

Week 2
"Inside Out"

Music for Gathering

[see music document for a list of secular songs about change that could be played as people gather]

Welcome

[after a general welcome statement and announcements, if any…]

Leader: We continue our worship series on change. Last week, we were reminded that the Creator God made us for change, creating an amazing physical body, a curious mind, and a willing spirit to grow and change over the course of our lives. It is what makes life vital and is the bedrock for our spiritual path.

Enter the Play Zone

[as theme music begins underneath]

Leader: You'll never know what is possible unless you pop the top of that container of imagination! When we check out what's inside and take a look "under the hood," all kinds of adventures can begin!

Theme Song

"Change is Good"

[scores and recordings are in your downloads]

Leader: Our Scripture this week invites us to remember the baptism of Jesus and the message that we, as followers of Jesus, are changed constantly "from the inside out." Transformation does not start with the action of change itself, but a willingness within our own spirits to "lean into" the life path that is calling us.

Opening Prayer

Let us pray together:

Life-giving God,
you refresh us from the inside out
with your water of life and spirit.
Open us to your presence within us
and help us see how you are
re-shaping our spirits each day.
Calm our fears, and animate our spirits
for this time of discovery.
Amen.

Opening Hymn/Song

"I Was There to Hear Your Borning Cry"
Chalice 75, ELW 732, GTG 488, FWS/STF 2051, NCH 351, VU 644
or
"From the Inside Out"
Songselect #4705176

Peace

The peace of Christ be with you!
And also with you!
I invite you to pass the peace with those around you.
[Use a gesture or spoken phrase familiar to your congregation, or teach the ASL for "Peace and Play."]

Story for All Ages

[See the Children's Time document for this script.]

Contemporary Reading

[This reading can be done by one person, as is written here, or it can be done as a dramatized reading (see "The Committee" Drama in your document downloads).]

We all live with a "committee" inside our minds. Hear this described in a reading by Marcia McFee.

"There is a committee inside my head. All seemingly a part of me, of who I am,
and yet at times I feel I am at war with myself
…within myself…until I feel I am with-out my 'self.'

"Sometimes I wander among the committee
among what feels like ruins
pondering
wondering
whatever happened to disjoint, disturb, disrupt
the whole
that is me.

"There is a committee inside my head.

A simple decision becomes a giant task.
A relationship becomes so complicated.
A dream dies.
Fear gets the better of me.
I fly off the handle!
I quash my passion.
I wallow in uncertainty.

"The committee is recognizable. I try each one on for size and they all fit.

"The realist and the dreamer collide — but they are separated by the wall which I construct in order to protect each piece…but what happens if they are allowed to dance with one another? The realist fine tuning and the dreamer urging on?

"The eager and spontaneous irritates the orderly — but they are frozen as I fight to defend the rights of both…but what happens if they are allowed to dance with one another? Order and spontaneity combine, birthing creativity?

"Impatience meets with stubbornness, and the non-conformist makes demands…and all the while the mediator pleads frighteningly, afraid of the passion which lives within…but what if they dance? play? push and pull that turns to give and take? What if they are allowed this relating? What if they are allowed this joy?

“Can I let go?

“Not of my committee…but can I let go of my own tight grip around the throat of my own potential…potential fire, passion, caring, groundedness, freedom, love…

“Can I see that which is holy and fine?

“That which is me, made in the image of God!”

A Word in Music

“From the Inside Out” [for choir]
or
“New Wine” [for band]
Songselect #7102397

Ancient Reading

Mark 1: 1-15 (The Message)

The good news of Jesus Christ—the Message!—begins here, following to the letter the scroll of the prophet Isaiah.

> *Watch closely: I’m sending my preacher ahead of you;*
> *He’ll make the road smooth for you.*
> *Thunder in the desert!*
> *Prepare for God’s arrival!*
> *Make the road smooth and straight!*

John the Baptizer appeared in the wild, preaching a baptism of life-change that leads to forgiveness of sins. People thronged to him from Judea and Jerusalem and, as they confessed their sins, were baptized by him in the Jordan River into a changed life. John wore a camel-hair habit, tied at the waist with a leather belt. He ate locusts and wild field honey.

As he preached he said, “The real action comes next: The star in this drama, to whom I’m a mere stagehand, will change your life. I’m baptizing you here in the river, turning your old life in for a kingdom life. His baptism—a holy baptism by the Holy Spirit—will change you from the inside out.”

At this time, Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. The moment he came out of the water, he saw the sky split open and God’s

Spirit, looking like a dove, come down on him. Along with the Spirit, a voice: "You are my Son, chosen and marked by my love, pride of my life."

At once, this same Spirit pushed Jesus out into the wild. For forty wilderness days and nights he was tested by Satan. Wild animals were his companions, and angels took care of him.

After John was arrested, Jesus went to Galilee preaching the Message of God: "Time's up! God's kingdom is here. Change your life and believe the Message."

