



Rite-13 Liturgy Guide

Rite-13

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A Celebration of Manhood and Womanhood

(often referred to as “the Rite-13 ceremony”)

Preparation for the Liturgy

Materials to use in the sessions with parents and youth prior to the ceremony.

The Liturgy

Copies of the Liturgy which you can reproduce “as is” or, using the disk, adapt for your own situation. A “program” for the liturgy service is also included in a separate file, for ease in working with the graphics on your computer.

Samples

Materials used by St. Anne’s Episcopal Church, Atlanta, Georgia for their Celebration of Manhood and Womanhood. They were developed by Tracey Herzer, a LeaderResources J2A workshop leader, who was also on the staff of St. Anne’s as the J2A program coordinator at the time of submission. Tracey is now the Executive Director here at LeaderResources. Our thanks to Tracey and the folks at St. Anne’s for their ideas.

Prayers

Several prayers which you may want to copy, frame, and use as gifts for the parents, youth and/or their families.

Certificate

A copy of the certificate that you can use as a template or as an example to create your own. This was created using a standard Windows frame so you can easily choose it or another frame and font to create a certificate. We recommend using stationary or certificate paper to make the certificate more attractive. The certificate is included in a separate file for ease in working with the graphics on your computer.

PARENT MEETING ONE

*** Note: This lesson plan is also included in the Rite-13 text file with the second Parent Meeting. ***

Goals

- To get to know one another.
- To look together as a group at the Rite-13 liturgy.

Preparation

In this first meeting with the Rite-13 parents, allow time for everyone to arrive at the church or other meeting place. Serve light refreshments.

After everyone has come together, pass out prepared name tags. Ask each individual to introduce themselves to the group and to tell the group the name of their child in the program. Ask them to share a distinguishing feature or quality about that young person. In effect, you are asking them to brag about their child for a moment. What is the one thing you like the very best about your child? What one word would you use to describe your child? If both parents are present, then each will share about their young person.

After all have been introduced, explain to the group that the purpose of the meeting is to get to know one another a little bit, as well as to explore some of the meanings of the Rite-13 Liturgy.

Introduction

Hand out copies of the Rite-13 liturgy and mark the story of Jesus in the Temple in the Bible (Luke 2:41-52). Explain that the group is going to do a role play of the liturgy in the church.

Take the group into the church. Ask them to sit on either side of the aisle. Ask three or four adults to volunteer to be the celebrities. The first six or eight people sitting on the lectern side of the aisle will be the parents of these celebrities. The first two pews on the gospel side of the aisle will be the youth group. The remaining people in attendance will be the congregation.

Explain to the parents that the Rite-13 Ceremony will take place on or near their child's 13th birthday. This is the time when we celebrate the gift of manhood and womanhood. We also charge the congregation and the youth group to take seriously their commitments to these young people. We remind the parents that we understand the difficulty and demands of raising children, and so we do not charge them with anything, but rather, pray for them.

Explain to the parents the importance of the ceremony in terms of a rite of passage. The following text may be helpful:

[A] misconception that inhibits a family process of life-cycle ceremonies is the assumption that the passage is the same as the ceremony. From the perspective of an emotional system, rites of passage begin six months to a year before, and end a similar length of time after, the ceremony. After all, some people were married (emotionally) long before the ceremony, and some emotionally never leave home after it; some were "buried" before they died, while others who are

deceased remain to haunt for years. Only when we can see these passages as the year or more surrounding the ceremony can we understand that it is the family that is doing most of the changing, and that more members of the family than those being celebrated are going through the passage. . . . From another direction, the concept that the passage is not merely the ceremony enhances the opportunity for involving family members creatively. There is no more clear-cut example of how process affects content. Involving relatives increases the spiritual message because such a procedure fits naturally with what the ceremony was supposed to have been all along—a family event. The family emotional process thus “gets behind” the message.¹

Explain further that this particular rite of passage, puberty, is something that happens to everyone. You might consider explaining the classical structure of a puberty rite of passage which appears to be consistent in all cultures:

- Separation
- Initiation
- Re-assimilation with a new status

Explain that the initiation phase (some people back off from this name, as it can be suggestive of fraternity/sorority hazing—use it if it is comfortable for you) contains the elements of instruction in the history and customs of the community, an initiation ceremony—sometimes an ordeal (in this case, standing before the congregation and leading them in saying a psalm) —and an encounter with the divine. ***All of these elements are present, to one degree or another, in the Journey to Adulthood program.***

Ask if there are any questions or concerns that the parents would like to discuss at this point.

Run through the entire ceremony, pausing after each section to discuss the questions below. One of the youth leaders should serve as the Celebrant. Remind parents to lay hands on their young person at the end of the ceremony, and to leave their hands on during all the prayers for all the youth. We want to remind parents to touch and love their children in appropriate ways. The laying on of hands in prayer is a special and delightful way to communicate our affection for our children in the context of this liturgy.

The Presentation

“ . . . we present to you *N.* and *N.* who this day move from childhood to manhood and womanhood.”

Questions

Your son or daughter has recently turned thirteen, and this ritual allows us to celebrate together the transition from childhood to manhood or womanhood.

- What do you understand by the terms “childhood”, “manhood”, and “womanhood”?
- Why do we celebrate this transition at thirteen?

¹ Edwin H. Friedman, *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue*, New York: The Guilford Press, 1985, pages 167-168.

Our Jewish brothers and sisters have been doing this for centuries in the bar/bat mitzvah. For many cultures, this age marks the transition from being a child to being a man or a woman and is accompanied by various initiation rites. The average age of menarche—the beginning of menstruation—today in young women in North America is eleven years and ten months.

- What feelings emerge for you personally as you envision this child, whom you have lovingly raised, making this transition?

The Charge to the Young People

“... as young men and women, it is given to you to share God’s power of creation. Human beings, because they are made in God’s image, are the only creatures on earth who can choose how to use their creative power—not only to create new life, but also to shape the world according to God’s purpose.”

Questions

- What does the phrase “gift of creative power” mean to you?
As human beings made in the image of God, we can decide what to do with this creative power—building a Stealth fighter is as much a creative act as writing or performing a symphony. Some people think that this creativity may be the distinguishing characteristic of being human. The creative energy that surges at puberty can and must be used in many other ways beyond the sexual as the young man or woman prepares for adulthood.
- Have you seen any signs of new creative powers in your son or daughter?
- Do you understand the connection between the power “to create new life” and the power “to shape the world according to God’s purpose”?

The Psalm

Read aloud the portion of Psalm 139 used in the service.

Questions

- What sentence or phrase particularly strikes you as you think about your son or daughter? Why?

The Prayer for the Parents

“When Mary and Joseph searched for Jesus and found him in the temple, talking with the elders, they realized that he was a child no longer.”

Read the story of Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:41-52).

Questions

- Has anything like this ever happened to you with your teenager? What were you feeling at the time? What feeling(s) does the memory evoke?
- How did you react? Why?
- We read that the teachers in the temple “were amazed at his understanding and his answers” (verse 47), but that his parents were “astonished” (verse 48) and that they “did not understand what he said to them” (verse 50). Why were the reactions of the two groups of adults so different? What bearing does this have with regard to your teenager in the *Journey to Adulthood* program? How do you feel about adults other than yourself having

a relationship with your teenager—having your teenager look to them for advice, for example—that is different from yours?

“O God, bless *M. and M.*, parents of *N. and N.* Rejoice with them as their sons and daughters become men and women. Strengthen them that they may support their sons and daughters as they begin the journey toward adulthood. Uphold them with your Spirit, that they may comfort them although they can neither walk their road for them nor shield them from pain. Carry them all safely through this journey, so that one day they may stand together as adults and friends, a joy and a comfort to each other all the days of their lives.”

Questions

- What strength in yourself do you look for during this change in your relationship with your son or daughter? What do you need at this time?
- In what specific ways (e.g. prayer, regular attendance at church, special times at meals, conversation, etc.) do you support your “sons and daughters as they begin the journey toward adulthood”?

Tell the parents that the young person’s knowledge that the parents support his or her new identity and endeavors is crucial.

