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Rural Life Sunday : Extension Circular 0-49-2

Doris Frazier

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Rural Life Sunday



EXTENSION SERVICE
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
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COOPERATING
W. V. LAMBERT, DIRECTOR

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PURPOSE OF THIS BULLETIN

This bulletin is prepared with the hope that it will provide material and ideas to help 4-H Clubs plan and conduct a Rural Life Sunday Service.

A Rural Life Sunday Service need not follow the outline or plan set up here. It can be varied to suit you and your group. Use your own ideas and inspirations if you like - make it your Service, worship as you choose.

Origin of Rural Life Sunday

by Doris Frazier

Rural Life Sunday is observed by church organizations throughout the Nation to emphasize the meaning of Christianity in rural life. It occurs the fifth Sunday after Easter and is closely linked with Rogation days, celebrated for centuries in the Christian Church during the three days preceding Ascension Day. Originally, on these days, several subjects were emphasized, but gradually that of prayer for God's blessing upon the fruits of the earth predominated. Rogation days were first observed by Saint Mamertus, Bishop of Vienne, in Gaul, sometime prior to A.D. 475. In A.D. 511 they were ordered observed throughout France, and in A.D. 747 they were established in England by church action. Alfred the Great held them in deep reverence and included them among the most important of holy days. They were established in Rome by Leo III about the end of the eighth century.

The idea is of far more ancient origin, however. In the earliest days of Egypt, the ceremony of blessing the land and the seed at the time of planting was widely observed. Most ancient people sought the favor of the gods at that time. When, therefore, 4-H members assemble to worship God on Rural Life Sunday, they join a long succession that comes out of the dim past of history. They join, as have many generations, in seeking the blessing of God upon the land, the seed, the cultivation of the earth, and the enrichment of home and community life. Rural Life Sunday was first observed in 1929 at the suggestion of the International Association of Agricultural Missions, and soon adopted by the Home Missions Council of North America, by the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, and by numerous other religious bodies.

Why We Observe Rural Life Sunday

To give us a chance to think together about home, community and world events in the light of some especially chosen theme such as "Working Together for World Understanding". To encourage us as 4-H members to identify ourselves with institutions that stand for the high ideals of a community, such as the church, school and other social organizations that lead to the full, all-round development of the individual.

To help rural youth to understand and appreciate the stewardship that people who work with the soil have with God.

To help 4-H members understand the "Heart H" Service.

To help 4-H members and leaders interpret spiritual activities in their everyday living.

To emphasize and recognize the spiritual value and character-building qualities of 4-H Club work.

To give 4-H members opportunity to work with their community groups. To help them realize their responsibilities to their Church.

To enable all 4-H members and leaders to take advantage of their American heritage -- "abundant life" and "pursuit of happiness".

Plans for 4 H Sunday

A county-wide plan may be advisable, guided by County 4-H Council, Special Committee or by Extension Agent. Make plans with individual clergymen or organized groups.

The observance at the local church should always be planned with the clergyman.

Make plans according to local situation.

Furnish clergymen or committee with copies of this outline and other suggestions for 4-H Sunday plans.

Highlight what 4-H Clubs are doing to improve homes, communities, and citizenship.

Encourage 4-H members and leaders in each church to talk over plans with their clergyman.

Have a 4-H decorating committee for each church.

Have ushering committee of 4-H members approved by church, if desired.

Encourage all 4-H members to invite parents and neighbors to the service.

4-H members and leaders should be ready to participate in program if desired, with talks, singing or other parts.

What Clubs Have Done

Clubs have conducted the entire service.

Conducted all except the sermon which was given by the minister.

Held their own service during the regular youth meeting.

Held outdoor service followed by a picnic, recreation and club meetings.

Held sunrise outdoor service on a hill top followed by breakfast cooked over a camp-fire.

Held evening services followed by pot luck supper.

Had committee to welcome people at door of church.

Worn emblems or pins to identify the group.

Provided mimeographed bulletin for the service.

Presented special program numbers such as talks, poems, songs, etc.

Invited other clubs to join in conducting service.

Made a radio broadcast for Rural Life Sunday.

Brought Rural Life Sunday to the public through posters, talks, etc.

Marched into church as part of the processional.

Invited other organizations to join in the worship such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Farmers Union, etc.

Provided the choir for the service.

