

PREPARE YOUR HEART

Praise God for his guidance.

Devotional Aims:

Club members will:

- learn how God has guided Pioneer Clubs and can guide them.
- celebrate God's guidance of Pioneer Clubs and of them.

Scripture:

Psalm 119:105

Bible Memory:

Psalm 119:105

Supplies:**WELCOME**—optional: cowboy hat**GET READY**—printout of Pioneer Clubs Time Machine Skit**GIVING PROJECT**—Love Offering containers**1st ACTIVITY**—frosting, plastic knives, sprinkles or other candies, tubes of decorating gel; for each member: plain cupcake**DEVOTIONAL**—Bible, two shirts of different colors, streamers**SNACK**—cupcakes from 1st Activity, matches; for each member: candle**BIBLE MEMORY**—none**2nd ACTIVITY**—construction paper, markers, decorating supplies (glitter glue, stickers, ribbon, etc.)**GAMES**—Frisbees, hula hoops**SONGS**—printouts of old Pioneer Clubs theme songs**PRAYER**—candle, candle holder, matches**Party Preparation**

- Print out party plans and handouts.
- Invite parents or Pals, if desired.

WELCOME

It's Pioneer Clubs' birthday! Cheer.

- Guess how old Pioneer Clubs® is. (70.)

Today we're going to celebrate how God has led Pioneer Clubs for 70 years. We'll find out what Pioneer Clubs meetings were like in the good old days, play games from long ago and make lots of happy noise!

When Pioneer Clubs began, it had



70th Birthday Party

a theme of the pioneers in the Old West.

Put on your cowboy hat if you brought one. Say you will begin the party the way a Pioneer Clubs meeting would have begun long ago. Call out, "Catch up!" Members of each age-group form a straight line facing you. You call the name of each age-group in turn ("Pathfinders!" etc.), and the appropriate Pioneer Clubs leader says, "All set!" (These are signals that wagon trains used in the Old West to get the wagons hitched up and in line to start each day.)

GET READY 5-8 MINUTES

With you as narrator, put on the Pioneer Clubs Time Machine Skit at www.pioneerclubs.org/pdf/birthday/skit.pdf to acquaint children with Pioneer Clubs history. No rehearsal needed!

► Or choose another activity idea at www.pioneerclubs.org/pdf/birthday/ideas.pdf.

GIVING PROJECT 5-8 MINUTES**Do Ahead:**

Have children bring their decorated Love Offering containers. (See "Love Offering" at www.pioneerclubs.org/events.birthday.php.)

Thank club members for their love gifts, which are their "present" to the Pioneer Clubs national ministry. Tell them it will be sent to Pioneer Clubs to help the ministry continue to share God's love with other children. Explain that many people have helped support Pioneer Clubs over 70 years, and now they, too, are a part of God's plan through their gifts.

Combine children's gifts into one check marked "\$70 for 70 years" and mail to Pioneer Clubs.

1st ACTIVITY 10-15 MINUTES**Do Ahead:**

Gather supplies.

Decorate birthday cupcakes for Snack.

► Or choose another activity idea at

www.pioneerclubs.org/pdf/birthday/ideas.pdf.

DEVOTIONAL 10-12 MINUTES**Do Ahead:**

Gather supplies.

Hand out streamers.

Bring up a volunteer, keeping the two shirts you brought hidden. Have someone turn off lights. Hold shirts up, and ask: **Which color shirt would you rather wear?**

Turn on the lights again, and ask the question again. Then ask: **How did the light help you?**

God has given us something to help us make good choices about things that are a lot more important than which color shirt to wear. He has given us the Bible. The Bible is God's Word. Read Psalm 119:105.

This verse compares the Bible to a light. Lights (point to room lights) can help you see things clearly—like colors. Hold up shirts. **The Bible is like a light because it can help you see things in a different way—not with your eyes, but with your mind. That means the Bible can help you figure things out. It can help you figure out what is good and true. It can help you understand how God wants you to live.**

Seventy years ago, in 1939, some young people believed this verse. They were students at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois. One of them, Joe Coughlin, had started a boys club for the boys in his Sunday school class. Now the sisters of those boys wanted a club for themselves. Joe prayed and prayed that God would give him light and show him what to do. He put an ad in the student newspaper asking for a leader for a girls club.

Wheaton College freshman Betty Whitaker had also been praying, asking God to give her light, to show her how he wanted her to work with girls. The newspaper ad was her answer, and soon Pioneer Girls began! Kids cheer and shake streamers.

Back then, it was called Girls Guild, and it was only for junior high girls. Betty went to the Bible, her light, and found a Bible verse to build the club program around—

Psalm 45:12, “The King’s daughter is all glorious within.”

Clubs began to form in churches near Wheaton College. For the first year, all of the information that Betty needed for this new organization fit in half of a shoebox.