- We know, as parents, that we cannot “shield them from pain,” yet we still try. How do you try to shield your son or daughter? What circumstances might seem critical enough to attempt to “shield them from pain”?
- The prayer refers to “standing together as adults and friends.” Do you find this new definition of your relationship helpful? Comforting? Threatening? Why or why not?
Reaching the stage of being adults who are capable of being friends is one mark of passing successfully through the separation and reincorporation of adolescence.

The Charge to the Young People

“Will you stand by them, knowing that there may be times when your support means more than any other?”

Questions

- Does your teenager seek support from his or her peers? How do you know this? How does seeking this support make you feel as a parent? Why?

The Charge to the Congregation

“As the living Body of Christ, we have been empowered by the Holy Spirit to do God’s work in the world. Will you, as a community of God which spans the generations, share your knowledge and experience with these young people as they become men and women?”

Questions

- Do you feel supported by the congregation as you raise your teenager? In what ways do you feel supported or not supported?
- Do you feel that the congregation has an obligation to “share [their] knowledge and experience with these young people as they become men and women”? Why or why not?
The Church is one of the few institutions to actively include all generations. It is significant and important, for this reason, that the Church conduct such rites of passage.

Initiating young people into new life stages implies handing on knowledge, wisdom, and experience—this is one of the reasons why it doesn't work well to have the young people initiate themselves. It is important in the life of the congregation that it be encouraged to take pride in its years and experience, and to take seriously the responsibility of handing down its collective and individual wisdom to its young men and women.

The Blessing

“The Celebrities kneel before the Celebrant. The parents come forward and lay their hands on his or her shoulders.”

Note, incidentally, that the teenagers do not have to promise anything, unlike the Jewish *bar/bat mitzvah*. Nor does the father end the service with the traditional prayer: “I thank thee, Lord God, King of the universe, who this day relieves me of care for this child.”

Questions

- If there are several young people in the ceremony, you will be touching your teenager for an appreciable time, perhaps even as long as one or two minutes. When was the last time you held or touched your teenager for at least a minute?

After the completion of the liturgy, ask the parents who have served as the celebrities to sit with their peer group.

Invite each group—parents, youth, congregation, and celebrities—to spend a few minutes talking in small groups about their responses and concerns about this liturgy. A few questions which seem to spark conversation are:

- What did you feel as you went through this liturgy?
- What might it have meant to you had you celebrated your 13th birthday in this way?
- What can we expect our young people to feel about this liturgy?
- How might we as a community honor them and make this a very special day?

Some of the most frequently asked questions have to do with the distinction we are making between manhood/womanhood and adulthood. See the annotated version of the service at the end of the Review of Liturgy section for help.

Re-gather the group after 15 minutes and ask them to share with one another what they discovered about themselves and about the liturgy in this exercise. Listen to all responses. Clarify whatever confusions may arise.

After all the discussion, remind parents that the Rite-13 program works best when the young people are present for as many meetings as possible. It is essential that they be present if the full, cumulative effect is to be felt. To that end, hand out the schedule for the next few months to all the parents. Ask them to prayerfully consider realigning all their commitments to make this youth group a priority in their lives. Remind them that the celebration of the Holy Eucharist is central to all the work we do in the Church and all of our lives both in and out of the church building. Regular attendance at Sunday services is a major part of our ongoing life and the life of the community of faith.

Answer any specific questions which the group may have. If you have not already obtained a signed release form from each parent, make sure you get them signed now.

Remind the parents that a full copy of the curriculum is in the church library for their review. Make available to the parents copies of the Annotated Rite-13, which follows the Review of Liturgy section.

Remind them, as well, that you, as leaders, are always available to them. You are grateful for the chance to work with their young person and are eager to get to know them as more than “Sally’s Mom” or “Tim’s Dad.”

Stand and close in prayer:

Almighty God, giver of life and love, bless (insert names). Grant us wisdom and devotion in the ordering of our lives, that we may be to this community of parents and the young people in our care a strength in need, wise counselors in perplexity, present comforters in sorrow, faithful companions in joy. And so knit our wills together in your will and our spirits in your Spirit, that we may live together as the Body of Christ, in love and peace all the days of our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

(adapted from the Prayer for Parents, Book of Common Prayer, page 444)

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REVIEW OF LITURGY FOR PARENTS OF CELEBRITIES

(PRE-CEREMONY MEETING)

*** Note: This lesson is also included in the Rite-31 text. ***

Goal: To prepare for the Celebration of Manhood and Womanhood.

Introduction

Shortly before conducting the Rite-13 ceremony, it's helpful to bring the young people who will be celebrating Rite-13 and their parents together for a rehearsal. By "walking through" the ceremony with both the young people and their parents, you will help them to feel prepared not only for the ceremony itself, but, in a larger sense, for the changes that are to come in the next few years. In this meeting, you can also deal with such "housekeeping" issues as the spelling of names in the Order of Service, etc.

Preparation

Give the parents and young people copies of the Rite-13 service, and go around the circle checking the spelling of names for the Order of Service and Certificates. Complete any other administrative tasks that need to be accomplished before the ceremony. Ask if there are any questions, either from the young people or their parents.

Rehearsal of the Ceremony

Go through the ceremony as slowly as is necessary, being sure to explain where the parents and the celebrities are to be through each part of the ceremony. Begin by telling them where they will be when the service begins, and run through the service section by section (as in Parent Meeting One, but without discussion between the sections). Be sure to point out the times and places where parents or celebrities will need to move. Remind parents once again to touch their young person at the appropriate times during the service.

Discussion

Show the group a copy of the Certificate, and explain that when the young people receive these Certificates in the ceremony, this is tangible proof that they will now be moving from childhood into manhood and womanhood. Invite a discussion of the feelings surrounding the coming ceremony and its significance in both the parents' and young people's lives. Ask if there are any other questions.

Closing Prayer

Almighty God, we know that times of change can be awkward, confusing, and frightening, particularly where our relationships with each other and with you are concerned. We ask that you stand with us during this time of growth and transformation: that you give our young people the strength and courage they need to accept the gifts of manhood and womanhood, and to move forward towards adulthood; and that you offer comfort and assurance to these parents that your grace will guide and protect their loved ones as they begin to move out into the world, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

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A CELEBRATION OF MANHOOD AND WOMAN HOOD (THE RITE-13 CEREMONY)

INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR THE ORDER OF SERVICE

We hesitate to burden you with yet another questionnaire, but as good Episcopalians we like to see everything done “decently and in good order.” Accordingly, we would appreciate your sharing with us the following information so that the Order of Service will reflect your wishes, and the certificate your son or daughter will receive will be inscribed as accurately as possible.

1. What is the full name of your son or daughter as you wish it to appear in the certificate?

2. By what name is your child called? How should the name appear in the Order of Service?

3. How do you wish the name(s) of the parent(s) to appear in the Order of Service?

4. Should anyone else's name appear in the Prayer for the Parents section of the Order of Service?

THE RITE-13 LITURGY

[Note: This lesson is also included in the Rite-13 text.]

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this lesson is to explain to the young people just why we have this ceremony. It asks them to consider critically *all* parts of the Rite-13 ceremony. This should not be done in one fell swoop but spaced out over a period of time, preferably in the first year of Rite-13. It is for this reason that this is presented in short segments (see A-F, below) during six meetings of the group.²

When dealing with the reading of the psalm, stress that, in keeping with the idea that manhood and womanhood are given, not earned, the Rite-13 ceremony should not be presented as a rigorous trial. Contrast the Jewish Bar/Bat Mitzvah, in which the young person leads the entire service, including a portion of Torah read in Hebrew and an interpretation of that passage, and is thereafter considered an adult in the congregation.

A major reason why the church is the right institution to be conducting rites of passage is that it is one of the few institutions which includes all generations. Initiating young people into new life stages implies handing on knowledge, wisdom and experience—that's one of the reasons why it doesn't work well to have the young people initiate themselves. The congregation should therefore be encouraged to take pride in its years and experience, and to take seriously the responsibility of handing down its collective and individual wisdom to its young men and women.

For further information on the Rite-13 ceremony, please see the annotated version of the service. This and the liturgy itself is found in the liturgy section of the program (near the end of the materials in the kit).

