

The United Methodist Church designates the second Sunday in February as Scouting Sunday. Most churches that sponsor or host both Boy and Girl Scouts will celebrate the ministry and the adults and youth involved. Scouting Ministries Sunday is an opportunity to recognize those involved in the ministry and invite others to join.

Who is currently a girl or boy scout?

Who has ever been a girl or boy scout?

Who has ever served as a girl or boy scoutmaster?

Who has ever served as a Big Brother or Big Sister?

### Prayer for Scouting Sunday

From UM BOW #436 (MARK TROTTER, U.S.A., 20TH CENT.).

O God, your will is that all your children should  
grow into fullness of life.

We lift to you the ministry of scouting.

We offer you thanks for camping, to teach us that the  
world is our great home;

for study and work, to build character;

for service, to see our responsibility to those in  
need;

for encouragement in genuine patriotism and vital  
faith.

Bless the work of scouting, in this place and around  
the world, that, through its efforts, the young  
may, like our Lord, increase in wisdom and in  
stature, and in favor with you and all people.

Amen.

## Interactive lesson



*picture from MMMS collection*

<Call for some volunteers; pair each with a buddy>

Let's imagine that we are about to go on a long journey and need some supplies. I have a bag here with some items in it; I want each of you in turn to look through it and pull something out for your buddy next to you. Hold onto it until everyone is done picking an item. <Let them pick items>

OK, what did you choose, and why? <Let them respond>

Was there anything you really wanted to give that was not in the bag? (If so, what, and why did you want to give them that?) <Let them respond>

What happens if one of you on the journey does not have what you need? <Let them respond>

We talk about our Spiritual journeys through life. What would you want to give someone going on the spiritual equivalent of a hike with you?

<Let them respond>

What happens if someone in your spiritual group does not have what they need? <Let them respond>

Today is Scouting Sunday. What is the role of a scoutmaster for a scout journey? <Let them respond>

Does the scoutmaster do the walking for the scout, or carry all of the things the scout needs for them?

<Let them respond>

Who is the master for our spiritual journeys through life? <Let them respond>

What does Jesus (God/Holy Spirit) do for our spiritual journeys? <Let them respond>

Does Jesus (God/Holy Spirit) do the spiritual walking for us, or carry all of the things we may need on it for us? <Let them respond>

God makes sure we are equipped for our journey, teaches us how to do it safely so that we can enjoy it, and provides assistance if something goes awry along the way (usually through others in our life).

Remember as you go through life that God has equipped you to live – and is ready to give additional help & guidance when needed, for you to live more fully – and reach heights you may not have thought possible.

## Gospel lesson

We continue again from where we left off last week:



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/healing-capernaum/>;  
credit: LUMO

### Mark 1:29-39 (NRSV)

<sup>29</sup>As soon as they left the synagogue, they entered

the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.

<sup>30</sup>Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once.

<sup>31</sup>He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

<sup>32</sup>That evening, at sundown, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons.

<sup>33</sup>And the whole city was gathered around the door.

<sup>34</sup>And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

<sup>35</sup>In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed.

<sup>36</sup>And Simon and his companions hunted for him.

<sup>37</sup>When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you."

<sup>38</sup>He answered, "Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do."

<sup>39</sup>And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.

*The word of God for the people of God*

<Hymn “We Would See Jesus”

UMH #256 vv.3-5>

## Message: With Wings Like Eagles



picture from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/becoming-the-people-of-god/fifth-sunday-after-the-epiphany-year-b-lectionary-planning-notes/fifth-sunday-after-the-epiphany-year-b-graphics>

Please pray with me?

Great Master who guides us through life,  
as we take time now to further consider today's  
scriptures, please

- speak Your words through my mouth,
- open our ears to hear Your message, and
- abide in our hearts,

That we may remember to turn to You in all things and  
to pay attention to others' needs as we live in  
community with them. Amen.

We conclude the Epiphany sermon series (but not our  
aim of) “Becoming the People of God” “With Wings Like  
Eagles”:

“Though this is the final week of this worship  
series, our journey to become the people of God  
continues as sanctifying grace works in our lives  
to form us more and more into the image of Christ.”



pictures from MMMS collection

In 2015, my sisters and I went on an overnight hike at the Delaware Water Gap. My sister's coworker said she had been on some hikes and invited anyone who wanted to join her. We headed out knowing that it was supposed to rain that evening. As you can see, I took my camera; I got some nice pictures along the way.

When we took too long on the trail and had to set up camp in pouring rain, it became apparent that the coworker had not had to deal with this situation before. My oldest sister, however, had been a scoutmaster for both her boys and her daughter.

She was able to get us to set up dry tents under a tarp and settle in while she made hot food for us to eat. When morning rolled around and the weather cleared, she had us dry our wet things in the morning sun while we had breakfast to start our day.