Suggested Order for Rural Life Sunday Service

The following program is suggested for clubs that are conducting the entire Service. When the service is conducted by a minister, 4-H clubs should offer their cooperation and provide help requested by the minister.

You may wish to change the following order of Service to suit your needs. Use the songs, readings, poems and prayers which you feel fit the service.

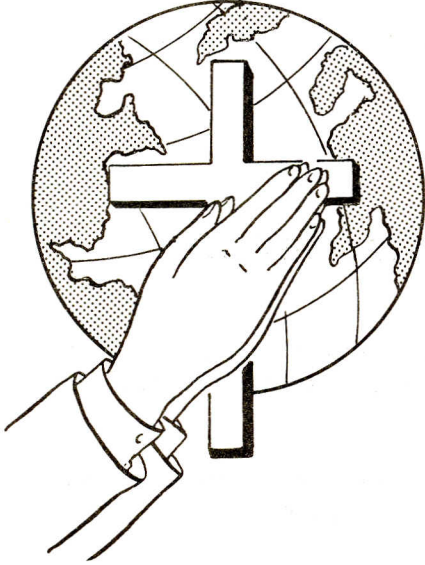
Call to Worship	Sermonette
Song	Song
Invocational Prayer	Pageant - The Four Leaf Clover
and/or	or My 4-H Club
Scripture Reading	Offertory
Responsive Reading	Song
Special Music	Benediction

Hymns

You may know of other suitable hymns; perhaps your favorite hymn will fit into the service.

"This Is My Father's World"
 "God of the Earth, the Sky, the Sea"
 "For the Beauty of the Earth"
 "All That's Good and Great and True"
 "God, that Madest Earth and Heaven"
 "The Heavens Declare Thy Glory"
 "The Lord is My Shepherd"
 "God of our Fathers" (National Hymn)
 "Holy, Holy, Holy"
 "Faith of Our Fathers"
 "Fairest Lord Jesus"
 "Our God Our Help In Ages Past"
 "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee"
 "God Who Touchest Earth With Beauty"
 "Now Thank We All Our God"
 "When Morning Gilds the Skies"
 "We Plow the Fields and Scatter"
 "Work for the Night is Coming"
 "I Love Thy Kingdom Lord"
 "God Bless Our Native Land"
 "Saviour, Like a Shepherd Lead Us"
 "I Would Be True"
 "O Worship the King"
 "4-H Hymn" (National Hymn)

Prayers



O Lord, of sunshine and storm, seedtime and harvest, grant us, we pray Thee this day, the blessing of Thy presence. We remember Thy sons and daughters in all lands who sow and till, that Thy children may be fed. As we wait upon Thee may we understand Thy divine plan of life and growth and may our souls be blessed with a renewal of faith and hope in the harvest of Thy truth in the lives of men. Amen.

Give us grateful hearts, our Father, for all Thy blessings; help us to be more worthy members in our own homes and more responsible citizens in our communities; make us mindful of those in need; give us strength to do our full part; relieve the suffering of the world; and grant peace in our time. Amen.

O God, whose love is infinite and in whose will is our peace, be pleased to be present in our service this morning and bestow upon us Thy peace which passeth understanding. Help us to keep open the windows of our souls to Thee in prayer, that in the midst of the restlessness and complexity of life, we may possess something of the peace of those whose minds are stayed on Thee. Grant that renewed by Thy grace we may go forth to meet whatever comes to us with courage and serenity through Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. Amen.

Gracious God, in Thee we live and move and have our being. In Thy presence is fullness of joy. Break the spell of that which blinds our minds. Purify our hearts that we may see Thee. Renew our inward life through the unseen and eternal. Visit our spirits and witness with them that we are Thy children. Amen.

Our Father, we beseech Thee to bless this meeting. Open Thou our eyes that we may see Thy bountiful blessings; open our hands that we may better serve Thee; inspire our minds that we may comprehend Thy teaching; give us health and strength to do Thy will; and open our hearts that we may find room for love for all Thy people in every land.

As Thou doest send the rain to cleanse and refresh the earth, and the sunshine to purify and revitalize it, so cleanse our lives and revitalize us with Thy unceasing love.

We ask Thy blessings on all our fellow 4-H Club members, our leaders, our friends, our government, and those of other lands.

