

OUR KINGDOM MINISTRY

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For United States of America

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Show Your Thankfulness

¹ Although we live in "critical times hard to deal with," we have many reasons to be thankful to Jehovah. (2 Tim. 3:1) Foremost among these is the precious gift of his Son in our behalf. (John 3:16) Further, while those in false religion are starving spiritually, we enjoy an abundance of spiritual food. (Isa. 65:13) We are part of a worldwide brotherhood and are privileged to share in the thrilling expansion of true worship. (Isa. 2:3, 4; 60:4-10, 22) How can we show our thankfulness to Jehovah for the blessings he showers upon us?—Col. 3:15, 17.

² Joyful, Wholehearted Service: When discussing material giving, the apostle Paul

wrote: "God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Cor. 9:7) This principle also applies to our service to God. Thankfulness is reflected in our enthusiasm for the truth, our joy at Christian meetings, our zeal in the field ministry, and our cheerfulness in carrying out the divine will.—Ps. 107:21, 22; 119:14; 122:1; Rom. 12:8, 11.

³ In ancient Israel the Law did not stipulate a specific amount for certain offerings. Each worshiper could show his gratitude by giving "in proportion to the blessing of Jehovah" that he had received. (Deut. 16:16, 17) Similarly today, a grateful heart will impel us to do as much as our circumstances allow in the Kingdom-preaching and

disciple-making work. The summer months often provide added opportunities to show our thankfulness. Some take advantage of time off from work or school and the longer daylight hours to increase their time spent in field service, even to auxiliary pioneer. Can you expand your ministry this summer?

⁴ Overflowing With Thanks: A major way we express our thanks to Jehovah is in prayer. (1 Thess. 5:17, 18) God's Word urges us to be "overflowing with faith in thanksgiving." (Col. 2:7) Even when we are very busy or are under stress, we should always include thanksgiving in our daily prayers. (Phil. 4:6) Yes, by means of our ministry as well as our prayers, may we "be rich with many expressions of thanks to God."—2 Cor. 9:12.

Music That Refreshes

¹ Singing and music are an integral part of true worship. In ancient Israel, Asaph and his brothers sang: "Give thanks to Jehovah, you people. . . . Sing to him, make melody to him, concern yourselves with all his wonderful acts." (1 Chron. 16:8, 9) Today we raise our voices in song to Jehovah at our weekly congregation meetings. (Eph. 5:19) What a marvelous opportunity this is to give praise to his name!—Ps. 69:30.

² Listening to *Kingdom Melodies*, orchestral arrangements of Kingdom songs, can fill our mind with spiritual thoughts. "As the melodies are played, I

hear the words in my mind," explained one sister. "What a fine way to keep Jehovah in my thoughts while enjoying music!"—Phil. 4:8.

³ Occasions to Enjoy Them: Playing *Kingdom Melodies* at home creates a warm, spiritual atmosphere that contributes to family peace. "We play this [music] over and over in our home and car and never tire of the stirring arrangements," wrote one family. "Often *Kingdom Melodies* have provided the right peaceful mood when getting ready for Christian meetings or when traveling to an assembly." A sister said: "They're a real lift

to listen to when I'm doing housework—whatever thought I'd be joyful while folding laundry? I plan to play this music when I find my spirits down. The music has such an exhilarating effect! . . . Every song evokes happiness." Are there occasions when such refreshing music would benefit you?

⁴ Much of today's music reflects the world's spirit. Parents can help their children to cultivate a taste for wholesome music by making good use of the *Kingdom Melodies* recordings. Many Bible students and interested people would also be pleased to know about these beautiful spiritual songs, which glorify Jehovah and uplift the spirit.—Ps. 47:1, 2, 6, 7.

SERVICE MEETING SCHEDULE

Week Starting May 10

Song 193

10 min: Local announcements. Selected Announcements from *Our Kingdom Ministry*. If the suggestions on page 4 are practical for your congregation territory, use them to demonstrate how to present the May 15 *Watchtower* and the May 22 *Awake!* Other presentations may be used. In each case, demonstrate a different way to handle the conversation stopper "I have my own religion."—See *Reasoning* book, pages 18-19.

15 min: Have You Approached Your Employer? Talk and audience discussion by an elder, based on the article "Will You Be There?" in the January 2000 *Our Kingdom Ministry*, page 1. Include comments on the *Ministry School* book, page 67.

20 min: "Widen Out."* Include comments on the *Worship God* book, page 150, paragraph 14. Song 18 and concluding prayer.

Week Starting May 17

Song 188

10 min: Local announcements.

15 min: "Show Your Thankfulness."* As time permits, invite audience to comment on the cited scriptures. When discussing paragraph 3, have one or two who recently served as auxiliary pioneers comment on the blessings they experienced from doing so.

20 min: We Care About One Another. (1 Cor. 12:25, 26) Talk and audience discussion based on *Our Ministry* book, pages 157-9, under the subheading "Concern for One Another." Although Jehovah's people live in all parts of the earth, we are closely united. All of us should pray for our brothers every day. We are also quick to provide material aid when urgent needs exist. Read and discuss key scriptures, and include one or two

experiences drawn from our publications.

