

General Keynote

Opening video clip image was purchased from iStock by Getty Images

<http://www.istockphoto.com/stock-video-16447877-animation-of-a-colored-growing-tree-with-roots.php?st=c8488b8>

Opening song was “Dirty Paws” by Of Monsters and Men

Monday

- Video: Parable of the Sower, <http://www.max7.org/resource.aspx?id=fb7b129a-5b6e-43b3-af18-485d44e36b3d>
- Clip: Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs, 18:59-20:46

Tuesday

- Video: Modern Family, Season 1, Episode 24 “Family Portrait”
- Prezi: Genealogy of Jesus
 - Link for Reusable Prezi at http://prezi.com/qm7nr0w-c6r1/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy
- Skit: Ruth 1:1-19, adapted for stage by Katie Owen
 - *See Appendix A*
- Video: Anti-bullying news story about Chy Johnson, Queen Creek High School (Arizona)
 - http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/10/29/queen-creek-football-players_n_2039212.html

Wednesday

- Selected Images of Jesus, via Google search and art search on Vanderbilt lectionary
 - Warner Sallman, Jesus
 - John Everett Millais, Jesus in the House with his Parents (1850)
 - Henry Ossawa Tanner, Nicodemus Visits Jesus (1899)
 - Jesus Mafa Series, Parable of the Sower
 - He Qi, “The Risen Lord”
 - “Christ the Redeemer,” Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
 - *Slideshow music*: Ben Harper, “Picture of Jesus,” Diamonds on the Inside (album)
- Skit: Luke 2:41-52, modern adaptation for stage by Katie Owen
 - *See Appendix B*
- Litany of Belonging

Litany of Belonging

Whether I was baptized as a baby or am just starting to ask questions, I know:

All: I Belong to God.

Whether I am confident in my faith or struggle with doubt, still I know:

All: I Belong to God.

When I love well and my love is a reflection of God's love for others, I know:

All: I Belong to God.

When I talk back to my parents or damage a friendship and have to seek forgiveness, still I know:

All: I Belong to God.

When I encounter the face of Christ and it looks familiar and loving, I know:

All: I Belong to God.

When I am surprised by the presence of God in the face of a stranger, still I know:

All: I Belong to God.

When I offer care to a friend in humble service, I know:

All: I Belong to God.

When I find myself in need and receive the gift of love from a friend, still I know:

All: I Belong to God.

When I wash the feet of others, I know:

All: I Belong to God.

When I allow someone else to wash my feet, still I know:

All: I Belong to God.

When I feel most alone, unsure if I belong, I know:

All: I Belong to God.

When I am embraced by friends and loved by my family of faith, still I know:

All: I Belong to God.

When I am at Montreat or the thin places where God is near, I know:

All: I Belong to God.

And in the everyday, mundane moments back home, still I will know:

All: I Belong to God.

Thursday

- Skit: Jonah, adapted for stage by Katie Owen
 - *See Appendix C*
- Guide for Leading Centering Prayer

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- *There are a number of centering prayer resources that give more detailed descriptions of how to lead centering prayer, the theology behind it, etc. What is provided below is my interpretation of those resources for students:*

Centering prayer is going to follow three steps: RECOGNIZE. RELEASE. RETURN. We're going to sit in silence in the presence of God—kind of like Jonah under the bush—and as we do, ideas are going to pop into your head. Thoughts are not good or bad, they're just thoughts; they're neutral. It's ok—RECOGNIZE them. Notice they're there. Then let them go—RELEASE them. Trust that if they're really important, they'll come back when you're done. The last step is to RETURN to the presence of God. It may help you to pick a word as your centering word. Something simple—peace or light or wind. When you notice your mind drifting, repeat your word to yourself to bring you back to center. You might have to say it a lot at the beginning but the longer you pray the less you'll need the word as a crutch. Take a minute to think of your centering word.