These blessings we ask in the name of Him who taught us to pray together saying: (The Lord's Prayer.) Amen.

Call To Worship Suggestions

O come and let us worship the Lord;
And hearken humbly to His word.

Then come, and let us seek His face;
And wait before Him for His grace.

God has created a new day
Silver and green and gold;
Live that the sunset may find us
Worthy His gift to hold.

Behold I stand at the door and knock;
If any man hear My voice and open
the door I will come in.

The Lord is in His holy temple;
let all the earth keep silence
before Him. O worship the Lord
in the beauty of holiness; fear
before Him, all the earth.

Leader: "Let the people praise Thee, O God, Let all the people praise Thee"

Response: "Then shall the earth yield her increase;
And God, even our own God, will bless us."

Leader: Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands:

Response: Sing forth the honor of his name,
Make his praise glorious.

Let us praise God; for the day, for the glory and warmth of the sun, for the stir of life, for honest toil that brings food and rest, and for earth, the sustainer of life.

Scriptures

Proverbs	3:6
Psalms	122:1
Matthew	25:34-40
Matthew	13:3
Mark	4:26
Mark	4:27
Mark	4:28
Mark	4:29
I Corinthians	16:13

Responsive Readings

by J. P. Schmidt

I

Minister: Let us praise God: For the day, for the glory and warmth of the sun, for the stir of life, and for honest toil that wins food and rest.

Response: God be praised for the day.

Minister: For the earth, sustainer of life; for the hills, the plains, and the dales, and for the beauty of meadows and fields, of flowers and of trees.

Response: God be praised for the earth.

Minister: For the sky, for the shifting clouds, and for the glory of the sunrise and sunset.

Response: God be praised for the sky.

Minister: For the sea, that yields and receives again the water without which life would die, and is wonderful in its stillness and most wonderful in its storm.

Response: God be praised for the sea.

Minister: For the shelter and joy of our homes; for fathers and mothers, who have provided for us; for brothers and sisters and all who share our common life; and for the larger vision which prompts us to receive all men as brothers.

Response: God be praised for our homes.

Minister: For friends who have exalted us by their trust, encouraged us by their lives, and enlarged our lives by sharing with us their confidences and their dreams.

Response: God be praised for our friends.

Minister: We bless Thee for the deathless vision of a fairer day in which all men may work together as friends to make Thy Kingdom come on earth. May we see beyond the present to future days and so live that we may become a worthy part of the divine society which is Thy life expressing itself in the world of men.

II

Reader: When the sun shines brightly on all the earth,

Group: God is near.

Reader: When the wind blows and the trees bow their heads,

Group: God is near.

Reader: When rain falls softly on the lake and flowers,

Group: God is near.

Reader: When we close our eyes in peaceful slumber,

Group: God is near.

Two Suggested Pageants

I. THE FOUR LEAF CLOVER



Leader: Rural life is a special concern of our church today. The Bible poet wrote in the 104th Psalm, "The earth is full of Thy riches". The farm boy walks with the Creator as he does his daily work. No one can realize this more fully than the rural youth who watches the miracle of growth take place in the tiny seed and lives with the beauty of nature around him. The boy who cares for animals or the girl who preserves products of the soil cannot but feel that this is all a small part of an infinite plan.

As we pause for a quiet moment surrounded by the realization of the beauties of nature, let us think of the four leaf clover which is the symbol of this organization of which we are a part. These 4-H members with me represent the four leaf clover with "H" on each leaf. The "H's" stand for Head, Heart, Hands and Health. These are symbols of the teaching of 4-H clubs by which we endeavor to become better citizens of this world of tomorrow.

Let us now hear from the H's:

HEAD: The Head is the governing body of our lives. It represents knowledge and wisdom. Knowledge is learning facts but wisdom is knowing how to use those facts. A clean mind trained to function and directed by proper impulses of the heart is essential to success and right living.

HEART: The Heart is the citadel of the soul. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." All our ideals and dreams come from the heart. The Heart is the spring from which flows the motive power of life. If the course is impure then life will also be impure. "Create in me a clean Heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."

HANDS: Our Hands represent our service to others. The Hands can do no evil for themselves--they are merely the tools of the brain and heart. Let the Hands, therefore, become the symbol of expression of our ideals and dreams and the creative power guided by an alert mind and a clean Heart.