A. THE GIFT OF CREATIVE POWER

The transformation from childhood to womanhood or manhood marks one of God's great gifts. Today we celebrate the gift of manhood and womanhood with N. and N.

N. and N., by the grace of God you have lived through the pains and joys of childhood, and have grown strong. Now, as young men and women, it is given to you to share God's power of creation. Human beings, because they are made in God's image, are the only creatures on earth who can choose how to use their creative power—not only to create new life, but also to shape the world according to God's purpose. God calls us to use this gift to build and not to destroy. Are you aware of God's gift to you and the challenge to use it wisely?

² In preparing these lesson plans, we are indebted to Amanda J. Smith for the original notes on the service which are found in the annotated version of Rite-13.

Questions:

- What do we mean by manhood and womanhood? What makes a woman a woman or a man a man?
We focus on these terms, rather than “person” or “maturity” because the sexual component of the maturing process is psychologically compelling. Using neutral terms, such as “person”, may be seen by the young person as neutering, a denial of their womanhood or manhood. Using a term such as “maturity” blurs the distinction with adulthood. To be perfectly blunt, when a girl becomes a woman, it means she is capable of having babies; when a boy becomes a man, he is capable of fathering children.
- What are some of the pains and joys of childhood which adults do not experience or do not appear to experience?
Childhood pains and terrors can include monsters under the bed, bullies on the school bus or in the schoolyard, feelings of uncertainty or inadequacy or battering and incest. Every child, healthy or handicapped, troubled or serene, has survived some pain, overcome some obstacles and become strong. (See, for example, Frederick Buechner: Adolescence and the Stewardship of Pain, for an excellent perspective on the pains of childhood.) Children should be encouraged to recognize their own strengths. Equally, the children should be helped to remember and to relish the good times.
- Why is one’s gender a gift? What do we do with a gift?
- What does it mean to be made in God’s image?
As human beings made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27), we can decide what to do with this creative power—a nuclear missile submarine is as much a creative act as a symphony. Some people think that this creativity may be the distinguishing characteristic of being human. The creative energy that surges at puberty can and must be used in many other ways beyond the sexual as the young man or woman prepares for adulthood. A dog or a cat or a rabbit has no choice in the matter of how it uses its creative power: all it can do is procreate and make puppies, kittens and bunnies.

B. PSALM 139 (DOMINE, PROBASTI)

LORD, you have searched me out and known me;
you know my sitting down and my rising up;
you discern my thoughts from afar.
If I take the wings of the morning
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
Even there your hand will lead me
and your right hand hold me fast.
For you yourself created my inmost parts;
you knit me together in my mother’s womb.
I will thank you because I am marvelously made;
your works are wonderful, and I know it well.
My body was not hidden from you,
while I was being made in secret
and woven in the depths of the earth.

Your eyes beheld my limbs, yet unfinished in the womb;
all of them were written in your book;
they were fashioned day by day,
when as yet there were none of them.
Search me out, O God, and know my heart;
try me and know my restless thoughts.
Look well whether there be any wickedness in me
and lead me in the way that is everlasting.

Psalm 139:1-2, 9-10, 13-16, 23-24

Questions:

- Why does God “search us out and know us”? Why does God search us out? What does it mean to you to be known by God?
Compare this verse with: “Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.” (1 Corinthians 13:12b)
- What does it mean for God’s right hand to “hold me fast?”
- Why does the Psalmist say that “I am marvelously made”? Why do we give thanks to God for this?
- Why should we ask God to “know [our] restless thoughts”? Is anything hidden from God? How do you feel about this?
- What is “the way that is everlasting”? Why should God lead us in this way; can’t we find it for ourselves?

C. THE PRAYER FOR THE PARENTS

When Mary and Joseph searched for Jesus and found him in the temple talking with the elders, they realized that he was a child no longer. So, M. and M. stand watching N. and N. grow beyond childhood. Let us pray for them.

O God, bless M. and M., parents of N. and N. Rejoice with them as their sons and daughters become men and women. Strengthen them that they may support their sons and daughters as they begin the journey toward adulthood. Uphold them by your Spirit, that they may comfort them although they can neither walk their road for them nor shield them from pain. Carry them all safely through this journey, so that one day they may stand together as adults and friends, a joy and a comfort to each other all the days of their lives. *Amen.*

Questions:

- Why should parents rejoice that their sons and daughters become men and women?
- What kind of strength do parents need at this stage of their children’s lives? How can parents and children find mutual strength and support at this time?
The knowledge that the parent supports the new identity of the young man or woman, as well as his or her endeavors, is crucial.
- How can God’s Holy Spirit uphold us in our journeys?
- Do we really believe we’re all in this together—parents and children? How would we act if we really believed it?
Focus on the fact that the process includes them all—parents and children.

- How do adults demonstrate friendship? Can parents and their offspring reach that kind of level of friendship?

Reaching the stage of being adults who are capable of being friends is one mark of passing successfully through the separation and re-incorporation of adolescence.

D. THE CHARGE TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE

Dear friends of N. and N.: As they move beyond the circle of their families, they will need loyal friends. Will you stand by them, knowing that there may be times when your support means more than any other?

“Young People” refers primarily to the church group. However, the Celebrity may wish to invite close friends from outside the church to share in this special occasion. They should be invited to stand up with the class.

The influence of peers for this age group is well recognized: As young people begin to move away from their families, they turn to friends. Increasing responsibility and independence are exhilarating but scary. Therefore, one of the major strengths of the program can be to help young people understand why they are important to each other at this time, and to help them develop a respect for their own influence on and responsibility for each other. Their relationship in the church group can serve as a model for how to function in other peer groups as well.

Questions:

- What do we mean by friendship?
- What do we mean by loyalty?

The group needs to be loyal to every member because they are a member of the group, even if they are not the most popular, good looking, etc. It is important to reinforce the responsibility they have to each other as well as the fun they have together.

E. THE CHARGE TO THE CONGREGATION

As the living Body of Christ, we have been empowered by the Holy Spirit to do God’s work in the world. Will you, as a community of God which spans the generations, share your knowledge and experience with N. and N. as they become men and women?

Will you guide, guard and sustain them as they grow into the full stature of Christ?

Questions:

- What do young people look for from the congregation in terms of support? How can we realize this support?
- The congregation responds to both these charges with the words, “We will.” How, in fact, does the congregation “guard, guide and sustain” the young people?
The community’s willingness to recognize and celebrate the young person’s manhood or womanhood is important. Developed to communicate all this to the congregation so that their support is genuine. Young people have excellent “crap detectors”! Perhaps this is why they are so threatening.

F. THE BLESSING

N. you have been armed by Almighty God with both the imagination of childhood and the strength and creative power of womanhood (manhood); now you must journey forth to gain the skills you will need to assume full responsibility as an adult.

May Almighty God fill you with courage, wisdom and joy. *Amen.*

May Jesus Christ, your strong companion and never-failing friend, make you strong in faith and defend you on every side. *Amen.*

May the Holy Spirit guide you in truth and peace. *Amen.*

And may the blessing of God Almighty, Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer, rest upon you this day and for evermore. *Amen.*

Questions:

- Why should the young person need these qualities? What do the young people understand by the terms: “courage,” “wisdom” and “joy”?
- Why is Jesus referred to as a “strong companion and never-failing friend”? What is there in the Gospels that bears this out?
Encourage the young man or woman to develop a sense of God’s constant presence, a friend to talk things over with at any moment in the day. This can fill the need created by pulling away from family, but not wanting or being able to share everything with friends. In the Gospels, see for example, John 15:12-17.
- Why do we pray for the guidance of God’s Holy Spirit?
- Why do we use the terms “Creator,” “Redeemer” and “Sustainer” rather than “Father,” “Son” and “Holy Spirit”? Which terms are the young people more comfortable with?
- At the end of the liturgy, the young people, who have been seated up until now with their parents, cross the aisle to sit with their peers. What is the significance of this? How do the young people feel about this?

The Rite-13 Service Annotated

(NOTE: The annotated information is in the footnotes!)

