

# SUGGESTIONS FOR MILITARY AND CIVILIAN CHAPLAINCY AWARENESS SERVICES



**SERVICE OBJECTIVE:** To create awareness of Special Ministries, specifically, what is being done and further opportunities for what could be done by our chaplains serving military and civilian personnel living in other countries.

## • THEME

**Joshua 1 :9** *“Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.*

These words paraphrased “I will be strong and courageous. I will not be terrified or discouraged; for the Lord, my God, is with me wherever I go” are inscribed on a small metal charm, similar to a dog tag. The other side of the tag has an American flag with the words “One Nation Under God.” This tag is known as the Shield of Strength and sold on the Internet. It is carried by senators, members of Congress, and thousands in the military in Iraq and Afghanistan as a symbol of valor and as a source of comfort and strength.

## • NOTE

Although the term “military service” is used in the following suggestions, the concepts and projects apply to anyone (military or civilian) who has to relocate someplace far away and unfamiliar, in most cases a country other than America – in many cases, not by choice. The chaplain brings the Word and Sacraments to them, assuring them that God is with us wherever we are, and reminds them that they are ambassadors for Christ in their new location.



## • INTRODUCTORY STORY

A chaplain approached a soldier who was preparing for a convoy down Route Irish, a contested route just outside of Baghdad known to be among the most dangerous stretches of road in the world. “What do you want?” the chaplain asked, meaning, “How can I minister to you?” Without taking his eyes from his gear, the soldier said what for some has become the soldier’s prayer. “What do I want? Sir, I wanna’ know that Jesus is in my Humvee.” This hunger for God’s nearness is both a hope for protection and a need to answer the loneliness in a soldier’s soul . . . This is why one chaplain said that his favorite name for God, and the one he teaches his soldiers, is “Emmanuel – God with us.” (Excerpt from *The Faith of the American Soldier* by Stephen Mansfield, published by Charisma House, Lake Mary, Florida, copyright 2005).

## • SECONDARY CONCEPT

Military service is an avenue for evangelism. When Christians are sent throughout the world, God uses them to spread His Word. Military service is an excellent opportunity for evangelism. A Christian who has the assurance that the Lord is with him wherever he goes embodies this assurance, and both testifies and reflects this fact to all he (she) comes in contact with.

**Scripture reference regarding this concept:** Acts 10 – the story of Peter and Cornelius, who was a military man. Cornelius was educated and a man in authority with considerable power, yet he was a humble man who cared for others and prayed regularly. The Bible tells us that he and his family were devout and God-fearing (v 2). This “devoutness” apparently “rubbed off” on another soldier who was one of his attendants (v 7). Cornelius was respected by the Jewish people, the conquered people (v 22) – very unusual, considering the way that we know the Jewish people felt about the Romans. Cornelius was an evangelist. When he knew that Peter was coming, he called together his friends and relatives to hear what Peter had to say to them (v 24). He thanked them for coming and told them that the Lord would be speaking to them through Peter (v 33). Note: Acts 10 would make an excellent subject for a Bible class in conjunction with the service.



in the military, military decorations and medals, uniforms, souvenirs brought back to the US from serving in other countries.

## PROJECTS FOR K-12

- **Take a field trip to your church's cemetery (if you have one) or any local cemetery.** Have children look for military graves or take a trip to a military cemetery. Find out if your town or state has any military statues or memorials. Have children visit them and report on what they saw or read.
- **Have children compose prayers – alone or in small groups – for those serving in the military.** Right now the government keeps military personnel well supplied with everything they need and want (food, clothing, etc.) but they really need our prayers. (Per Pastor Jaeger).
- **Make a poster** – if possible, with pictures – of all congregation and family members currently serving in the military or let children bring pictures of any family and friends they know that are currently serving or have served in the military in the past. Display the poster(s) prominently in the church or school. This would be a good project for April and May to be displayed at the end of the school year to celebrate Memorial Day.
- **Make a school or church bulletin board display of above materials.**
- **Make sure that the WELS Military Services Committee has a complete list of everyone in your congregation** so they can contact them and/or send worship materials. Have children research the various branches of the military – what each group does, similarities and differences, what the uniform looks like, where bases are located, what are the highest ranks or highest rank in each branch, etc. Children could use some of the information they find to make a 1 or 2 page service insert to be used at the special church service highlighting the military and the work of the military services committee. (Good internet or computer project for upper grades and high school ages).
- **Compose Bible study lessons on the subject of God's care for those in any trouble.** (e.g. Psalm 91)
- **Have a military "show and tell"** in school, Sunday school, teen Bible class, or confirmation class. Children can bring in pictures of relatives that served

## Suggested songs from "Let All The People Praise You"

Borning Cry  
 God Will Take Care of You  
 He's Got The Whole World In His Hands  
 His Eye Is On The Sparrow  
 I Lift My Eyes to The Quiet Hills  
 Leaning on the Everlasting Arms  
 Lift Every Voice and Sing  
 No Mountain High Enough  
 Standing On The Promises

## Suggested songs from "Christian Worship"

#517 Almighty Father, Strong To Save  
 #418 My God Will Never Leave Me  
 #419 If God Himself Be For Me (especially verses 1,2,6,7)  
 #428 Why Should Cross and Trial Grieve Me  
 #431 I Walk In Danger All The Way (especially verses 1,4,5)  
 #449 Children Of The Heavenly Father

## Witnessing

#558 Christ High-Ascended (We are his witnesses)  
 #566 We All Are One In Mission (especially verse 2)  
 #568 Good News of God Above  
 #579 Lift High The Cross

## Additional Readings (besides Act.10 and Joshua 1)

Matt: 8:5-13 Another example of a non-Jewish person witnessing his faith in a land not his own. God had a plan and purpose in mind when he sent the centurion to serve in the land of Israel and the faith he gained there will go with him when he returns home or is sent by his superior officers to another post or another land. Christians serving in the military are sent all over this country and the world in the course of their service and have an opportunity to spread the Gospel by their words and actions wherever they go.

Psalm 3  
 Psalm 18: 1-3, 16-19  
 Psalm 20:7  
 Psalm 27: 1-6

II Kings: 6: 8-17 (Angels are always protecting us- just because we can't see them doesn't mean they are not present)

Romans 8:35-39