

SIGNS

Speaker: Church Worker or Wheat Team Director

Time: Sunday 3:30 p.m.

Length: 20–30 minutes maximum (*Keep in mind that the Wheat Team will be waiting through this talk.*)

Purpose:

As a community of believers, the Body of Christ, we communicate God's love by sharing the love of God we have in Word and Sacrament and sharing our love with one another.

This talk also serves as the introduction to the celebration of Holy Communion and introduces the Wheat Team. The introduction of the Wheat Team does not come at the very end of the talk, for then the excitement of the introduction would hinder the TECites' focus and preparation for Holy Communion. Rather, after the Wheat Team introduction, continue with other signs in the community of God's people, leading up to God's signs in the Sacrament: the Word, bread, and wine. Note that **God's signs** not only point to what they mean but also contain the meaning itself. For example, the Sacrament not only points to forgiveness but contains forgiveness. God's Word not only points to His love but contains it.

Outline: Begin Your Talk Here

Scripture reading: Genesis 9:12–17

Response (ALL): That is the sign of the promise which I am making to all living beings (Genesis 9:17).

Introduction:

There are various forms of communication. Communication gives information through a system of signs (such as an alphabet, symbols, or behavior). It's a way to express ideas, statements, and beliefs. Communication is essential to human life and to life in the Body of Christ. Our fellowship is communicated in three ways (*use a diagram of a triangle or arrows to express visually*): (1) God to people, (2) people to God, and (3) people to people.

I. Communication through Signs

- A. Words: While our words can sometimes be confusing (for example, new words, slang terms, or acronyms), the communication from God is seldom confusing (God's clear promise "I will not again destroy the earth" after the flood accompanied the sign of the rainbow).
- B. Body language (*Give examples of how posture, gestures, and other nonverbal signals communicate, sometimes something different than our words are saying.*)
- C. Possessions (*Give examples of what possessions can say about the person who has them.*)
- D. Actions: It's often said, actions speak louder than words. If a person talks the talk but doesn't walk the walk, what is he or she communicating? (*Give examples of how helpful actions can witness to others or how harmful actions can give the wrong message.*)

We don't always get signs right. We give mixed messages or don't communicate what we want. But God's signs are perfect. How does God use His people, the Body of Christ, to communicate?

II. Actions among God's People (Colossians 3:12–17)

- A. God's actions: Christ's death and resurrection, giving the Holy Spirit to His people.
- B. Our actions: greeting others in worship, hugs, kind gestures.
- C. The actions of others: Wheat Letters, remembering others with a card or phone call, and a group of people on this weekend who have surrounded us with their prayers and help on this retreat. They have been praying for us weeks before we arrived, they pray with us prior to giving a talk and while we give these talks. This group has washed dishes, served meals, cleaned up after us, and served us because they love the Lord. Allow me to introduce to you: THE WHEAT TEAM.

Settle the group down after the Wheat Team leaves and continue your talk: There are more signs in the community of God's people I'd like to tell you about.

III. Signs from God Himself

- A. God's words: We've already talked about the gift of the Bible, the Word of God.
- B. God's body language: He made man of the dust of the earth and breathed life into him. He reached out in Jesus to touch and heal the sick, and so on.
- C. Objects/possessions: the cross, church buildings, pastor's stole, vestments, banner, water, bread and wine, and candles. *Select a few and explain what these objects mean.*
- D. Actions: Finally, today we especially look at the celebration of Holy Communion, in which we are about to partake. Here, we have a beautiful communication from God through Christ's very body and blood—in, with, and under bread and wine. We also have our communication back to Him in worship, prayer, and praise—and also our communication with one another as family members, schoolmates, coworkers, friends, and brothers and sisters in Christ.

Conclusion:

We, too, are signs to others as we return to our homes, schools, and our congregations. What communication will we give through our words, body language, possessions, and actions?

Question (asked by Lay Director following this talk):

What sign has God given to me that He loves me? OR What sign can I show to others that God loves them?