1. Settle into a comfortable position. Get the creeks out of your pew. Silence your cell phone. Close your eyes. Take a deep breath in and a deep breath out.
2. Intentionally place yourself in the presence of God, on the center of God's love.
The Psalmist says "Be still and know that I am God."
Be still and know that I am.
Be still and know.
Be still.
Be.
3. Options for guided meditation: Take time to become quiet. It is not unusual for the first bit of time to be filled with many noisy thoughts. Don't worry about them or pay attention to them. Let them go. Gently turn your attention to the center of God's presence and love by repeating your word. When your thoughts wander let them drop to the bottom of your mind. Don't go after them. Gently return to the presence of Christ by repeating your word. Let your word draw your attention back to Jesus.

Friday

Drama: Mark 5:25-34, interpretation of hemorrhaging woman, by Katie Owen

- *see Appendix E*

Video Resources:

- Background Music for "Love is..." video: "Greatest of These," by Steve Lindsley
- Photography: What I Be Photography Project, Steve Rosenfield www.whatibeproject.com
- Background Music: "I'll Rise," by Ben Harper
 - lyrics based on poem "I'll Rise" by Maya Angelou

Appendix A

Tuesday Keynote
Ruth Skit (based on Ruth 1:1-18)
Adapted for keynote by Katie Owen

Cast:

Narrator
Naomi
Elimilech
Chilion
Mahlon
Ruth
Orpah

Supplies:

Sign for Moab/Judah
Backpack
Empty cereal boxes
Ring pops
Wedding veils
White cloth (for burial cloths)
Music clips—funeral dirge and wedding march

Narrator: Let me tell you the story of belonging in God’s family. Well, let’s back up. Let me tell you the story of how some unexpected outsiders came to belong in God’s family. We go back to the land of Judah and its neighboring country Moab.

Two actors on opposite sides of stage place signs: Judah on one; Moab on the other.¹ Additional actor places blue cloth to create river division between Moab and Judah.

Narrator: A Jewish man named Elimilech lived in Bethlehem in Judah with his wife Naomi and their two sons—Mahlon and Chilion.

Naomi, Elimilech, Mahlon, and Chilion enter and stand in Judah as a family.

Narrator: In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the Judah and Elimilech’s family was hungry, really hungry. Elimilech’s sons Mahlon and Chilion being strapping young men had eaten their parents out of house and home. There was nothing to eat anywhere in Bethlehem, and they were all famished.

Mahlon shakes box of cheerios upside down to find it’s empty. Boys grasp stomachs and act hungry.

Narrator: So Elimilech told the family to pack their bags. They were moving to the land of Moab—immigrating across the river in search of food and a better life.

Sons pack backpacks. Family walks/swims across the stage, through “river”, and enters Moab.

¹ http://www.123rf.com/photo_20886134_wooden-signs-in-a-grass-isolated-on-white-background-illustration.html

Narrator: Shortly after they arrived, tragedy struck and Naomi's husband Elimilech died.

<<PLAY FUNERAL DIRGE #1>>

Elimilech falls to the floor and dramatically dies. Mahlon and Chilion cover Elimilech with white cloth. Naomi takes out handkerchief and wipes eyes.

Narrator: Despite their loss, Naomi and her two sons tried to make a life in this new land. Mahlon and Chilion both started dating Moabite women named Orpah and Ruth.

Mahlon and Chilion each greet and escort the women around the stage pretending to talk happily.

Narrator: Soon, they proposed.

Mahlon and Chilion each get on one knee, propose with a Ring Pop. The girls nod yes enthusiastically.

Narrator: and were married.

<<PLAY HERE COMES THE BRIDE>>

Mahlon and Chilion place veil on their head and they walk forward in pairs as if they're walking down the aisle.

Narrator: After about ten years had passed, tragedy again struck the family and Mahlon and Chilion also died, leaving Naomi without her husband or sons and with two Moabite daughters-in-law, few resources, and a questionable future.

<<PLAY FUNERAL DIRGE #2>>

Mahlon and Chilion both fall to the floor and dramatically die. Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah cover Mahlon and Chilion with black cloth. Women take out handkerchief, sob, and wipe eyes.