*Following the Renewal of Baptismal Vows, the Celebrities together with their parents, sponsors, the other participants in the Rite-13 class, and the Celebrant move to the chancel steps.*³

Sponsors

_____, we present to you *N.* and *N.* who this day move from childhood to womanhood and manhood.

Celebrant

Dear People of God: The transformation from childhood to womanhood or manhood⁴ marks one of God's great gifts. Today we celebrate the gift of womanhood and manhood with *N.* and *N.*

N. and *N.*, by the grace of God you have lived through the pains⁵ and joys⁶ of childhood, and have grown strong. Now, as young men and women, it is given⁷ to you to share God's power of creation. Human beings, because they are made in God's image, are the only creatures on earth who can choose⁸ how to use their creative power—not only to create new life, but also to shape the world according to God's purpose. God calls us to use this gift to build and not to destroy. Are you aware of God's gift to you and the challenge to use it wisely.

Celebrities

I am.⁹

³ The Rite-13 ceremony may take place anywhere in the service during the Liturgy of the Word. At St. Philip's, we do it between the Nicene Creed or (preferably) the Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows and the Exchange of the Peace, feeling that this provides a good liturgical "bracket". We suggest that the Celebrities sit with their parents on one side of the aisle preceding the ceremony. The young people in the Rite-13 class sit on the other side of the aisle. During the ceremony, the parents and families stand on one side and the young people on the other with a gap between them. Following the ceremony and the Exchange of the Peace, the Celebrities join the other young people and sit with them during the service.

⁴ We focus on these terms, rather than "person" or "maturity" because the sexual component of the maturing process is psychologically compelling. Using neutral terms, such as "person," may be seen by the young person as neutering, a denial of their man- or womanhood. Using a term such as "maturity" blurs the distinction with adulthood.

⁵ Honor the child's strength. Childhood pains and terrors can include monsters under the bed, bullies on the school bus or in the school yard, feelings of uncertainty or inadequacy, or battering and incest. Every child, healthy or handicapped, troubled or serene, has survived some pain, overcome some obstacles and become strong. Children should be encouraged to recognize their own strengths.

⁶ The children should be helped to remember and to relish the good times.

⁷ Manhood and womanhood are gifts of God, not to be earned or proven.

⁸ As human beings made in the image of God, we can decide what to do with this creative power—a nuclear missile submarine is as much a creative act as a symphony. Some people think that this creativity may be *the* distinguishing characteristic of being human. The creative energy that surges at puberty can and must be used in many other ways beyond the sexual as the young man or woman prepares for adulthood.

Celebrant

Let us join with these young people in reciting Psalm 139. The congregation is asked to repeat the antiphon.¹⁰

Celebrities

O God, you have searched me out and known me; you know my sitting down and my rising up; you discern my thoughts from afar. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, Even there your hand will lead me and your right hand hold me fast.

Antiphon

Your works are wonderful, and I know it well.

Celebrities

For you yourself created my inmost parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I will thank you because I am marvelously made; your works are wonderful, and I know it well.

Antiphon

Your works are wonderful, and I know it well.

Celebrities

My body was not hidden from you, while I was being made in secret and woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes beheld my limbs, yet unfinished in the womb; all of them were written in your book. They were fashioned day by day, when as yet there were none of them.

Antiphon

Your works are wonderful, and I know it well.

Celebrities

Search me out, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my restless thoughts. Look well whether there be any wickedness in me and lead me in the way that is everlasting.

Antiphon

Your works are wonderful, and I know it well.

⁹ We do not ask the Celebrity to swear to anything as that would imply that they must *earn* the recognition of their womanhood or manhood rather than accepting it as a gift from God. However, we do ask that they be thoughtfully conscious—aware—of its significance.

¹⁰ We use Psalm 139, verses 1,8-9,12-15,22-23. Some themes to be emphasized are God's interest in the person—"searched me out and known me," strength and support—"your right hand [will] hold me fast," the total acceptance of the individual as he or she was created—"marvelously made," and the understanding of the "restless thoughts" that are an integral part of this transition. In keeping with the idea that manhood and womanhood are given, not earned, the Rite-13 should not be presented as a rigorous trial. (Contrast the Jewish Bar/Bath Mitzvah, in which the young person leads the entire service, including a portion of Torah read in Hebrew and an interpretation of that passage, and is thereafter considered an adult in the congregation.) Nevertheless, leading the Psalm of Celebration clearly and confidently is important. This means rehearsing in private and in the church, with lectern and microphone and coaching until the whole procedure is totally familiar. Time must be budgeted for this. Don't leave it until the last minute—that's panic-producing.

THE PRAYER FOR THE PARENTS¹¹

Celebrant

When Mary and Joseph searched for Jesus and found him in the temple, talking with the elders, they realized that he was a child no longer. So, *M.* and *M.* stand watching their *sons* and *daughters* grow beyond childhood. Let us pray for them.

O God, bless *M.* and *M.*, the *parents* of these young people. Rejoice¹² with them as their *sons* and *daughters* become men and women. Strengthen¹³ them that they may support¹⁴ their *sons* and *daughters* as they begin the journey toward adulthood. Uphold them by your Spirit, that they may comfort¹⁵ them although they can neither walk their road for them nor shield them from pain. Carry them all¹⁶ safely through this journey, so that one day they may stand together as adults and friends¹⁷, a joy and a comfort to each other all the days of their lives. *Amen.*

THE CHARGE TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE¹⁸

Celebrant

Dear friends of *N.* and *N.*: As they move beyond the circle of their families, they will need loyal¹⁹ friends. Will you stand by them, knowing that there may be times when your support means more than any other?

Young People

We will.

¹¹ This prayer is tricky to write in a universal form because there may be either one or two parents, and a single parent and celebrity may be of the same sex. That's why names are often used when pronouns might seem smoother.

¹² This is a celebration which should not be overshadowed by the awesome responsibilities to come.

¹³ They'll need it!

¹⁴ The knowledge that the parent supports the new identity of the young man or woman, as well as his or her endeavors, is crucial.

¹⁵ Sometimes that's all a parent can do.

¹⁶ Focus on the fact that the process includes them all. "Both" may be substituted here if there is only one parent.

¹⁷ Reaching the stage of being adults who are capable of being friends is one mark of passing successfully through the separation and reincorporation of adolescence.

¹⁸ "Young People" refers primarily to the church group. However, the Celebrity may wish to invite close friends from outside the church to share in this special occasion. They should be invited to stand up with the class.

The influence of peers for this age group is well recognized: as young people begin to move away from their families they turn to friends. Increasing responsibility and independence are exhilarating, but scary. Therefore, one of the major strengths of the program can be to help young people understand why they are important to each other at this time, and to help them develop a respect for their own influence on and responsibility for each other. Their relationship in the church group can serve as a model for how to function in other peer groups as well.

¹⁹ The group needs to be loyal to *every* member because they are a member of the group, even if they are not the most popular, good looking, etc. It is important to reinforce the responsibility they have to each other as well as the fun they have together.

THE CHARGE TO THE CONGREGATION²⁰

Celebrant

As the living Body of Christ, we have been empowered by the Holy Spirit to do God's work in the world. Will you, as a community of God which spans the generations²¹, share your knowledge and experience with *N.* and *N.* as they become men and women?

People

We will.

Celebrant

Will you guide, guard and sustain them as they grow into the full stature of Christ?

People

We will.

THE BLESSING

N. and *N.*, you have been armed by Almighty God with both the imagination of childhood and the strength and creative power of womanhood (manhood); now you must journey²² forth to gain the skills you will need to assume full responsibility as an adult²³.

The Celebrities kneel. The parents come forward and lay their hands on the Celebrities' shoulders. The Celebrant lays hands on each individually and says²⁴

²⁰ The community's willingness to recognize and celebrate the young person's manhood or womanhood is important. Strategies must be developed to communicate all this to the congregation so that their support is genuine.

²¹ A major reason why the Church is the right institution to be conducting rites of passage is that it is one of the few institutions which includes all generations. Initiating young people into new life stages implies handing on knowledge, wisdom and experience—that's one of the reasons why it doesn't work well to have the young people initiate themselves. The congregation should be encouraged to take pride in its years and experience, and to take seriously the responsibility of handing down its collective and individual wisdom to its young men and women.