After the first club year they had a weekend camp called Camp Uketegi. Call out how many kids you think attended. (23.) Today the Pioneer Clubs camping program has served thousands of children and is called Camp Cherith®. Cheer; shake streamers.

Two years later, the Girls Guild director’s name was Carol Erickson. God continued to shine a bright light for her, letting her know which way to go with the club program. What do you think she changed the name to? (Pioneer Girls.)

Carol built the activities around a theme of pioneering and adventure. A group called Pilgrims began for girls under age 10. Carol searched the Bible to find a theme verse and chose Psalm 119:105, the same verse we’re talking about today. Say it with me.

That verse has guided Pioneer Clubs all these 70 years. Have kids cheer and shake streamers.

In what country do you think Pioneer Clubs began in 1945? (Canada.) Pioneer Clubs began spreading to other countries, too, as missionaries adapted the program to the cultures they were reaching. You are part of an international family of Pioneer Clubs members! Cheer and streamers.

If you had been a Pioneer Clubs member in 1951, you could have earned the ranks of Settler, Harvester, and Homesteader. Those were kind of like badges. In 1974, you could have been a Lavalier or a Shikari.

1981 was an exciting year—guess who joined the fun. (Boys.) Have kids cheer and shake streamers. Pioneer Girls became Pioneer Clubs. In 1986, Scooter Clubs started for 4- and 5-year-olds; and in 1990, 2- and 3-year-olds could join Skippers.

What languages do you think Pioneer Clubs books have been translated into? (They include Spanish, French, Lithuanian, Russian.) Does anyone here speak Lithuanian?

God and his Word have guided Pioneer Clubs through all these excit-

ing stages. Cheer and shake streamers.

God and his Word will guide you in your life, too. Do you need to decide what to do about a bully? Do you need to say “I’m sorry” to your mom? Is someone you love sick? Are you worried about school?

“Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” God gives you himself and his Word, the Bible, to show you the way to go. It’s as though your life is a path, taking you through good days and bad days. Just as God guided the leaders of Pioneer Clubs for 70 years, he will guide you. Just ask him. Pray to him. Read your Bible for ideas. Talk to other Christians. God is always there for you.

• Which of these ideas will you try this week when you need guidance?

Dear God, thank you for guiding the leaders of Pioneer Clubs for 70 years. Please help the Pioneer Clubs members know they can always turn to you and your Word when they need your light and your guidance. In Jesus’ name, amen.

BIBLE MEMORY 8-10 MINUTES

Recite the theme verse, Psalm 119:105. Use the Pioneer Clubs salute or sign language signs at www.pioneerclubs.org/pdf/birthday/signs.pdf.

SNACK 10-15 MINUTES

• **Do Ahead:**
Gather supplies.

Hand out cupcakes from 1st Activity. Give everyone a candle (or just light one candle for everyone). Sing “Happy Birthday” to Pioneer Clubs.

► Or choose another snack idea at www.pioneerclubs.org/pdf/birthday/ideas.pdf.

2nd ACTIVITY 5-8 MINUTES

• **Do Ahead:**
Gather supplies.

Make 70th birthday cards for Pioneer Clubs. Mail them to: *Happy Birthday, Pioneer Clubs, PO Box 788, Wheaton, IL 60187-0788*

Pioneer Clubs will display them around the office and may feature some on the website.

Option: Also make cards for your own Pioneer Clubs program’s birthday. Post them in church where everyone can see them.

► Or choose another activity at www.pioneerclubs.org/pdf/birthday/ideas.pdf.

GAMES 10-15 MINUTES

• **Do Ahead:**
Gather supplies.

- **Frisbee Toss.** Play like an egg toss. Frisbees were invented in the ’50s.
- **Hula Hoop Relay** (1960s). Give each team a hula hoop. At the signal, the first player steps through the hoop and passes it back to the next player, who does the same. *Variation:* Each player rolls the hoop to a designated spot and runs back, passing it to next player.

► Or choose other games at www.pioneerclubs.org/pdf/birthday/ideas.pdf.

SONGS OPTIONAL

• **Do Ahead:**
Gather supplies.

Sing Pioneer Clubs theme songs at www.pioneerclubs.org/pdf/birthday/songs.pdf from the past 70 years.

PRAYER 5-8 MINUTES

• **Do Ahead:**
Gather supplies.

Form a “Friendship Circle,” as many Pioneer Clubs groups used to do years ago to end meetings. Light a candle in the center.

Let volunteers thank God for things they like about Pioneer Clubs or for guiding Pioneer Clubs for 70 years.

Option: Sing “Goodbye Chorus” at www.pioneerclubs.org/pdf/birthday/songs.pdf and “We’ll Never Say Goodbye in Glory” to end your Friendship Circle, as clubs often did long ago.

LEADER REFLECTION

Plan more things to do this year at www.pioneerclubs.org/pdf/birthday/ideas.pdf to show how God has guided Pioneer Clubs or your own group.