The coworker of my other sister, the one who had set up the trip, took longer to get going in the morning. She had been unwilling to accept advice from my scoutmaster sister in the evening, so her sleeping bag had gotten wet and she had gotten chilled. She was very lucky the weather was not unseasonably cold.

Over hot drinks in the morning, my sister was able to explain to that remorseful woman some of the ways to be more prepared on hikes, using our experiences of the night before as examples. We all learned a lot;

eventually we each had to pack up our own things and get ready to start walking again.

Once we got back on the trail, there were beautiful views and things to see along the way. We might not have made it that far or enjoyed the trip if we had not had someone resourceful keeping an eye on those of us who were less experienced along the way.

Much like that coworker was oblivious to or in denial of my sister's capability on the trail, people seem to be oblivious to or in denial of God's caring for us - and this goes waaay back.



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/elijah-baal/>

In Isaiah, the prophet twice asks the people, “Have you not known? Have you not heard?” and goes on to remind them of the power and commitment of the Lord, strengthening and renewing the people that they might (figuratively speaking) soar like eagles.

Yet people suffer, both physically and spiritually, when they try to live without regard for God's ways. We hear about people being brokenhearted, wounded, outcast, and downtrodden today as well as in biblical times. The psalmist sings about how the Lord heals the brokenhearted and wounded, gathers in the outcast, and lifts up the downtrodden - but casts the

wicked down. How well do we pay attention to and praise God for all that the Lord does to save us from ourselves, from the sins of humanity?

Instead of helping nurture one another, too often we seek to get ahead of others at the expense of the community.

- Perhaps for a better deal we go to a superstore or order something delivered instead of buying locally, and the local business that cannot compete with that ends up closing.
- Perhaps we do not talk to our neighbors because it feels uncomfortable and risky to introduce ourselves, or we get into an argument with them about how property is maintained, and then are disappointed that they do not stay in the community when opportunity arises elsewhere.
- Perhaps we sit tight and do not respond when an alarm sounds, and then are dismayed about long response times for help in emergencies.

We seem to want to know what is in it for us, rather than trusting God and working to build God's kingdom on earth.



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/healing-capernaum/>;  
credit: LUMO

Jesus did not just make use of helpful people and ignore useless ones. Jesus healed Simon's mother, and

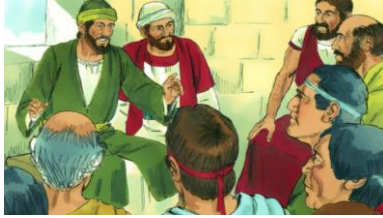


she was able to contribute to society again in her customary manner. The whole city sought Jesus's healing power and power over demons, and Jesus helped the members of the community.

But notice that Jesus did not just keep doing all they asked. After doing the work of healing and casting out demons, Jesus took time to go pray: alone time, the kind of time that renews us. He also knew that the people of the city would become a healthier society if they turned to God and did not become dependent on the miracle-working man in their midst.

After having helped them through their difficulties, he made them live their own lives again, much like scoutmasters have scouts each help pack up camp and their things and hike themselves the rest of the way. Jesus went on to other towns, to help as many as possible to know about the power of God working in their lives, in their world, that they could seek healthier life in God's kingdom.

Jesus proclaimed good news to the people: that the kingdom of God was near them, and they had the choice to live in it rather than be trapped in the world of sin with no way out. God gives us a choice for better, even at the cost of Jesus' death on a cross.



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/paul-lystra-derbe/>

Paul proclaimed the Good News, the gospel, to as many people as he could get to listen. In today's excerpt to the Corinthians, he gets into one of the great Christian faith paradoxes: he is free, so he cherishes that by slaving for others.

He is free from the ritual requirements of Jewish law. His salvation – his self-worth and ultimate future with God – does not depend on his meeting the expectations or demands of any person in society. He is filled with extreme joy at this and wants to share this awesome news with everyone – including the fact that this freedom is available for everybody!

But people are too busy with their own affairs to bother listening, too wrapped up in their own lives. So Paul takes the initiative to enter into their spheres, becoming like them so that they will listen to him, not charging or requiring anything that would be a further burden on them in return. This mirrors what God did for us, in Jesus.

And this shows us what we need to do, to share the Good News with others – for share it we must, because this world is crying under the weight of sin upon it when God would have us soar with wings like eagles.



picture from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/becoming-the-people-of-god/fifth-sunday-after-the-epiphany-year-b-lectionary-planning-notes/fifth-sunday-after-the-epiphany-year-b-graphics>

- † First, pay attention to God: what the Holy Spirit is already doing, the call for us to repent and seek Jesus more closely, and the call for us to help spread the Word by serving others.
- † Next, pay attention to others: notice the ones helping us and make their burden easier, observe in those around you who may be in need of help, and ask God for discernment about how best to bring the Good News into their lives.

We do not live in a vacuum; we live in community. By staying healthy and giving to others what will help them on their spiritual journey, your journey becomes easier as well. Let God strengthen you and lift you up through your service to others, that you may be part of God's holy kingdom.