



DIACONAL SUNDAY

February 22, 2015

Celebrating witness expressed through service (diakonia) and leadership offered by the ELCIC's diaconal ministers.

Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God.—Mark 1:14

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE — Mark 1:9–15



MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Colouring Sheets of Diaconal Ministry Emblem (enough for each of the children)
- Paper with the word DIAKONIA written on it
- Baptismal font with water

Message:

Good morning everyone. How are you today? Today is a special Sunday, called **Diaconal Sunday**. The word *Diakonia* (**show sign**), tells us that each and every one of us is called, through baptism, to be God's servant.

Today's Gospel lesson talks about the baptism of Jesus. Let me re-tell you the story that was read today. *(Briefly recap the Gospel lesson with the children, emphasizing that after Jesus was baptized he began his ministry.)*

So, can anyone tell me what it means to be baptized? *(Brief discussion with children.)*

Yes, it means to become a child of God and to be changed from the inside out.

When Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit flew down to Jesus, coming in much the same way a dove flies. Therefore, the dove is a symbol of the Holy Spirit and of God's love for Jesus and of God's love for us. After his baptism, Jesus was ready to start his ministry.

Can anyone tell me some of the things that Jesus did for others? *(Brief discussion with children.)*

Yes, Jesus helped others, told them about how much God loved them, listened to them, made them feel better. He did this because he loved God.

How many of you are baptized? Can you tell what happens during a baptism? *(Conversation using baptismal font as part of the discussion.)*

The Holy Spirit became a special part of you when you were baptized. The Holy Spirit helps you to be kind to others, tell others about how God loves them, be good helpers and listeners. You can do these things for God because at baptism, you became part of God's family.

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CHILDREN'S MESSAGE — Mark 1:9-15

Did you know that there are special women and men in our church all across Canada who are called **Diaconal Ministers**? These people have made a special promise to God to always serve God in their lives. Some of our Diaconal Ministers preach sermons, some visit sick people, others help those who are poor. Some Diaconal Ministers create beautiful music for God, listen to people who are sad or work with children at christian camps and schools. Today is their special Sunday, called **Diaconal Sunday**.

Look at this picture of the Diaconal Ministry emblem. What do you see?

(Look and you might see a dove, with an olive branch of peace in its beak. The dove reminds us of the Holy Spirit. Look again and you might see a hand reaching out into the world. The hand reminds us of helping.)

Reaching out to others, sharing the Good News of Jesus and helping others, in the church and in the world is what Diaconal Ministers have promised God that they will do for their whole lives.

And doing these special things for God isn't just a job for the Diaconal Ministers. It is a job for each and every Christian. Baptism welcomes us into God's family. As part of God's family, we are also called to share God's love with others, both in church and in our neighborhoods and in the world.

What are some special things you can do for Jesus, at home? *(Brief discussion.)* At your church? *(Brief discussion.)* And in your neighbourhood? *(Brief discussion.)* You do these things because you are part of God's family.

Now I would like you to put your finger in the baptismal waters and make a sign of the cross on your forehead. The cross on your forehead will help you remember that you are a child of God who has been called to share God's Good News of love, hope and forgiveness with others.

This is what Jesus is calling all of us to do. To reach out in love to other people, in our church, in our families and in our neighbourhoods. Be good listeners to Jesus as he calls you to follow Him.

Echo prayer *(Leader says a line and the children repeat.)*

*Thank you God that I am your child, like Jesus was.
Help me to be kind to everyone, like Jesus was.
Show me where I can be a good helper, like Jesus was.
Let me tell others about your love for us all, like Jesus did.
Amen.*



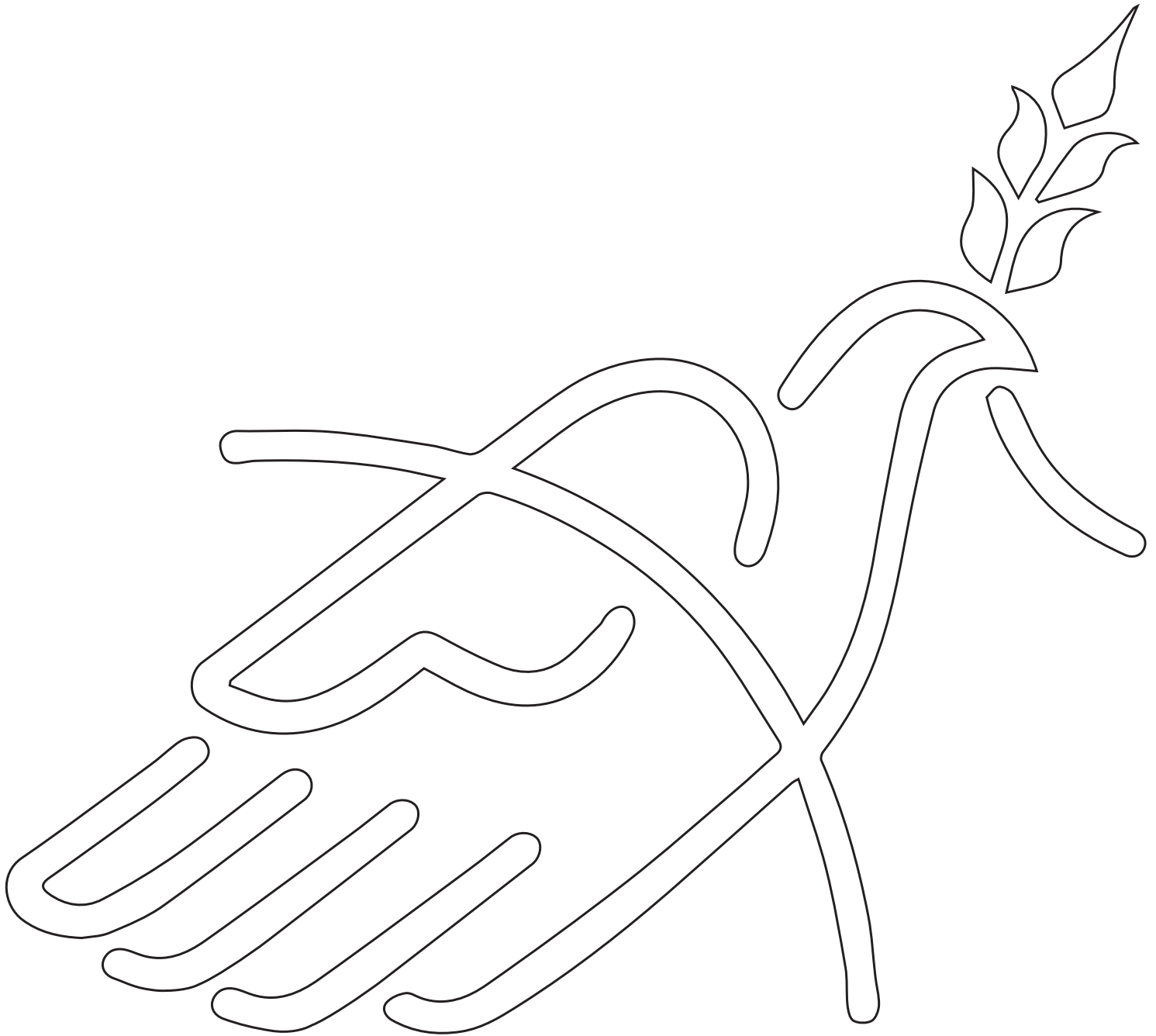
Distribute colouring sheets of Diaconal Ministry emblem to each of the students.

Tell children that when they look at the emblem, they can see the dove and remember the Holy Spirit being a special part of them, so they can be the hands of Jesus in the world.



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