²² This is the stage called "youth." American youth seem to respond better to words like "training period" or "apprenticeship."

²³ Responsible for self and society.

N., may Almighty God fill you with courage²⁵, wisdom²⁶ and joy²⁷. May Jesus Christ, your strong companion²⁸ and never-failing friend, make you strong in faith and defend you on every side. May the Holy Spirit guide you in truth and peace. And may the blessing of God Almighty, Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer, rest upon you this day and for evermore.

The People respond AMEN.

The Peace is then exchanged and the service continues with the Offertory.

²⁴ This is taken from the practice in the Jewish Bar/Bat Mitzvah service. The parents find this especially meaningful.

²⁵ Life is *not* easy, especially for adolescents.

²⁶ Reinforce this budding quality which is associated with age but which may be present and growing in the youngest.

²⁷ Joy is not an accident but a conscious part of a life that makes the most of God's gifts.

²⁸ Encourage the young man or woman to develop a sense of God's constant presence, a friend to talk things over with at any moment in the day. This can fill the need created by pulling away from family, but not wanting or being able to share everything with friends.

Sample letter to parents

January 6, 1999

Dear Parents:

Your teenager is a member of the Rite-13 Sunday School class at St. Anne's Episcopal Church. "Rite-13" gets its name from a special liturgy designed to recognize your son or daughter as an important member of St. Anne's. I want you to be aware that during the next few weeks we will be preparing for this important liturgical rite of passage called "**The Celebration of Manhood and Womanhood**". The ceremony will take place during our normal 10:30 Eucharist on **Sunday, February 7th**.

This ceremony is the liturgical cornerstone of the Journey to Adulthood program and it is a wonderful way to acknowledge the changes that are happening in your teen. Journey to Adulthood gives teenagers a safe place to wrestle with these changes. It also offers ceremonies that serve as Rites of Passage. In our culture, the line from childhood to adulthood is blurry at best and it's hard to know when we are "grown up". The Rite-13 Liturgy is designed to welcome teenagers to the journey of becoming adults and celebrate publicly, and in the midst of our worship, God's gift of manhood and womanhood. This liturgy recognizes the holy power of creation that God gives to each one of us.

We often take it for granted that our teens feel accepted and appreciated at St. Anne's, but during these years of adolescence - this time of change and uncertainty - our young people need to hear from us that they are extraordinary. We want to affirm the unique and wonderful gifts of each teenager involved. To that end, the names of each teenager who is preparing for this ceremony will be mentioned in our Prayers of the People for the next month. We'd also encourage you to pray specifically for your teenager and their peers as they stand on the brink of adulthood.

In order to prepare for this important event, we'd like to invite you and your Rite-13 teenager to share a special dinner with us the night before. We will gather in the parish hall on **Saturday night, February 6th, from 6:00 - 8:00 pm**. Please wear party clothes and join us for a wonderful dinner in honor of your teenager. This night will be like a rehearsal dinner before a wedding – a time to reflect on where we've been before we take a big step into who we will become.

I hope you will make plans to join us. Please call Tracey Herzer in the church office at (000-123-4567) to reserve your place.

In His Peace,

Tracey E. Herzer
Director of Children's and
Youth Ministries

William L. Evans
Interim Rector

Julie W. Huston
Associate Rector

Example contributed by Tracey Herzer, 11/99

Sample Invitation

Hello to all 7th & 8th Graders!

This is a special invitation to all students in the Rite-13 class at St. Anne's. During the next several weeks, we will be preparing for a very important ceremony that will take place on February 7th during the 10:30 Eucharist. The name of this ceremony is:

THE CELEBRATION OF MANHOOD AND WOMANHOOD

Basically, this is an opportunity to celebrate the gifts God has given you, as well as a time when the adults of this parish – including your parents – will recognize you as men and women. It is very similar to a Bar Mitzvah or Bat Mitzvah in the Jewish tradition.

You may not know anything about this ceremony, or you may know a little bit about it and be confused about why it is such a big deal. During the next several weeks in Sunday School we will be looking at the ceremony, talking about what it means, and making changes to the wording so that it will be meaningful to you.

It doesn't matter if you've already done your Rite-13 Ceremony or if you've never been to our class, we need and want you to be a part of this event. Each person has an important role to play – not just the teens who are celebrating their Rite-13 ceremony.

In addition, you and your parents are invited to join our youth workers, clergy, and vestry officers for a very special celebration and rehearsal dinner the night before – so mark your calendars for Saturday night, February 6th from 6:00 to 8:00 pm. If you have ANY questions, please call me at the church at XXX-XXXX.

See you Sunday!
Tracey ☺

Example contributed by Tracey Herzer, 11/99

Sample newsletter article for Rite-13 Celebration

"NOTHING GOES WITHOUT SAYING"

How often do we think to ourselves things like, "She knows I love her – it goes without saying" or "He knows how much I appreciate all his hard work – it goes without saying"? The truth is, words can be a powerful affirmation, and the absence of the right words can leave a void that really hurts. The truth is, very little goes without saying, and the important things should NEVER go without saying. There are things we know, but sometimes we need to hear them loud and clear.

During the 10:30 am service on **Sunday, February 7th**, we will celebrate an important rite of passage with some of our 7th and 8th Graders. This class is named **Rite-13** after the special liturgy we will celebrate with them on this day. In some respects, this is a new way of saying to our young people things we have meant to convey all along – things like: "We stand with you as you make your way on the journey; we're here if you need us; we think you are terrific; we love you." We often assume that our teens feel appreciated and accepted as a vital part of our parish, but adolescence can be such a time of uncertainty that some things just can't be said often enough.

One of the unique aspects of the *Journey to Adulthood* program is that it seeks to provide rites of passage that are often lacking in our culture. We help define points along the path to adulthood that tell our young people they are making progress; they are growing; they are becoming adults. Rite-13 is the liturgical cornerstone that lays the foundation for the entire congregation of St. Anne's Episcopal Church to rise up and in one mighty voice tell our young people, "You matter to us. Your lives are of inestimable value. The journey you are now embarking on is significant." It is a way that we fulfill our baptismal covenant of "seeking and serving Christ in all persons."

The Rite-13 Liturgy is a rite of passage that recognizes the gift that God bestows upon each one of us: the gift of manhood or womanhood. This is a free gift that we cannot earn and need not prove. This gift is the essence of who we are. The same energy that pushes us through adolescence gives us the power to change the world. As these young people grow and mature, their knowledge and skills will increase, but the core of who they are remains the same.

Here is a priceless opportunity for us to affirm all that is good in the young people who live and grow around us and to recognize them as young men and women in our midst. Don't miss this incredible chance to say out loud in a very powerful way what we have meant to say to them all along. Remember, NOTHING GOES WITHOUT SAYING!!

Example contributed by Tracey Herzer, 11/99

Sample 1: Bulletin insert prior to Rite-13 celebration

Are you a “Grown-Up”?

In our society, the line between childhood and adulthood is often a fuzzy one. Unlike other cultures, we don't have formalized rites of passage that define the points along the path to adulthood. We need ways to tell our young people they are making progress; they are growing and learning; they are becoming adults. The *Journey to Adulthood* program that we use attempts to do just that.

During the regular 10:30 service on **Sunday, February 7th**, we will celebrate an important Rite of Passage with some of our teens. This liturgy is formally called **“The Celebration of Manhood and Womanhood”**, but is more well-known as “Rite-13” since it takes place near the candidate's 13th Birthday – much like a bar mitzvah or bat mitzvah.

During the ceremony, we recognize the gift of womanhood or manhood that God bestows on each one of us. This is a free gift that we cannot earn and need not prove. This gift is the essence of who we are. As we grow and mature in the journey to adulthood, our knowledge and skills increase, but the magical core of who we are remains the same.

These are the teenagers who we will celebrate and recognize on February 7th:

Mary Brown

Bill Jones

Chris Smith

Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers as they prepare and plan to be with us to witness this important event.

