



Week 1: God is On the Move

Scripture Passage

Genesis: 1: 1-8

Focus Statement

The work of creating begins with God in the book of Genesis. The Spirit of God swept over the waters and spoke creation into existence. God is on the move.

ME

In Genesis, God is creating, sweeping and speaking. Share a time when you have felt or seen God sweep over, speak to you or a situation.

WE

Maybe we have seen or experienced a time of great movement; it can be something scary like an earthquake when the actual plates of the earth moved, or it can be something exciting like moving to a new home or career.

GOD

As God creates, God sweeps over and speaks into being all of creation; God is actually part of the movement. In our baptism liturgy we talk about the chaos that existed until God swept over the waters. God moves the water of the Red sea, moves the clouds for rainbows, parting heavens in Jesus' baptism and an earthquake rocks the earth at the time of Jesus' death and resurrection. We can see throughout both the Old and New Testaments how God's movement continues.

YOU

Jesus empowers all of us to be part of this dynamic movement. The reason we can move, the reason faith can move mountains, is because God did it first. We are all created in the image of God; therefore, we can participate in God's creating, sweeping and moving. Create new opportunities for people to be welcomed. We can sweep over (fill in what needs light in your context) _____; we can move mountains.

WE

Imagine a world with no movement, no breezes blowing etc. Our world is waiting on us. In your community, what are the mountains that need to be moved. What are the obstacles and opportunities waiting for your faithfulness? Challenge your congregation to imagine sweeping across your neighborhood with the power of God.



UNITED METHODISTS
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY



Week 2: Mountains Can Seem Like Obstacles

Scripture Passage Genesis 12:1-9

Focus Statement Sometimes movement can be uncomfortable. Faith requires that we face obstacles trusting in the plan of God.

ME Share a personal reflection story of being uprooted; maybe this is moving jobs, going to college, getting married, moving to a different home or even church.

WE We can relate to being moved out of our comfort zone, as a church we are asked to have faith often when we cannot see the destination. Highlight times in your congregation when they have been asked to have faith without knowing the results. Maybe this is starting a new ministry, a mission trip or facing changes in their community.

GOD God instructs Abraham to literally step out in faith. Discuss what it means for Abraham to move; he leaves his family, a place of safety, away from his community. Highlight that Abraham is uprooted at 75 years old. Abraham leaves without a set destination. Sometimes God will call us to something without showing us where it will lead. Abraham continues to listen to God along the way; keeping connected to God moves him forward.

YOU Abraham is not alone. Throughout the Bible, people are called to step out of their comfort zone. Highlight a few favorites such as the prophets, Jesus and early disciples. You can also add stories from church history--John Wesley's story of coming to America set the foundation for the church even though he saw it as a failure.

WE As we journey in faith, God will offer us instruction. We might be well established, and it would be uncomfortable to change or move to a new thing. But do we have the faith that God has a plan? Maybe not for our benefit today, but for the benefit of the generations to come.



UNITED METHODISTS
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY



Week 3: (Mother's Day) Mountains as Opportunities

Scripture Passage Luke 1:39-45

Focus Statement Both Mary and Elizabeth have been swept over by God's spirit, which has led to the unlikely motherhood of both. We are reminded that nothing is impossible with God.

ME Think about a time when you were faced with a challenge and uttered the words, couldn't, wouldn't and shouldn't. If you are preaching on Mother's Day, share a story about a woman in your life or in history who did something seemingly impossible, such as Amelia Earhart, Sally Ride, etc.

WE We understand impossibilities. Life can be hard, even in the church. Lift up places where your congregation or community has had to face impossible circumstances.

GOD Through the power of God, both women became pregnant. Faith requires belief. Nothing is impossible with God; this is a place to explain the challenges that both women faced.

YOU There are opportunities for deep faith today, even in a world that is skeptical about faith and questions the value of church. Mary and Elizabeth's unwavering faith introduced the world to Jesus. We are called to that same faith.

WE Actively moving in faith allows us to see God. How will we strengthen our faith? This is the place to challenge your congregation to go deeper, begin Bible studies, take part in mission activities, listen to God through the intentional practice of prayer. Next week we will dig deeper into how we will live into being people who will move mountains.





Week 4: You Move the Mountain

Scripture Passage Hebrews 12: 1-2

Focus Statement The mountains you face might be obstacles to overcome, but they can also be opportunities for you to step out. But, with God, none of these mountains are impossible for you to move.

ME Discuss the perseverance of someone, physical, spiritual or emotional. This can be a personal example; maybe an athlete, Holocaust survivors, Nelson Mandela, etc.

WE Throughout history, the church has faced times where it needed to persevere. Highlight some examples of the universal church or your congregation.

GOD We are not alone, God has us in journey with those who support us in faith, a cloud of witnesses. God is also with us. We are called to persevere. Go back and talk about the perseverance of your previous examples such as Abraham, Mary and Elizabeth. Their examples point to the necessity of constantly connecting with God. In perseverance we come to see some of our mountains are obstacles, and others are opportunities. We have an example in Jesus as the pioneer and perfecter of faith; consider what that implies.

YOU How will we be pioneers, demonstrating great faith in a new way. God is calling us to do new and seemingly impossible things. You can highlight new ideas for your community here.

WE Who today is willing to join the movement of running with perseverance and faith? I invite you to take the first step towards mountain-moving faith, by coming forward to the altar and inviting God to sweep over you. Allow people to come forward; give them time to just be there. Do not rush this opportunity. Have a musician play if this matches your experience. This is a chance for anointing and individual prayer. However, you might choose to just pray over all those who came forward.



UNITED METHODISTS
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY