**God’s Dream** by Archbishop Desmond Tutu

**Scriptures:**
- Matthew 22:37-39 The Greatest Commandment
- John 13:34-35 Love One Another
- 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 One Body with Many Members
- 1 John 4:7-8 God is Love

**Hymns:**
- UMH 549 Where Charity and Love Prevail
- FWS 2172 We are Called
- W&S 3116 Love the Lord
- W&S 3127 I Have a Dream

**Theological Reflection:**

Archbishop Tutu makes his interpretation of the Bible’s message easy to understand even for the youngest among us. Like Jesus, he says that God’s dream is that we love God and love each other. Using the simplest words and examples, Archbishop Tutu and co-author Doug Abrams teach forgiveness, empathy, and what it looks like to love all of God’s children. In their full-length book, *God Has a Dream*, they go into detail about exactly how “God is transforming the world now—through us—because God loves us.” These are concepts we teach over and over in our churches, but do we really know how to embody them? Tutu and Abrams give wonderful radical but concrete lessons in how to do so. Using these books in your church can help focus all of your worship and missions on the love God feels for all of God’s children and how we can live them out for others.

**Discussion Starters/Activity for Children and Adults:**
- Go back to the very first question on the very first page. *What do you dream about in your loveliest dreams?*
  - Have each person answer this either aloud in a popcorn style or if working with older children, youth, or adults, have them write it down on sticky notes or draw pictures.
  - Have them post the notes of their dreams somewhere that a volunteer can read them.
- How do those things make everyone feel? Do they make people visibly smile or giggle? Are there any that are difficult to hear and/or unexpected? Or, things we take for granted?
  - Discuss if dreams have to be realistic or if somewhat unrealistic dreams are just as good or better—like “flying high.”
  - Josie Bisset is quoted as saying, “Dreams come a size too big so that we can grow into them.” What does that look like?
- The authors state that “God dreams about people sharing.”
  - Have everyone yell out or write down a way that they can share with others. Help them keep in mind the rest of the book that everyone is a child of God; encourage them to write down a way they can share with someone outside the church.
The authors then state that “God dreams about people caring.”
  - Repeat the ritual of calling out, writing down, or especially with kids, acting out a way they can show they care about someone else. Have the Sharing and Caring sticky notes posted to the wall.

The book reminds us that no matter what we look like or how we speak or how big or small we are, that we are all God’s children.
  - Have children note some of the differences between the children in the book. Note with each difference that God loves that character and that that character is a part of God’s family. The characters in the book don’t all look the same. Look at each other. Do we all look the same?
    - If we were all the same, wouldn’t it be boring?
    - If we were all the same, wouldn’t God’s family be boring?
    - Remind them that God’s family is full of ALL human beings and it’s God’s dream that we’re not all the same and that God loves all of us like family partly because we’re not the same, and we’re all special to God.
    - An easy (and popular) demonstration of this is the use of candies (like M&Ms) that are different on the outside, but the same on the inside, especially if multiple sizes can be procured. Ask children if it would be as much fun if the whole bag was the same color. Ask if they think they all taste the same.

  - With adults, have them look around the room. Then ask them to think of who is not in the room.
    - Are specific demographics from the community missing in your church?
    - Remind them that at the end of Luke 4 and Mark 1, after Jesus has healed multitudes in Capernaum, he runs a risk of limiting his ministry. He could have stayed and just helped the people of Capernaum, but instead he tells the disciples, “I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities also.” Jesus continued on to include the excluded.
    - Have adults write down some of the groups of people in the community who are missing from their church. Post these sticky notes on the wall.
    - In 1 Corinthians 12:21, Paul writes that “The eye cannot say to the hand, I do not need you…” If we are the body of Christ, we need ALL of the parts. How can we work to create space in our church to welcome ALL of the Body of Christ?
  - With children: Encourage them to find and bring a library book with a main character that is “different” like one of the characters in “God’s Dream.” Take one of the sharing or caring actions during the week and report back about how they were able to show God’s love to another child of God.
  - With adults: Ask how they acknowledge and celebrate differences. Ask them to reflect throughout the day what keeps them from building relationships with groups in the community who are not part of the church. And, to reflect on ways that they would be willing to begin building relationships.

After the discussion, have each person pull one sticky note that is not theirs from each of the Sharing, Caring, and Differences wall.
  - Encourage adults to read Tutu and Abrams’ full-length adult book, *God Has a Dream* for more detailed discussion and further examples.