HEALTH: Good Health is an essential factor. It consists not only of a body free from disease and infirmities but of a clean mind and pure heart. Sick minds and sick hearts produce sick bodies. Health is a symbol of a well personality.

STEM: The beauty of the leaf cannot develop and would be incomplete without the life-giving force of nature. God gives the life and Jesus is the stem through which flows the power of life. We must abide in Him and He abides in us.

Leader: No other group of boys and girls is in a position to know God first hand as you who work with him so close to nature. Wake up and know Him and let Him direct your ways.

(Leader reads or chorus sings) "My God and I"

My God and I
 Go in the fields together
 We walk and talk
 As good friends should and do,
 We clasp our hands
 Our voices ring with laughter
 My God and I
 Walk through the meadow's hue.

He tells me of
 The years that went before me
 When heavenly plans
 Were made for me to be
 When all was but
 A dream of dim conception
 To come to life
 Earth's verdant glory see.

My God and I
 Will go and for together
 We'll walk and talk
 And jest as good friends do
 This earth will pass
 And with it common trifles
 But God and I
 Will go unendingly.

(4-H Pledge in unison)

Note: Each of the four H's mounts a green leaf on the white background board as he speaks. The stem of green is added last to complete the clover.

If this service were in the evening, it would be very effective to have a series of colored slides picturing appropriate scenes that fit into the descriptive words of "My God and I".

II. MY 4-H CLUB

by Don Claussen

Eight people would be required for this service -- one to represent each letter in "My 4-H Club."

- M - is for the many things God has blessed us with to help us live a life of happiness. He has graciously given us food, clothing, homes, and above all--loving parents. For these we should be deeply grateful.
- Y - is for youth in all its splendor and purity. Youth on which the world of tomorrow rests its future. Youth who as loyal citizens will help to maintain lasting world peace. Only with the help of God above can we attain these goals with certainty.
- 4 - is for the 4 elements of the 4-H pledge--head, heart, hands, and health. Head--that we may instill in our minds an intelligent understanding and an appreciation of nature and of the environment in which we live. Heart--that we may, now more than ever before, turn to God for His guidance in our problems of everyday living. Hands--that we may develop our talents for a greater usefulness in learning by doing. That we may help produce food and fiber for home and market. Health--that we may build for a strong America by being a healthy 4-H member.
- H - is for happiness that we may attain by joining with friends for work, fun and fellowship. This is a true goal of all 4-H members. However, we should realize that only a child of God can really be happy.
- C - is for church that we may all develop into well-balanced young people. We can never thank God enough for all of the fine crops, bountiful rains, bright sunshine, freedom from insect plagues, and above all--our home and family.
- L - is for love for our family, friends, and all with whom we associate throughout our life. We should also have love for our jobs, community projects, and our dear United States of America.
- U - is for understanding which means so much to all lands throughout the world today. If all people could truly understand each other there would not be constant unrest in the world. Above all, we should understand God and all the wonders He has given us.
- B - is to "Build a Better World for Tomorrow" that we and following generations may live peaceably together so that no one will ever know what war means. A better world of tomorrow is the job and responsibility of everyone. Let's all work together with God and really have a better world for tomorrow. When building this magnificent world, let's not forget about the most important tools, faith, prayer, and thanksgiving.

Leader: To sum up our duty as loyal 4-H members and believing children of God, we will all have to remember just what our own individual task in this great project will be. It can be beautifully summarized in a meaningful little lyric set to music entitled "My Task".

"My Task"

To love someone more dearly every day,
To help a wandering child to find his way,
To ponder o'er a noble tho't, and pray,
And smile when evening falls,
And smile when evening falls,
This is my task.

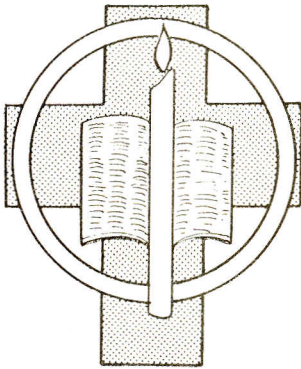
To follow truth as blind men long for light,
To do my best from dawn of day till night,
To keep my heart fit for His holy sight,
And answer when He calls,
And answer when He calls,
This is my task.

