



## Decorating the Mitten Tree Program

**[Please provide:** leader, 7 readers, a small real or artificial Christmas tree, at least 7 pairs of children's mittens or gloves which will later be given to a local school or social service agency, copies of this program for all participants including those who are not designated readers]

**Leader:** Let's begin by reading together the LWML Pledge:

**All:** In fervent gratitude for the Savior's dying love and His blood bought gift of redemption, we dedicate ourselves to Him with all that we are and have, and in obedience to His call for workers in the harvest fields, we pledge Him our willing service wherever and whenever He has need of us. We consecrate to our Savior our hands to work for Him, our feet to go on His errands, our voice to sing His praises, our lips to proclaim His redeeming love, our silver and our gold to extend His kingdom, our will to do His will, and every power of our life to the task of bringing the lost and the erring into eternal fellowship with Him. Amen. (Rev. Harry Fricke ©1955 LWML)

**Leader:** Our Lord Jesus used His hands in many different ways as He lived here on earth. With His hands Jesus fed people, healed people, and comforted people. Most importantly, Jesus allowed His hands to be nailed to the cross as He gave up His perfect life to save our imperfect one. Jesus did this because it was the only way that we could be rescued from the eternal death that we deserve because of our sins. Such love our Savior Jesus showed us with His hands!

Now, let us take our hands and place them on the table before us. [Invite individuals to examine their own hands.] As we said the LWML Pledge, we once again consecrated our hands to our Savior to work for Him. Though our hands may be smooth and slender, short and stubby, calloused or freckled, it doesn't matter for our hands were made by God and they are beautiful. We lift our hands in praise to God for we are *fearfully and wonderfully made* (Psalm 139:14). By the power of the Holy Spirit, we use our hands to reach out to others in the name of Christ Jesus in service to Him.

**Reader One:** When we were small, it took us some time to learn how to hold a spoon, to color a picture, to cut with scissors, and to tie our shoes. But the Lord has known us since before we were even conceived. He was with us as we were formed in our mothers' wombs. In Holy Baptism, God gave us faith in Him and made us His children. By His grace, we can now do many things with our hands. [Picks up a pair of mittens.] We may not be able to knit, but by the work of our hands we have purchased these mittens and now present them to be given to a child in need. May God bless the child who will receive these mittens. May this child grow to know, love, and serve our Lord Jesus Christ. [Hangs the pair of mittens on the tree.]

**Reader Two:** In the LWML Pledge, we promise to give our Savior "our willing service wherever and whenever He has need of us." Jesus told His disciples, "*Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay*" (Matthew 10:8). Jesus gave His disciples the power to do all these things in His name. [Picks up a pair of mittens.] As Jesus' disciples today, we can give this pair of mittens to safeguard the health of one of His little ones. We daily receive so much from the hand of God that we freely and happily give these mittens in service to Him. [Hangs the pair of mittens on the tree.]

**Reader Three:** Our Lord Jesus also said, *“And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward”* (Matthew 10:42). [Picks up a pair of mittens.] Now it is not a cup of cold water we give, but it is a pair of new, warm mittens. Our reward from You, O Lord, is the joy we receive as we give this gift in Your name. [Hangs the pair of mittens on the tree.]

**Reader Four:** Have you ever had really cold hands? Because of the cold, have your hands ever turned red or even blue? Have your hands ever been so cold that your fingers have lost feeling? I remember losing my mittens on the playground once in a pile of snow. I walked home crying from the pain of my cold hands. When I reached my home, my mother put my hands in luke-cool water and slowly, the feeling came back to my fingers. [Picks up a pair of mittens.] Such a simple thing, this pair of mittens, but what a blessing on a cold, winter day. Jesus said, *“And the King will answer them, ‘Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me’”* (Matthew 25:40). Our Lord Jesus has compassion on all who are in physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual need. The Holy Spirit gives us the compassion of Christ in our hearts as we bring these mittens for one of the *least of these*. [Hangs the pair of mittens on the tree.]

**Reader Five:** Proverbs 31 tells about the virtuous woman. This Scripture says that the virtuous woman ... *works with willing hands* (v. 13). *She dresses herself with strength and makes her arms strong* (v. 17). *She puts her hands to the distaff, and her hands hold the spindle. She opens her hand to the poor and reaches out her hands to the needy* (vv.19–20). *She makes linen garments and sells them* (v.24). *She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness* (v. 27). As modern Christian women, we probably don't know how use a spinning wheel, but we can use a sewing machine, a microwave oven, drive a car, or use a computer. With whatever tools and abilities God gives us to use, we are empowered to work for Him in our households, local churches, communities, and throughout the world. [Picks up a pair of mittens.] What a privilege to present to the Lord the work of our *willing hands*. [Hangs the pair of mittens on the tree.]

**Reader Six:** Holy Scripture reminds us, *Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you* (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18). Despite earthly trials and troubles, as those redeemed by Jesus we can always give songs and prayers of thanks and praise to God. Jesus died and rose for our sins so that we might have God's forgiveness and the sure and certain hope of eternal life. Daily God blesses us with His forgiveness and provides all that we need and even more. [Picks up a pair of mittens.] In gratitude for all that God has done and continues to do for us, we offer these mittens as we share with others the bounty with which God provides us. [Hangs the pair of mittens on the tree.]

**Reader Seven:** In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, *“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven”* (Matthew 5:14–16). As Jesus' followers today, we tell others that He is the everlasting light of salvation and truth. We share Jesus' saving love through the words we speak and the things we do. In this way, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we are His lights in the world. [Picks up a pair of mittens.] Lord, may all that we give to others show them Your love and care for all and bring glory to You. [Hangs the pair of mittens on the tree.]

**Leader:** [To other participants besides the readers.] As Jesus' lights, let us all come forward and place the remaining pairs of mittens on the tree in glory and service to Him. [Invite all to come forward and hang the rest of the mittens on the tree.] And now, let us pray together:

**All:** Thank You, Heavenly Father, for the unbelievable, undeserved, tremendous gift of salvation, grace, forgiveness, and eternal life that You give us through faith in Jesus. Thank You for giving us hearts that love You and hands that serve You. Bless all who will receive these mittens. By the power of the Holy Spirit, when these individuals hear Your Word may each one come to faith in Jesus as their Lord and Savior. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

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