Narrator: Naomi knew that their outlook was bleak. In those days, women had little worth on their own and as widows, their survival was in question. Naomi loved her daughters-in-law but knew their best hope was to return to their family. So she declared,

Naomi: 'Go back each of you to your mother's house. May the Lord deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. The Lord grant that you may find security, each of you in the house of your husband.' I have no husband and no other sons and even if I did, you would be old by the time they were grown up. No, go back to your families in Moab. The hand of the Lord has turn against me.'

The girls plead back and forth, looking sad/crying/wiping tears. Orpah hugs Naomi and turns and walks back to the corner of the stage, staying in the land of Moab. Ruth clings to Naomi.

Narrator: Orpah left and returned to her family in Moah, but Ruth stayed. When Naomi saw this, she said,

Naomi: See. Your sister-in-law went back to her family and her gods. You should do the same.

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Narrator: But Ruth replied

Ruth: 'Do not push me to leave you
or to turn back from following you!
Where you go, I will go;
where you stay, I will stay;
your people shall be my people,
and your God my God.
Where you die, I will die—
there will I be buried.
May the Lord do thus and so to me,
and more as well, even if I die!'

Narrator: So Naomi returned together with Ruth the Moabite, her daughter-in-law, who came back with her to Judah. This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Stage lights up.

Appendix B

Wednesday Keynote

Jesus in the Temple Skit (based on Luke 2:41-52)

Adapted for keynote by Katie Owen

Cast:

Jesus' parents

Jesus

Rabbis

Other Passover observers

Supplies:

Backpacks

Table set for Passover, which might include:

- Matzah/Bread
- Paten and Chalice
- Candles
- Tablecloth

Giant sign for My Father's (we referenced My Father's Pizza)

Narrator: Now every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival.

Actors come to stage from the front row, backpacks on. Set communion table with candles, matzah bread, etc. Circle around table to pray. Tune "Shalom Chaverim" played in background.

Narrator: When the festival was over and Joseph and Mary packed up to head home, but Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem.

Joseph, Mary, and several other Passover observers exit stage and begin walking up the aisle with their backpacks. Jesus and several friends and rabbis sit in the temple pretending to converse (two on stools, several on the ground).

Narrator: After traveling quite some time, they realized Jesus wasn't with them. As any anxious mother would do, she looked around for him first. When she didn't see him, she spoke to several friends and they called for him:

Friends in crowd and Mary and Joseph confer in the aisles and then spread out, looking frantically, and call for him:

Friends and Mary and Joseph: Jesus! Where are you? Your mother is looking for you!

Mary and Joseph remain in side aisle and Mary pulls out her cell phone.

Narrator: When that didn't work, she tried calling. and calling. and calling.

<<PIC OF iPHONE CALL on SCREEN/sound of phone ringing>>

Jesus' friend: Hey man, do you need to answer that?

Jesus: Nah, it's just my mom. I'll call her later.

Narrator: When that didn't work, she started texting.

<<SEPARATE SLIDES ON SCREEN: Image of texting from an iPhone, appear in sequential order>>

- 1) Jesus, where are you?
- 2) This is your mother. You're not answering your phone. Call me. Seriously.
- 3) If you don't text me back in the next 5 minutes, there will be no challah for a week.
- 4) Ok, now I'm getting worried, where are you?

Narrator: The anxious Mary and Joseph turned back to Jerusalem to look for him. After a three days search and nearly calling the authorities to put out a missing persons report, they returned to the temple and found him sitting among the rabbis, listening and asking questions. Everyone around him was amazed by his questions and his insights.

Jesus continues to pretend to converse with friends and rabbis on stage. Joseph and Mary finally return to the stage.

Narrator: When Jesus' parents saw him, they were shocked and relieved. But they snapped right back into parent mode:

Mary runs across the stage to Jesus, pulls Jesus away by the ear, and they speak:

Mary: Boy, where have you been? Didn't you see my calls and texts. You are in so much trouble when you get home.