Example contributed by Tracey Herzer, 11/99

Sample 2: Bulletin insert prior to Rite-13 celebration

“Nothing Goes Without Saying”

How often do we think things like, “She knows I love her – it goes without saying” or “He knows how much I appreciate all his hard work – it goes without saying”? The truth is, words can be a powerful affirmation, and the absence of the right words can leave a void that really hurts. The truth is, very little goes without saying, and the important things should NEVER go without saying. There are things we know, but sometimes we still need to hear them loud and clear.

During the 10:30 am service next week, we will have a chance to say some important things to some of our 7th and 8th Graders. We will celebrate an important rite of passage with them called **“Rite-13” or “The Celebration of Manhood and Womanhood”** with these teenagers:

**Mary Brown
Bill Jones
Chris Smith**

This ceremony gives us a way of saying to our young people things we have meant to convey all along – things like: “We stand with you as you make your way on the journey; we’re here if you need us; we think you are terrific; we love you.” We often assume that our teens feel appreciated and accepted as a vital part of our parish, but adolescence can be such a time of uncertainty, and some things just can’t be said often enough.

Please keep these teens in your prayers as they prepare for this significant event.

Example contributed by Tracey Herzer, 11/99

Sample invitation

All members of the Rite-13 Class
and their parents
are invited to join
the youth leaders and the rector
for a special rehearsal dinner
for the Rite-13 Liturgy

Honoring:

Chris Smith
Mary Brown
Bill Jones

Please join us at St. Anne's
in the parish hall
Saturday, May 15th
6:00 – 8:00 pm

RSVP to Tracey Herzer at (000) 123-4567
Please wear party clothes!

Example contributed by Tracey Herzer, 11/99

Sample 1: Rehearsal dinner

Rite-13 Rehearsal Dinner

Saturday, Feb 6th

6:00 – 6:10	Gather (music playing, candles lit)
6:10 – 6:20	Read “Jesus in the Temple” story; reflection
6:20 – 7:00	Eat Dinner
7:00 – 7:40	Split into groups

PARENTS

Look over Ceremony
Talk about separation & Letter²⁹
Kahlil Gibran piece³⁰
Guided Imagery – being 13

TEENS

Look over Ceremony
Practice reading Psalm 139
Work on Collages³¹

7:40 – 8:00	Both groups walk through ceremony in church <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where do I sit?• Who else sits with me?• When do I move?• What do I say?
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Example contributed by Tracey Herzer, 11/99

²⁹During the weekend retreat prior to the Rite-13 celebration, all the Rite-13 youth are asked to write a letter to their parents. The leaders collected them and created a single letter using phrases from the youth’s letters (making sure they are unidentifiable). This merged letter is shared with the parents as a way for them to hear some of the thoughts of the young people.

³⁰The process used was to ask the parents to close their eyes while the leader read the piece, then the piece was distributed. The group was divided into small groups by gender and invited to underline “the phrases that strike you—irritate or inspire you.” Parents then discussed their reaction with other parents in the small group.

³¹The collage was poster-sized paper with illustrations of “Who I Am”—if Rite-13 celebrates who they are, it is useful for the youth to take a few weeks prior to the ceremony to get in touch with and find a way to convey that. They can finish up their work during this session or, if already complete, discuss it with each other. The collages included baby pictures, stubs from favorite movies/plays, magazine pictures of sports, hobbies or what I want to be when I grow up, etc. It also included words of all the roles each of them held—sister, son, aunt, honor student, soccer player, chorister, etc. These were displayed in the hallway on the Sunday of the ceremony.

Sample 2: Rehearsal dinner

Rite-13 Rehearsal Dinner Saturday, May 15th

6:00 – 6:10	Gather (music playing, candles lit, flowers, balloons—party atmosphere!)		
6:10 – 6:20	Have each celebrity ³² show their collage poster and explain it		
6:20 – 6:30	Give each person a 3x5 card and pen. Have teenagers write down three things they are good at or things they are proud of. Have parents write down some, too. Then, the teens share their three things and the parents have to give three other things that have not been mentioned.		
6:30 - 7:10	Split Groups		
	<table><tr><td><u>PARENTS</u> Look over Ceremony Talk about separation Kahlil Gibran piece³³ Guided Imagery – being 13</td><td><u>TEENS</u> Debrief the previous exercise Review Ceremony Practice reading Psalm 139</td></tr></table>	<u>PARENTS</u> Look over Ceremony Talk about separation Kahlil Gibran piece ³³ Guided Imagery – being 13	<u>TEENS</u> Debrief the previous exercise Review Ceremony Practice reading Psalm 139
<u>PARENTS</u> Look over Ceremony Talk about separation Kahlil Gibran piece ³³ Guided Imagery – being 13	<u>TEENS</u> Debrief the previous exercise Review Ceremony Practice reading Psalm 139		
7:10 – 7:30	Both groups walk through ceremony in church <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where do I sit?• Who else sits with me?• When do I move?• What do I say?		
7:30 - 8:00	Eat dinner		

Example contributed by Tracey Herzer, 11/99

³² The collage was a poster to illustrate “Who I Am. Since Rite-13 celebrates who teens are, I wanted them to find a way to convey that. Teens spent several weeks working on the posters, but could use this time (and my art supplies) to finish their work or, if already complete, discuss their posters. The collages included the full name of each celebrity, surrounded by baby pictures, stubs from favorite movies/plays, magazine pictures of sports, hobbies or what I want to be when I grow up, etc. It also included words of all the roles each of them held—sister, son, friend, honor student, soccer player, chorister, etc. These were displayed in the narthex on the Sunday of the ceremony.

³³ We asked the parents to close their eyes while the leader read the piece, then the piece was distributed. The group was divided into small groups by gender and invited to underline “the phrases that strike you—irritate or inspire you.” Parents then discussed their reactions with the other members of their small group.

On Parenting

Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.
They come through you but are not from you,
and though they are with you, yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your love, but not your thoughts,
for they have their own thoughts.
You may house their bodies, but not their souls,
for their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,
which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them,
but seek not to make them like you,
for life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.
You are the bows from which your children
as living arrows are sent forth.
The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite,
and He bends you with His might
that His arrows might go swift and far.

Let your bending in the archer's hand be for gladness;
For even as He loves the arrow that flies,
so He loves also the bow that is stable.

– Kahlil Gibran
from *The Prophet*

St. Anne's Book of Wisdom for our 13-year-old Teens

In the spirit of such books as "Life's Little Instruction Book", we are compiling advice from people at St. Anne's. Please use the space below to give a small bit of advice (one sentence or less) to our young teenagers who will be celebrating an important rite of passage ("Rite-13") on Sunday, February 7th. Your advice can be something practical (like "Don't go to bed with gum in your mouth.") or something more profound (like "Be content to seem who you really are.") Both are important to know!!

Please identify yourself by your first name and your age or stage in life. (For example, Bob – Age 41, Susan – mother of toddler, Charles – grandfather, etc.)

Please put your completed form in the offering plate or return to Tracey Herzer in the Church Office by Monday, February 1st. Thanks for your help!

Example contributed by Tracey Herzer, 11/99

(NOTE: These were little half-sheets that were inserted into the bulletin for several weeks before the ceremony. I was astonished by how many submissions I got. This was a great way to get my parish onboard and interested in what would happen at the Rite 13 ceremony!)

St. Anne's Words of Wisdom

Over the last several weeks we've solicited advice from friends, family and parishioners to give to our 13-year-olds on the day of their Rite-13. Here's some of the advice we've collected:

Be kind and respectful of everyone you meet. It all matters. *Sacy, mother of two boys*

Work like you don't need money... love like you've never been hurt... and dance like no one's watching. *Wendy, age 27*

Be content to seem who you really are. *Anonymous*

Stay out of trouble. Do what your teacher says, even if you have a better idea. *Martha, grandmother of two*

Believe in yourself. *Anonymous*

The reputation of a thousand years may be determined by the conduct of one hour.
(Japanese proverb) *Ann, grandmother – age 60*

Enjoy the greatest gift God gave us: Life and the opportunity to love. *Bill, age 39*

Consider the consequences before you act – is it worth it? *Carolyn – mother of four*

Know that you are a beloved child of God and with you God is well-pleased.
Julie, priest & mother - age 57

Don't hold anger. *John, grandfather*

Pay attention to things you enjoy. What you love to do is usually what you should be doing. *Anonymous*

Any work that is honest is honorable. *Talbert, grandfather*

Anything worth doing, is worth doing right. Doing the right thing is its own reward.
Linda, age 44

Always remember: according to the law of aerodynamics, the bumblebee cannot fly.
Margaret, age 15

If you want peace, work for justice. *Bett, grandmother*

Not all questions require quick answers, so save yourself time to think. *Anonymous*

Be hopeful and persevering and be your own person at all times.
Randy, mother of six – age 65

Take some time to listen to the little voice inside – it's **your heart speaking.**

Bill, priest and father of two

Know that you are never alone and there are always **options.**

Joan, mother of adult children

Keep the main thing the main thing!