Sermon

[See notes in the Sermon Fodder document and Discussion on the WDS website.]

Play-Doh Contemplation

[It will be a good idea to have some "background" music during this exercise. Even though I'm calling this "contemplation," feel free to choose more lighthearted instrumental music to make it feel fun…or even move from playful in the first part to contemplative in the second part.]

Leader: Each week, we have a time of contemplation as an opportunity to shape Play-Doh as we think about change in our own lives. Today I invite you to use the Play-Doh to make a shape that represents how you are feeling "on the inside" about change. Take a moment to do that now, allowing yourself to imagine what the committee members inside your head are trying to convince you about your approach to change. Even if you think you have no idea what you feel inside about change, simply allow the re-shaping of the clay to be your prayer of opening to revelations inside you.

[When it is time to move on, move into the "Ready for a Change" song and Prayers.]

Prayers of the People

"Ready for a Change"

Take this broken spirit, create in me a clean heart,
heal this wounded healer and point me to the good road.
Lord, I'm ready for a change, only you can make me change,
Lord, I'm ready for a change, only you can make me change,
only you can make me change, Lord, I'm ready for a change.

Wipe away these tears, Lord, and end my night of weeping,
wash away the old ways, replace my pain with your joy!
Lord, I'm ready for a change, only you can make me change,
Lord, I'm ready for a change, only you can make me change,
only you can make me change, Lord, I'm ready for a change.

Give my life a new start, and plant in me a fresh
seed that grows and blossoms into the fruit of blessing.

[Continue with prayers as are familiar to your community, and/or feel free to use these intercessory categories, reordering them or adapting the categories for your context.]

For all who are experiencing change as a result of civic policies and laws,
may they be supported in their search for good outcomes and resolutions.
From our community and beyond, we name these persons…
[lift up people and places being affected by institutional or political unrest, as appropriate]

For all who are experiencing change in their sense of identity or work,
may they know their sacred worth no matter the chaos of unsettled circumstances.
From our community and beyond, we name these persons…
[lift up people who are undergoing life changes, as appropriate]

For all who are experiencing change in their sense of home,
may they be welcomed into safe and vibrant communities of belovedness.
From our community and beyond, we name these persons…
[lift up people who are moving, who are displaced, who are suffering lack of a home, as appropriate]

For all who are experiencing change in their health,
may they feel the healing power of love and care.
From our community and beyond, we name these persons…
[lift up people with health concerns, as appropriate]

For all who are facing change in their lives,
may they, may we, find the strength and courage to move forward.
For our community and beyond, we name these things…
[lift up any issues that your community, your church, is in the midst of dealing with, as appropriate]

In this silence we offer to you the deepest yearning of our hearts…

Silence

Holy and Living God,
when we have hesitated to dig deep,
when we have been too afraid to look within
and give *ourselves* the understanding that we need,
forgive us and remind us that we are forgiven.

When we have lost touch with your presence within us,
thinking that we might fall alone rather than fall into your arms,
forgive us and remind us that we are forgiven.

When we have forgotten that it isn't all up to us,
that you are also changing us continually from the inside out,
forgive us and remind us that we are forgiven.

We pray this in the name of Jesus, who came to change our hearts for good…

The Lord's Prayer

Sung Response

[sung]

Wipe away these tears, Lord, and end my night of weeping,
wash away the old ways, replace my pain with your joy!
Lord, I'm ready for a change, only you can make me change,
Lord, I'm ready for a change, only you can make me change,
only you can make me change, Lord, I'm ready for a change.

Offering the Possibilities and Praise

[The call for offering would be a good time to highlight a new ministry or collaboration with another organization for change in your community.]

Song of Commitment/Doxology

"Jesus We Are Here"
GTG 392, MV 189, FWS/STF 2273, W&R 659
[Try this easy song of commitment, or use a doxology familiar to your community.]

Jesus, we are here, Jesus, we are here
Jesus, we are here, we are here for you!

Offering Prayer

Holy God,
We offer these gifts
and the gift of our co-working relationship with you.
May we use our lives to lean into your paths,
into the changes you have in store for us.
Bless all of this to your glory
and to the work of making the world a better place for all.

[insert Communion here if needed]

Closing Hymn/Song

"In the Midst of New Dimensions"
Chalice 458, GTG 315, FWS/STF 2238, NCH 391
or
"Change"
Songselect #7146725

Benediction

From the Gospel According to Riley,
(with sadness) "We used to play tag and stuff."
Remember that your spirit within is created to play with God's Spirit.

Go into the world knowing
that the Potter God is still shaping and reshaping you as you were made to do;
that the Teacher Jesus is inviting you to a change of heart,
making it all so very possible;
and that the Adventurous Spirit is luring you to
more play and curiosity in your precious life.

Go in peace,
stay in courage,
Amen!

Music for Going Out

[Let the Postlude in this series send people out in joy!]