Jesus: Mom, mom, calm down. Why are you freaking out? Didn't you know I'd be at My Father's?

Mary: Jesus, what are you talking about? Why would you be here? Joseph and I have been worried sick! Enough of this. Get your things; we're going home. We'll talk about this later.

Narrator: So he packed up his belonging, said goodbye to his friends, the rabbis, and followed his parents home. He took his grounding, obeyed his parents, and weathered his teenage years, increasing in divine and human favor.

Jesus packs his bag and they return down the side steps of the stage to the front row.

END SKIT

Appendix C

Thursday Keynote

Jonah (based on the Book of Jonah)

Adapted for keynote by Katie Owen

Cast:

Jonah

God

Ninevites (including King)

Sailors (including Captain)

Supplies:

Sign pointing to Ninevah/Tarshish

Ninevah:

- Evil things—we chose gambling (dice, cards, cash)
- Mourning clothes—we used church robes
- King's crown

Sailors:

- Boat
- Cast lots (dice)
- Cash (for Jonah to pay fare)

Big fish

Large bush

Opening: I know you've heard the story of Jonah and the "big fish" ...one of everyone's favorite Vacation Bible School stories. And I have to tell you that for years of my life, I thought that Jonah and the big fish was the whole story. You're familiar with it...it goes something like this:

<The whole acting team act out each of these steps in the story in rapid succession (like freeze frame portraits)>

God asks Jonah to go to Ninevah.

Jonah runs away.

Storm.

Throw him over board.

Eaten by big fish.

Pray.

Saved.

Bada bing bada boom.

Narrator: It was a long time before I realized there was any more to the story than that. But Jonah's story is really one of struggle, of listening and response, of screwing up and getting a second chance, of harsh words, forgiveness, and reform. Let's start back at the beginning, shall we?

<<INSERT REWIND MUSIC>>

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Begin skit again

Jonah enters stage and stands front and center.

Narrator: Now Jonah was a prophet, a reluctant one at best. He was the son of Amittai, literally the son of Truth. Although he was a prophet called by God, he was also a young guy who wanted nothing to do with this whole call that God put on his life. Think seed falling on rocky soil. He had a rebellious streak and a good bit of fear and no concern about talking back. He was, in fact, a teenager trying to find his way, but a teenager for whom God had plans.

Narrator: Now there were people living in the city of Ninevah. Ninevah was a great city, but it had fallen into paths of wickedness.

<<CUE CITYSCAPE of NINEVAH, SPOTS on NINEVITES, Ninevites gamble, fight, etc. >>

Narrator: And the Lord said to Jonah, “Go at once to the great city of Ninevah and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before me.” But Jonah set out to flee to Tarshish and to flee God.

Jonah puts on backpack, turns to look at street sign (Ninevah pointing one way, Tarshish pointing the other), scratches head and and makes dramatic turn to walk in opposite direction of Ninevah.

Narrator: Jonah found a ship in Joppa going to Tarshish, paid his fare and climbed on board to go away from the presence of God, thinking to himself, “No one wants to be the bearer of bad news! I don’t want to tell Ninevah they’re doomed, better for them to find out the hard way.”

Actors bring out cardboard cut out of a boat and hold it in front of Jonah, as if he’s in the boat. 2-3 students” climb in boat” with him. Those holding up boat rock it slowly and steadily.

Narrator: Not long after they’d set sail, the Lord hurled a great wind and a mighty storm came upon the sea so that the ship threatened to sink. The sailors were afraid, and each cried to his or her god. Jonah, meanwhile, had gone down into the hold of the ship and fell asleep, as only a true teenager and professional napper could do. The captain came and said to him, ‘What are you doing sound asleep? Get up, call on your god! Perhaps the god will spare us a thought so that we do not perish.’

Actors holding boat shake/rock it back and forth. Mariners look afraid. Captain shakes sleeping Jonah.

Narrator: The sailors said, “let’s cast lots to see whose fault this storm is.” And after placing their bets, the lot fell on Jonah.