Tom, grandfather – age 80

Love yourself for who you have been, who you are, and who you are **becoming.**

Embrace the journey!

Carolyn, age 34

Character counts. Be honest.

Anonymous

Always set standards for yourself which are higher than those you set for **others.**

John, retiree

Time is short. Carpe diem: seize the moment!

Jan, grandmother

Be bold and courageous – when you look back on your life, it is the **things you didn't do** that you will regret more than the things you did do.

Jim, father – age 42

All students are gifted, some just open their packages sooner than **others!**

Sara, age 14

Don't forget the manners you have learned. Don't be afraid to be a **geek.**

Marguerite, grandmother

You are who you are when you're by yourself.

Sherry, mother of adult children - age 57

Live your life looking at the glass as if it is half-full; not as if it is **half-empty.**

Rob, father of a toddler

Be kind; be faithful; always do your best; be **honorable.**

Nancy, mother of two - age 41

Remember that no matter how good you think you are, there is always **somebody** better. This helps keep ego under control.

Ken, age 66

Delay gratification; practice self-discipline.

Marie, grandmother – age 64

Slow down; do first things first; do the right thing; enjoy your friends and **family.**

Phil, age 41

Dream **YOUR** dream – Identify **your** gifts and go for it in stages and phases, remembering that God is with you!

Eloise, priest and mother and grandmother - age 67

Example contributed by Tracey Herzer, 11/99

Sample of bulletin insert on day of Rite-13 Celebration

Mary Brown

Mary turned 13 in March of this year. She is in the 7th grade at The Local School, where she plays violin in the school orchestra and is a member of the gymnastics team. She also plays tennis and enjoys riding horses. Her best subject in school is Math.

Mary lives in Atlanta with her parents, Beth and David, and two younger brothers: Dennis, age 11 and Bill, age 6. They share the house with a Jack Russell terrier named Molly who they got last year on Mother's Day. Mary has always lived in Atlanta and gone to St. Anne's. She has LOTS of family here! Her two aunts, Mary Green and Laura Blue are both involved in education at St. Anne's and her grandparents, Bob & Helen Red, are long-time parishioners. She says her favorite thing about St. Anne's is the youth group activities and "having so many kids here my age". Her favorite service at St. Anne's is the early Christmas Eve service when the children do their Pageant. She thinks the best thing about becoming an adult will be being able to drive and the most important preparation she thinks she'll need for adulthood is her education. She thinks she may want to someday be a veterinarian, but she is wisely keeping her options open! Mary loves chocolate but she uses Colgate toothpaste to fight off any cavities!!

Chris Smith

Chris was born on February 9, 1986 and is a 7th Grader at The Local Academy. She plays soccer, is a member of the Swim Team and participates in the Outdoor Club. She plays intramural sports and is part of the Builder's Club, which is a service organization that raises money for hungry children. She has been a Girl Scout since the 1st Grade and she is an avid skier.

Chris lives with her parents, Carol and Bill, and brother, Scott, who is 9 years old. Chris is quite the animal lover and shares her room with Rocky, the family dog; a hamster named Toffee and an aquarium full of fish and frogs. Chris has always lived here in Atlanta. Her family has been a part of St. Anne's since her mother was a child and her grandmother, Dot Maple, is a weekly volunteer in the church office. Chris looks forward to the increased freedom of becoming an adult, but also recognizes it will mean more responsibility. Her favorite thing about being 13 is her friends and the new privileges that come with being a teenager. She sees the most important things in her life as being her family and friends and her religious views. She believes these things are the most important things to take with her into adulthood.

William Jones

Bill just celebrated his 14th birthday on May 18th and he is in the 8th Grade at The Local Boys School. His favorite subject is Science. He enjoys playing basketball and tennis. He has a wonderful imagination, he likes to draw and he plays the clarinet.

Bill was born at Local Hospital here in Atlanta and lives with his parents, Louisa and Paul Jones. He also has a Labrador named Mandy and 5 talking parrots that keep life interesting at his house. Bill is fluent in German and will be one of our language readers next week for Pentecost Sunday. Bill has three older sisters— two who live in Germany and one who lives in St. Martin. Believe it or not, he is the uncle of three children, with another one on the way! Bill's mom, Louisa, sings in the choir and Bill has been an acolyte for several years. In fact, he was one of the acolytes during the bishop's visit and helped the bishop with his mitre (hat). Bill says that being an acolyte is one of his favorite things about being a member here at St. Anne's. He is very excited about getting his learner's permit to drive next year and he says the thing he would most like to change about the world is reducing the pollution.

Example contributed by Tracey Herzer, 11/99

Sample Sermon #1

Preached by Ms. Tracey Herzer
Parish Education Director and LeaderResources J2A Trainer

Sunday - February 7, 1999
Celebration of Rite-13

Good Morning. Today is such an important day and I was thrilled when I was asked to give the sermon on the day we do Rite-13. I thought I knew exactly what I wanted to say. Since I have spent the last two years being a full-time trainer for the *Journey to Adulthood* program, I thought it would be a snap. I've traveled all over the country and taught people how to do the rite of passage we will celebrate today. So, I thought I wanted to talk about how rites of passage are lacking in our American culture and how separation is an essential part of becoming an adult and how adulthood is earned, while manhood and womanhood are free gifts from God.

All of those things are true and are important and all of them would probably help you understand the mechanics of the ceremony we are about to do... but mechanics is NOT what this ceremony is all about, and when I realized that, my sermon kind of fell into place.

Yes, I want this congregation to understand all the ins and outs of this ceremony. But more than that, I want it to move you and to touch you and to bless you. So, if you want to learn the differences between manhood/womanhood and adulthood or if you are curious about why it's so important that this rite take place in the midst of our worshipping community, then give me a call here at the church and I'll be glad to discuss it with you. Or better yet, you could come to the J2A training I will be offering here at the end of the month... BUT... to learn why this liturgy is so significant, all you have to do is experience it.

I think it will speak for itself. From the first time that I ever read anything at all about this celebration, something deep inside my soul said, "YES! This makes sense to me. Why haven't we been doing this with our young people all along?" and I trust God enough that your reaction will be just as strong, even without my detailed explanation of what is going on. Because there is something universal about this rite of passage. There is something common to the human experience that will be touched by this ceremony. So, I am just going to trust that. I am going to trust that God's spirit will move in this place and stir your heart and teach you intrinsically why we do this ceremony with our thirteen-year-old teenagers.

Some of the best life advice I ever received came from my first priest. He said, "Let the whole experience wash over you. What you are ready for will stick and what you are not ready for will come back to you, because that's just the way God is." So, that is what I say to you today: let the experience wash over you. There is something here for everyone, just be open and aware and see what God has to teach you.

So, instead of using this time to teach you about the ceremony, I want to use it to say some things to these teenagers... and I want to say it here in a public setting. These words are not just for

Mary and Chris and Bill, who celebrate their Rite-13 today. They are for each teenager in the youth group, and for the teenager that still lives inside of you, regardless of your age.

