Part of the reason we were mean to him and to each other was because there were so many children in our family, and we were so poor. We had problems in school because people laughed at us because we were darker than others. We hadn't yet learned to be proud of our traditions.

Even though we were mean to our brother, he still looked after me; he helped me to put on my shoes when I couldn't do it myself.

Now, I know I have to heal the sadness. I try to be kind to my brother. I let him know how much I love him. I think this is how God wants us to treat each other.

### The Story

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### The Art

Annette Loutit is a First Nations artist living in Selkirk, Manitoba. "Brother's Love" was created especially for *The Dancing Sun*, Vol. IV, 1994, to illustrate this story, initially titled "Compassion for a Brother." The story was shared by Annette in response to the biblical story of Joseph. Reproduced with permission of *The Dancing Sun*, Vol. IV (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 1994).

How do you think God wants us to treat each other? To find out, read Ephesians 4:32 in your Bible.