Song 100 and concluding prayer.

Week Starting May 24

Song 128

12 min: Local announcements. Accounts report. Demonstrate how to present the June 1 *Watchtower* and the June 8 *Awake!* Adapt each presentation to appeal to someone of a local religion.

15 min: "Music That Refreshes." Talk and audience discussion. Include comments on the 2002 *Yearbook*, page 175, and the February 1, 1997, *Watchtower*, page 27, paragraphs 1-2.

18 min: Be Prepared to Witness Informally. Talk and audience discussion based on the June 2003 *Our Kingdom Ministry*, page 3. Arrange in advance for a few to relate experiences they have had when witnessing informally. Briefly demonstrate how the tract *Would You Like to Know More About the Bible?* and the booklet *Good News for All Nations* can be used when witnessing informally.

Song 211 and concluding prayer.

Week Starting May 31

Song 26

8 min: Local announcements. Remind publishers to turn in field service reports for May.

17 min: Life—A Gift to Be Cherished. Audience discussion based

on the *Reasoning* book, pages 25-6. Include comments on the May 22, 1993, *Awake!* pages 10-11. How would you explain Jehovah's view of abortion to a person who feels that a woman has a right to decide on matters affecting her own body? Relate the experience in the January 1, 2000, *Watchtower*, page 4, paragraphs 4-5.

20 min: "Offering Learn From the Great Teacher." During June we will be offering this publication. Point out the features described on page 7, paragraphs 1-3, of the book. Entertain comments from audience on what they appreciate about it. Review the suggested presentations. Highlight how to feature the pictures when offering the book. Have a youth demonstrate the first presentation, and an adult one of the others. If a different approach would be more effective in the local territory, this may be discussed and demonstrated in place of one of the latter presentations.

Song 24 and concluding prayer.

Week Starting June 7

Song 136

10 min: Local announcements. Discuss main points of "A Means to Help Them." Name some of the languages that are encountered in the local territory.

15 min: Local needs.

20 min: Use Effective Illustrations in Your Teaching. Talk and audience discussion based on the September 1, 2002, *Watchtower*, pages 22-4. What four factors make an illustration effective? Why is it advantageous to keep illustrations simple? Where can we find good illustrations? Examine some of the examples in the box on page 23, and discuss what makes each illustration effective. Song 133 and concluding prayer.

* Limit introductory comments to less than a minute, and follow with a question-and-answer discussion.

FEBRUARY SERVICE REPORT

Number of:	Avg. Hrs.	Avg. Mags.	Avg. R.V.	Avg. Bi.St.
Sp'l Pios.	214	103.7	89.2	48.1
Pios.	92,883	63.3	40.8	20.9
Aux. Pios.	17,271	49.2	34.7	14.1
Publs.	891,192	9.2	8.1	3.6
TOTAL	1,001,560		Baptized: 1,463	

ANNOUNCEMENTS

■ Literature offer for **May**: Feature individual copies of both *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* When making return visits on interested people, which may include visiting those who attend the Memorial or other theocratic events but who are not actively associated with the organization, concentrate on placing the *Worship God* book. Every effort should be made to start a home Bible study, especially if some individuals have already studied the *Knowledge* book and the *Require* brochure. **June:** *Learn From the Great Teacher*. If individuals say that they have no children, offer the *Require* brochure. When using the brochure, concentrate on starting home Bible studies. **July and August:** Offer the *Knowledge* book or the *Require* brochure. When householders already have these publications, use another appropriate brochure that the congregation has in stock.

■ The presiding overseer or someone designated by him should audit the congregation's accounts on June 1 or as soon as possible thereafter. When this has been done, make an announcement to the congrega-

tion after the next accounts report is read.

■ Donations made by check and put in the local Kingdom Hall contribution boxes for the worldwide work and the Kingdom Hall Fund should be made payable to "Jehovah's Witnesses." Donations made by check at district conventions and those sent to the branch office should be made payable to "Watch Tower." The branch office financial address is Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, c/o Office of the Secretary and Treasurer, 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483.

■ While attending the "Walk With God" District Convention, keep in mind the importance of taking brief notes, which will help you to participate in the oral review to be scheduled on the Service Meeting later in the year.

■ **DISTRICT CONVENTION CHANGE:** The dates and location for the Armenian-language district convention have been changed to August 27-29, 2004, at the Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 1001 Parkridge Ave., Norco, California.

■ Beginning with the May literature shipment, the annual supply of congregation forms is being shipped to congregations as forms become

available. Instructions regarding forms distribution will appear on the shipment packing list. When there is more than one congregation in a Kingdom Hall auditorium, the literature coordinator should make sure that each congregation receives its supply of forms as soon as they arrive.

A Means to Help Them

True Christians share in the public ministry of spreading the good news. (Phil. 2:17) As a means to that end, some basic brochures, tracts, and articles in 20 languages have been on the Internet at www.watchtower.org. This Web site is not designed to distribute current publications to Jehovah's Witnesses. Its objective is to make available to the public accurate information about what Jehovah's Witnesses teach from the Bible.

