

Strength of Women



ENVIRONMENT: Chairs in a circle; small table in center with a candle and flowers; pictures of women in action.

Call to Prayer

Leader Praise the One who has heard the cry of the poor.

All Who has lifted up the weak and given them strength.

Leader Praise the One who has fed the hungry and satisfied the longing of those in need.

All Who has held with tenderness the orphan and widow and given the stranger a land and home.

Antiphonal Prayer

Left My spirit takes delight in the presence of our God; my heart is filled with laughter and my words fall short of the truth I long to express.

Right For the One whom I love is faithful: our ancestors have known compassion throughout the ages, and this day, mercy is given us.

Left Holy is the love and sacred is the place where we meet. We are in awe of the gift that is ours.

Right The powerful have stumbled and the rich are burdened and fall. The proud are alone in their confusion.

Left While before our eyes, the weak are upheld in kindness. The poor are called by name; the hungry are nourished with bread that never grows old.

Right The promise endures. The One whom we love is faithful and life gives birth to beauty and truth.

All Our Spirits take delight in the wondrous presence of our God. Holy is this love. We are in awe of the gift that is ours.

(Based on Luke 2:46-55.)

Song Suggested: *El Shaddai* by Colleen Fulmer or *Wherever You Go* by Gregory Norbet

Reading

Called to Discipleship — John 4:25-26, 39

The woman said to Jesus, “I know that the Messiah is coming, the one called the Anointed; when he comes, he will tell us everything.” Jesus said to her, “I am he, the one who is speaking with you.”

Many of the Samaritans of that town began to believe him because of the word of the woman who testified, “He has told me everything I have done.”

Reflection and Sharing

Who are women whose testimony have brought you to belief?

(Allow time for silence and sharing)

Reading *Women: Bringing Gifts to Our World*

Women have strengths that amaze men.... They bear hardships and they carry burdens, but they find happiness, love and joy. They smile when they want to scream. They sing when they want to cry. They cry when they are happy and laugh when they are nervous.

They fight for what they believe in. They stand up to injustice. They don't take “no” for an answer when they believe there is a better solution. They go without so their family can have.

They go to the doctor with a frightened friend. They love unconditionally. They cry when their children excel and cheer when their friends get awards. They are happy when they hear about a birth or wedding. Their hearts break when a friend dies.



They grieve at the loss of a family member, yet they are strong when they think they have no strength left. They know that a hug and a kiss can heal a broken heart.

Women come in all shapes, sizes and colors. They'll drive, fly, walk, run or email you to show how much they care about you. The heart of a woman is what makes the world keep turning. They bring joy, hope and love. They have compassion and ideas.

They give moral support to their family and friends. Women have vital things to say and everything to give. Women of all times are called to be confident and strong in sharing these gifts for the betterment of all peoples and the protection of our earth.

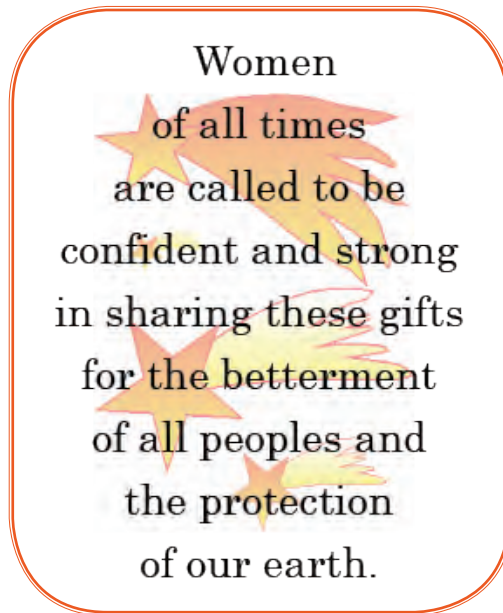
(Author unknown.)

Reflection and Sharing

Which statement about women meant most to you?

Who are the women brought to mind whose strength you have experienced?

(Allow time for silence and sharing.)



Remembering in Prayer

Leader Let us name women who are in need of our support and compassion as they face difficulties in their lives that they may have hope and courage.

(time for naming)

Leader Let us name women whose sharing of their gifts have strengthened and encouraged us that they may continue to bring life to others.

(time for naming)

Closing

Prayer All

Loving God, we celebrate your faithfulness and love, and praise you for the wonders you have worked through women and men of faith throughout history.

Your presence within us enables us to claim our own strength and our need, and to take risks in the service of your people, confident of your grace.

Continue to root us more deeply in your love that any life that results from our efforts might be an expression of your truth and love. We ask this through your child, Jesus, your own word and gift of love. Amen.

Song Repeat the song used earlier or another song of your choice.

Acknowledgments

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