The sailors look at him with questioning and convicting eyes, point fingers, etc.

Sailors (all at the same time): Who are you? Where are you from? What is it that you did? All of this is your fault!

Jonah: I am a Hebrew. I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.

Actors holding the boat continue to rock it, more violently now, sailors form a circle, huddle together, and deliberate pushing him overboard.

Narrator: The sea was growing more violent and the sailors more concerned. So Jonah said,

Jonah: “Pick me up and throw me into the sea and it will quiet down for you. This is all my fault.”

Narrator: The sailors tried to be merciful and get to shore, but when they could hold off no longer, they picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea and the sea immediately became calm.

Sailors throw Jonah overboard, toward center stage where he sits, using arms to act like he’s drifting. Actors holding boat immediately stop rocking.

Narrator: Jonah was drifting alone, out at sea, but the Lord provided a large fish to swallow up Jonah; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights.

Actors enter stage with outline of a giant fish/whale and stand in front of Jonah with mesh cutout within fish so it looks like he’s inside the fish. Jonah remains seated on stage. Gets on knees to pray.

Narrator: From inside the giant fish, desperate, Jonah prayed to God:

Jonah (Andy):

Lord, I need you right now. Let’s be honest, I deserved to be thrown into the sea. I ran away from your sight and avoided everything you asked of me. I thought I could never come back, but you heard my voice when I was freaking out. You and I both know that I’m praying out of desperation. But I’ll make you this deal: with a heart of gratitude for saving my life, I will keep my vow and do what you call me to do. Please, God, just give me one more chance.

Narrator: And suddenly, the giant fish spewed Jonah out upon the dry land.

Jonah rolls/jumps across the stage outside the “fish” backdrop, grabs a towel and wipes his forehead and hands. Stands up and listens.

Narrator: Then God spoke to Jonah a second time. Get up and GO. Seriously, this time. Go to Ninevah and tell them of their wickedness and my displeasure.

Narrator: Jonah set out toward Ninevah, a three days walk. And proclaimed what God had told him:

Jonah looks at street sign and turns toward Ninevah. Grabbing his backpack and water bottle he walks toward stage left. He arrives in Ninevah and stands on a soapbox.

Jonah: 40 days more and Ninevah shall be overthrown! Ninevah is doomed because of your evil acts!

JP characters in Ninevah look at him and make faces of fear.

Narrator: Jonah was sure he’d be stoned to death, but to his surprise, the people of Ninevah believed God’s word to them and they put on mourning clothes. The King also repented, declared a city-wide fast and called upon everyone to mourn, repent, and stop all their violence and evil nonsense.

Characters in Ninevah pick up trash, take down signs of evil, put on black robes and sit solemnly. King takes off crown and also puts on black.

Narrator: The king and all the people of Ninevah prayed and the king said,

JP characters—Ninevites—all kneel and pray.

King: Maybe God will change his mind about us and have mercy despite our actions so that we will not die.

Narrator: When God saw that they had changed their hearts and turned from their violent ways, God changed his mind and did not destroy them.

Ninevites cheer and say together, "Thank You! Thank You! Thank You, God!" Jonah rolls his eyes and walks away from the Ninevites back to the center of the stage, pacing as he prays.

Narrator: At this point, Jonah was angry at God, for he had listened to God and told the Ninevites that they would perish, as he was called to do as a prophet, and God had made him look like a liar. Jonah prayed,

Jonah kneels center stage.

Jonah: God, don't you see why I ran away the first time! *<sarcastically>* I know you're *merciful* and *gracious*, *slow* to anger and *abounding* in steadfast love. And as great as that is, you told me to proclaim Ninevah's demise and since you saved them from their own evil ways, now I look like a fool. Just kill me now, God. It is better for me to *die* than live.

Jonah walks to the side of the stage and sits down in the bright light of day, waiting to see what would happen.

Narrator: But God replied, "Really, Jonah? You're gonna be angry at me? How else would you want me to act? Here, sit under the cool of this bush and think about what you said."