Recently, there has been a significant addition to our official Web site. This is the brochure *What Does God Require of Us?* in over 220 languages. Also, with the issues of January 1 and January 8, 2004, *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* in all languages began showing our Web address on the back page.

How can you use this tool? Well, you may meet a person who seems interested but understands only another language. If he has access to the Internet, you can point out the Web address on the back page of *The Watchtower* or *Awake!* That way he may be able to examine the *Require* brochure in his native tongue until you can return with literature in his language. Or you may be able to refer the call to the congregation or group that cares for his language.

Offering Learn From the Great Teacher

■ "Do you think that the world would be a better place if people lived by this saying? [Read Matthew 7:12a. Then allow for response.] This book contains many lessons from the greatest teacher who ever lived." Highlight the pictures and captions in chapter 17.

■ "Most parents today try to instill wholesome values in their children. Do you feel that this is important? [Allow for response. Then read Proverbs 22:6.] Notice that parents are encouraged to start training their children from an early age. This book is de-

signed to help them to do that." Highlight the pictures and captions in chapter 15, 18, or 32.

■ "Often parents are amazed at the questions their children ask. Some of those questions can be hard to answer, isn't that so? [Allow for response. Then read 2 Timothy 3:14, 15.] Timothy's mother and grandmother taught him from infancy what the Scriptures say. This book can help parents do the same for their children today." Highlight a few of the pictures and captions in chapters 11 and 12 or 34 to 36.

"Widen Out"

¹ In the Christian brotherhood, each of us has a responsibility to contribute to the warmth of the congregation. (1 Pet. 1:22; 2:17) Such warmth is generated when we "widen out" in our tender affections for one another. (2 Cor. 6:12, 13) Why is it important to get to know our brothers and sisters well?

² **Friendships Grow Stronger:** As we become better acquainted with fellow believers, we come to appreciate their faith, endurance, and other fine qualities more fully. Their shortcomings seem smaller to us, and the bonds of friendship grow. Knowing one another well, we are in a better position to build up and comfort one another. (1 Thess. 5:11) We can become "a strengthening aid" to one another to resist the unwholesome influences of Satan's world. (Col. 4:11) In view of these pressure-filled last days, how grateful we are to have good friends among Jehovah's people!—Prov. 18:24.

³ Close friends can be a special source of strength and comfort when we face severe trials. (Prov. 17:17) One Christian who struggled with feelings of worthlessness recalls: "There were friends who would say positive things about me to help me overcome the negative thoughts I had." Such friends are a blessing from Jehovah.—Prov. 27:9.

1. What responsibility does each of us have?
2. Why is it important to develop friendships with fellow believers?
3. How can we be a strengthening aid to others?

⁴ **Reach Out to Others:** How can we widen out in our tender affections for fellow believers? In addition to greeting others at Christian meetings, make an effort to engage them in meaningful conversation. Without prying into their private matters, show personal interest. (Phil. 2:4; 1 Pet. 4:15) Another way to reach out to others is by inviting them over for a meal. (Luke 14:12-14) Or you might arrange to work with them in the field ministry. (Luke 10:1) As we take the initiative to get to know our brothers better, we foster unity in the congregation.—Col. 3:14.

⁵ Do we tend to choose our close associates only from among those of our age group or those whose interests are similar to our own? We should not let such factors limit the friendships we cultivate in the congregation. David and Jonathan as well as Ruth and Naomi forged strong bonds of friendship despite differences in age and background. (Ruth 4:15; 1 Sam. 18:1) Can you expand your friendships? Doing so can bring unanticipated blessings.

⁶ By widening out in our tender affections for others, we strengthen one another and promote peace in the congregation. Furthermore, Jehovah himself blesses us for the love we show our brothers. (Ps. 41:1, 2; Heb. 6:10) Why not make it your goal to get better acquainted with as many as possible?

4. How can we get to know others in the congregation better?
5. What is one way to expand our friendships?
6. What are some benefits of widening out in our tender affections for our brothers?

What to Say About the Magazines

THE WATCHTOWER May 15 ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

"Have you ever wondered if the things humans do on earth have any effect on God? [Allow for response.] Notice how our actions can affect God's feelings. [Read Proverbs 27:11.] This magazine considers some examples of people who made God's heart rejoice, and it explains how we can do the same."

Awake! May 22

"Medical science has made remarkable progress in fighting disease, but do you think we will ever see a world completely free from sickness? [Allow for response.] This magazine explains that one day everyone on earth will enjoy perfect health in fulfillment of this promise." Read Isaiah 33:24.

THE WATCHTOWER June 1 ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

"Some people feel that it is not necessary to be part of an organized religion to worship God. Have you ever wondered about that? [Allow for response.] This magazine examines the record of God's dealings with people in times past. It also considers what it means to worship God with truth." Read John 4:24.

Awake! June 8

"Many people today experience loneliness. This involves a feeling of being cut off from others. Wouldn't you agree that this can be painful? [Allow for response. Then read Psalm 25:16.] This issue of *Awake!* offers practical suggestions for combatting loneliness."