I want you guys to know how much I treasure all the good gifts you bring into my life. To watch you grow and change and struggle and adapt teaches me so much. The fact that you also allow me to share in a very small portion of that is an amazing gift. One of the reasons I like to be around teenagers so much is because you are full of light and life. You remind me of what life is really about. How it's not about keeping score. And it's not about how accepted or unaccepted I am. It's not about the way I look or the clothes I wear or the music I listen to – those things don't define who I am. But life IS about who I love and who I hurt. It is about who I make happy or unhappy purposefully. It's about trust and friendship and compassion and it's about what I say and mean – whether it's hurtful or heartening. Most of all, it's about how I choose to use my life to touch other people.

I think that's exactly what the gospel reading is about today. We are the light of the world – all of us. Jesus didn't say he wanted us to be like the salt of the earth or like the light of the world – He said we already were those things.

Mary, Chris and Bill: Today is an important day for you. Today we recognize the progress you've made and the ways in which you have grown and matured. But today is just the starting point. Becoming an adult is a lifelong process of growing and changing and learning. I encourage you to live your life intentionally and really think about what kind of an adult you want to be. I know some of this ceremony doesn't make a lot of sense to you and some of it seems a little weird, but this is our way of encouraging you to go ahead and start on your own path. Find your way. Begin to carve out the life that will be your own. You still have lots and lots of time and we aren't going anywhere. We are here to support you and encourage you... but you have to do the work. Remember that you are some of God's most spectacular creations. You are holy and unique and blessed. This is your moment. This is your time. You truly are the light of the world.

Amen.

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Sample Sermon #2

Preached by Ms. Tracey Herzer
Parish Education Director and LeaderResources J2A Trainer

Sunday – May 16, 1999
Celebration of Rite-13

Good Morning. This is such an important day and I am so glad you are all here. Today is our last celebration of the Rite-13 Liturgy for this year. It is a day when we come together to celebrate some of our teenagers. And since we want you to know WHO you are celebrating, we have done a couple of things. First, each one of these three teenagers has made a collage of things they like and things they are. They are on display out in the narthex and I encourage you to take a moment to look at them after the service. Also, we have written a little information about each teen in the Rite-13 leaflet to allow you to know the teenagers we are celebrating today.

Because today we are here to celebrate Jerry, with all his good-natured enthusiasm, his humor and his unfailing willingness to pitch in and help. We are here to celebrate Ann, with her creative, gentle spirit and her quiet, pretty smile. We are here to celebrate Bonnie, with her confidence and animation and far-reaching compassion. We are here to celebrate the children they have been and the adults they will become. We are here to celebrate all the teens they know and interact with and all the teens they've never met. We're here to celebrate being thirteen. Being thirteen can be really hard, but it can also be really wonderful. These young teens stand on the brink of their adult lives and the next few years will be all about blossoming and growing and becoming and learning and stretching and changing and transcending.

Today is about affirming all the good things that Bill, Mary and Bonnie already are and in a way, it is a vote of confidence for all the good things they will discover about themselves in the next few years and for the rest of their lives. Today is a way for us to say we think you are already pretty wonderful and we have lots of reason to hope and believe that you will become some pretty spectacular adults.

I think all this comes at a really appropriate time because today is the Sunday after Ascension Day and next week is Pentecost—the day we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit. But I think we get to see a glimpse of that today. Right here in front of you today, you will see three teenagers—as well as all those who have gone before them—who have intentionally stepped on the path and are in the process of being transformed. That transformation is facilitated by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God's connection to us—and through us, to the rest of the world. Sometimes this doesn't make much sense to us, but as we seek out God, He will reveal himself to us more and more.

Today's reading in Acts shows us how the disciples were a little confused about where Jesus was going and what was going to happen to them after he was gone. Jesus tells them to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father. He tells them he will not leave them comfortless... but

they probably have no idea what he is talking about. They have to remain there—even after their beloved teacher has gone away from them and that's kind of what we are asking our young people to do: stay here and wait for the fulfillment of the Father's promise. It's easy to get bogged down with our busy schedules and before we know it, church is not the priority it once was. That is understandable, but if the apostles had not remained in that place, they would have missed that experience. These young people—and those of us who stand here as witnesses—have set their feet on the path of Life and have been promised they will never be alone.

Look at what Peter said in his letter—the same thing that God says to us today: "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal..." This is the gentle hand of God touching us with infinite tenderness... "Beloved..." that is not even a word we hear much today... It means precious, something treasured... something special... So, God touches us with his infinite tenderness and He says, "Beloved... don't be surprised by what Life can throw at you... or what comes across your path... or when life is not like you thought it would be... No matter what happens, I am with you and I did not leave you comfortless. I am not just beside you as you go through these things... I am with you... I am a part of you... I am IN YOU!! I will never, never, never leave you.

Jerry, Ann and Bonnie: Today is an important day for you. Today we recognize the progress you've made and the ways in which you have grown and matured. But today is just the starting point. Becoming an adult is a lifelong process of growing and changing and learning. We are all still in the process of growing and changing and learning... and we are all still in the process of being transformed. We have received the Holy Spirit and we are discovering new ways to live out our baptismal covenants in our daily lives.

I want you three to know that I think each one of you is absolutely extraordinary. I really do believe you are "holy and unique and blessed" and my life is richer because I know you. I encourage you to live your life intentionally and spend some time thinking about what kind of adult you want to be. Explore new ideas, ask the big questions and become skillful at being yourself. You may not understand this completely today—but that's ok. Just let the whole experience wash over you. What you are ready for will stick, and what you're not ready for will come back to you—because that's just how life is, and God is good. Mostly what I want you three to get out of today is this: You are loved and you are special. You matter to us. Your lives are of inestimable value. The journey you are now embarking on is incredibly significant

The God of all creation has extended His hand to us... to ALL of us! We are some of God's most spectacular creations. The same things we will tell these young people in their ceremony in a few minutes, I want say to all of you this morning: You are holy and unique and blessed. This is your moment. This is your time. The King of all creation is calling you into partnership with himself... he is asking you to dance with Him through creation and be an ongoing witness of His love. May each one of us find our own unique ways to do just that.

Amen.

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PSALM 139

(DOMINE, PROBASTI)

LORD, you have searched me out and known me;
you know my sitting down and my rising up;
you discern my thoughts from afar.
If I take the wings of the morning
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
Even there your hand will lead me
and your right hand hold me fast.
For you yourself created my inmost parts;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I will thank you because I am marvelously made;
your works are wonderful, and I know it well.
My body was not hidden from you,
while I was being made in secret
and woven in the depths of the earth.
Your eyes beheld my limbs, yet unfinished in the womb;
all of them were written in your book;
they were fashioned day by day,
when as yet there were none of them.
Search me out, O God, and know my heart;
try me and know my restless thoughts.
Look well whether there be any wickedness in me
and lead me in the way that is everlasting.

Psalms 139:1, 8-9, 12-15, 22-23

PRAYER FOR THE PARENTS

O God, bless the parents
of these young people.
Rejoice with them
as their sons and daughters
become men and women.
Strengthen them that they may
support their sons and daughters
as they begin
the journey toward adulthood.
Uphold them by your Spirit,
that they may comfort them
although they can neither
walk their roads for them
nor shield them from pain.
Carry them all safely
through this journey,
so that one day
they may stand together
as adults and friends,
a joy and comfort to each other
all the days of their lives. *Amen.*

PRAYER FOR FAMILIES

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
who sets the solitary in families:
We commend to your continual care
the homes in which your people dwell.
Put far from them, we entreat you,
every root of bitterness,
the desire of self-importance,
and the pride of life.
Fill them with faith, virtue, knowledge,
self-control, patience, godliness.
Knit together in constant affection
those who, in holy matrimony,
have been made one flesh.
Turn the hearts of the parents
to the children,
and the hearts of the children
to the parents;
and so inspire
wholehearted compassion among us all,
that we may evermore
be loving one to another;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

*Prayer for Families (adapted)
Book of Common Prayer, page 828*

PRAYER FOR YOUNG PERSONS

God our Father,
you see your children growing up
in an unsteady and confusing world:
Show them that your ways
give more life
than the ways of the world,
and that following you
is better than
chasing after selfish goals.
Help them to take failure
not as a measure of their worth,
but as a chance for a new start.
Give them strength
to hold their faith in you,
and to keep alive
their joy in your creation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*Prayer for Young People
Book of Common Prayer, page 829*