And then my Savior by and by to meet,
When faith hath made her task on earth complete,
And lay my homage at the Master's feet
Within the jasper walls,
Within the jasper walls,
This crowns my task.

It is suggested that you sing or read as a poem "God Has Created a New Day" at the beginning of the Service.

God has created a new day,
Silver and green and gold;
Live that the sunset may find us
Worthy His gift to hold.

Benedictions



May the silence of the hills
The joy of the winds,
The peace of the fields
The music of the birds
The fire of the sun
The strength of the trees
And the faith of a little child,
In all of which is God
Be in your hearts.

Amen

Oh God, who hast made us glad in the service of Thy house; may the blessing we have received pass not away from us, but abide in the sanctuary of our hearts, that we, being helped by Thee, may be able in all things to please Thy loving eyes; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

O Thou strong Father of all nations, draw Thy great family together with an increasing sense of our common blood and destiny, that peace may come on earth at last, and Thy sun may shed its light rejoicing on a holy brotherhood of peoples. Amen.

Poems

"A Prayer For Every Day"

Make me too brave to lie or be unkind,
Make me too understanding, too, to mind
The little hurts companions give, and friends,
The careless hurts that no one quite intends.
Make me too thoughtful to hurt others so.
Help me to know
The inmost hearts of those for whom I care,
Their secret wishes, all the loads they bear,
That I may add my courage to their own.
May I make lonely folks feel less alone,
And happy ones a little happier yet.
May I forget
What ought to be forgotten; and recall
Unfailing, all
That ought to be recalled, each kindly thing,
Forgetting what might sting.
To all upon my way,
Day after day,
Let me be joy, be hope! Let my life sing!

-- Mary Carolyn Davies

"Out In The Fields With God"

The little cares that fretted me
I lost them yesterday,
Among the fields above the sea,
Among the winds at play,
Among the lowing of the herds,
The rustling of the trees,
Among the singing of the birds,
The humming of the bees.

The foolish fears of what might happen
I cast them all away
Among the clover-scented grass,
Among the new-mown hay,
Among the husking of the corn,
Where drowsy poppies nod
Where ill thoughts die and good are born-
Out in the fields with God.

-- Louise Imogene Guiney

"Through The Year"

God be with you in the Springtime
 When the violets unfold,
 And the buttercups and cowslips
 Fill the fields with yellow gold;
 In the time of apple blossoms,
 When the happy bluebirds sing,
 Filling all the world with gladness -
 God be with you in the Spring!

God be with you in the Summer,
 When the sweet June roses blow,
 When the bobolinks are laughing
 And the brooks with music flow;
 When the fields are white with daisies
 And the days are glad and long -
 God be with you in the Summer,
 Filling all your world with song.

God be with you in the Autumn,
 When the birds and flowers have fled,
 And along the woodland pathways
 Leaves are falling, gold and red;
 When the Summer lies behind you,
 In the evening of the year -
 God be with you in the Autumn,
 Then to fill your heart with cheer.

God be with you in the Winter,
 When the snow lies deep and white,
 When the sleeping fields are silent
 And the stars gleam cold and bright.
 When the hand and heart are tired
 With life's long and weary quest -
 God be with you in the Winter,
 Just to guide you into rest.

-- Julian S. Cutler

"A Nation's Life"

I know three things must always be
 To keep a nation strong and free;
 One is a hearth, bright and dear
 With busy, happy, loved ones near;
 One is a ready heart and hand
 To love and serve and keep the land;
 One is a worn and beaten way
 To where the people go to pray.
 So long as these are kept alive
 Nation and people will survive.
 God keep them always, everywhere
 The Hearth, the FLAG, the PLACE OF PRAYER.

-- Clarence Flynn

Please Report

REPORT ON 4-H SUNDAY OBSERVANCE

Please send a report of your Rural Life Sunday Service to the county extension office at once, giving the information listed below. Attach a copy of the printed program (or hand written program). If possible, take appropriate pictures of the service, or participating group and include with this report. The Extension office will then send this report to the State 4-H office.

Name of Club _____ County _____

Local Leader _____

State briefly how your club observed Rural Life Sunday _____

Did you cooperate with other clubs? _____

If so, which clubs? _____

Where was service held? _____

Date _____

Church or churches participating _____

Name and address of pastor _____

Approximate number present _____

Other remarks _____

SIGNED _____