Characters bring a tree out on stage for Jonah to sit under. Jonah smiles, drinks some water, and ponders.

Narrator: Jonah enjoyed the shade and began to seem pleased with himself.

Just then the tree withered, the wind blew, and the hot sun beat down on Jonah's head. And once again, Jonah dramatically declared:

As this is read, remove the tree, spotlights both shine brightly (with red screens) on Jonah. Jonah dramatically faints and sits down with his head in his hands.

Jonah: Just kill me now, God. It is better for me to die than live!

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Narrator: And God, watching Jonah's reaction, says again, "really Jonah? Is it right for you to be angry about the bush and the heat? You are concerned about a bush, which grew and perished on its own and for which you did not work at all. If you're going to be concerned about such a small thing, should I not be concerned about Ninevah where thousands of lives are at stake?"

And Jonah went out, humbled by God.

Jonah walks out, shoulders down.

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Appendix D

Mark 5:25-34

A first-person narration for the hemorrhaging woman

Written by Rev. Katie Owen

I want to tell you my story. I grew up in this dusty town by the lake. I loved to sing and to play outside. I loved the feel of the breeze off the lake and the smell of the fresh water. God blessed me with friends. And I went to the synagogue often. Even though I wasn't allowed all the way inside, I loved the smells that wafted out and the low drum of the Hebrew chants and the prayers. My parents taught me to trust God and told me every day that I was loved. And I wanted to know God.

When I was a young woman, though, everything fell apart. My period started—that rite of passage for a girl—and it just wouldn't stop. No amount of Midol would fix the situation. It didn't stop for twelve years. In my day, when girls had their "woman time" they weren't allowed to be around anyone. We were unclean, which is not a big deal if it means going to hang out for a few days with other women in the tent outside town. But when it won't stop, they cast you out. All I wanted was my life back. To laugh. To play. To have coffee with friends. To eat dinner with my family. To sit outside the temple and hear the priests chant their prayers. Was there a prayer left for me, I wondered? I felt so ostracized and alone. I tried everything. Home remedies didn't help. The doctors could do nothing. Anytime someone caught a glimpse of me, they no longer saw me. All they saw was my disease. I cried. I just wanted someone to reach out and hug me, but no hugs came.

I reminded myself every day what my mom had told her when I was young:

You are a child of God. You are a child of God. Nothing can take that away from you. Nothing. And something inside me made me believe it was true.

Sitting alone outside town, I got wind that Jesus was coming through and I'd heard that he was a healer. I believed he could heal me, so I devised a plan. I knew others would spot me if I just showed up, so I covered my head and snuck into the crowd. I didn't want to draw attention to myself, but if I could just get near Jesus, if I could just reach out and touch his cloak, surely God could heal me. The moment came. He walked by. I reached out. And something strange happened....I felt better.

I wanted to jump for joy, but I couldn't overreact. I wasn't supposed to be here in the crowd, and no one knew about my healing but me. But then Jesus stopped. He looked around for who had touched him. Surely he couldn't know? There was a whole crowd here. Wasn't my embarrassment throughout life enough? I'd spent my whole life ostracized and alone. I finally felt better and now I was in trouble, just another way I would be mocked by everyone. Jesus caught my eye and my heart sank. I slowly inched my way forward. The crowd realized it was me and cleared out around me, assuming I was still unclean. I knelt down at Jesus' feet and told him my story...my whole story.

And you know what? He listened. And he looked at me, Jesus looked at me with compassion in his eyes. And he grabbed my hand and helped me stand up and said "daughter, your faith has made you well, go in peace and be healed." Did you hear it? He called me daughter. What my mother had said was true. I am a child of God. I met Jesus, and he loved me. Then I looked up and realized the crowd was still there. But in that moment, everyone saw me differently, they actually saw ME. A woman I hadn't seen in 12 years came up and hugged me and oh how it felt to be hugged! For the first time in a long time, I was fully alive!