



ALL-AGE WORSHIP

a set of five Family Worship plans
which form part of the Year of Discipleship
in the Diocese of Canterbury



all-age worship

The following five service plans have been put together as an aid to your planning for the Sundays of Lent within the Year of Discipleship. All-age worship or a family service is generally a delicate balancing act, where each stereotyped age group is carefully catered for, possibly creating a piecemeal service that attempts to appeal to everyone at least some of the time.

These plans have approached the service from the perspective that if something is accessible for the younger members of a congregation, it will inherently be accessible for the more mature members. It is my experience that the older members of a congregation enjoy the 'young' approach and gain a great deal from the creative and unusual expressions of worship.

The ideas are presented purely as a resource to ignite your own creativity, please use any bits that work and discard any that don't or won't. Each of the five All-Age Worship plans provide a mixture of creative approaches to the Collect, Reading, Talk & Prayers of Intercession.

THE COLLECT

The collects have been copied from the alternative lectionary plan available for Lent (see the 24/7 live it! web space) to encourage a united experience within parishes in the diocese.

THE READING

A few specific translations of the bible have been recommended; please use whichever version you feel is most appropriate for your own context. We would however, encourage you to consider the accessibility of the language of your chosen translation.

www.biblegateway.com is an excellent resource for comparing most of the modern (& the more familiar) translations.

THE TALK

There are some ideas for a direction that the talk could take relating to the text and the wider context of the five weeks in the Lent course themes. Please do not infer any attempt to dictate the direction that the sermon should take: the ideas are presented simply as ideas. Similarly please use the illustrations* as they stand, or adapt them to your context. **It is important to rehearse any physical demonstration before hand!*

THE PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

The ideas for the intercessory prayer are designed to include the younger members of our church families. As with all the ideas in these plans, please use them as you see fit, discard any ideas that seem unworkable **or** allow them to inspire more interactive ideas.

I pray that you will find these ideas useful and that they will serve to enhance your shared time of worship together. If any of these ideas, or any of your own, work particularly well; please do let us know!

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COME

Lent 1 March 13th

COLLECT:

Lord Jesus Christ,
you called men and women to come to you
to find forgiveness, purpose and hope.
Still today you are calling those whom you are adding to your church.
Keep us mindful of our calling,
and strengthen us to live faithfully as your disciples.

READING

John 10:1-10

Invite the congregation to participate in the gospel reading by making the appropriate noise as each word is read and repeated in the text. It may be worth priming one or two team members who could join in loudly...

'sheep' ~ "BAAA"
'thief' ~ "BOOOO"
'Shepherd' ~ "YAY"
'gate' ~ "creak"

TALK IDEAS

*Illustration – if facilities allow: set up a 'whose voice is that?' quiz:
play clips of a number of celebrity voices and challenge the congregation to
identify as many as possible*

Jesus calls Himself the Good Shepherd
the sheep COME to the Good Shepherd because they know His voice.
the response to COME is a response to the promise of an life of abundance

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PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Give everyone a cotton wool ball: these could be placed in strategic piles before the service or handed out at an opportune moment. Every time they say the response, invite them to pass their 'sheep' to the person on their left (or whichever best creates a 'flow' of 'sheep' around the congregation). Be prepared to round up any lost or wandering 'sheep'.

Lord God, we desire to respond to your voice.
You are the Good Shepherd, and we are your flock, your sheep.
May this ball of cotton represent us and our desire to respond to your voice.

Lord, we have heard your voice,
And we respond to you, together. *[pass the 'sheep']*

Lord God, we long for everyone in our world to know your Love.
We dream with you of a world where everyone knows a life of abundance! Show us, Lord, where we might serve you!

Lord, we have heard your voice,
And we respond to you, together. *[pass the 'sheep']*

Lord God, we think of the leaders of our world,
Those who have the position and authority to implement real change.
We pray for your continued presence and power to inspire and lead them. That they too would hear Your voice!

Lord, we have heard your voice,
And we respond to you, together. *[pass the 'sheep']*

Lord God, we pray for all gathered here today.
As we now hold someone else's 'sheep', we pray for them:
that you would call them just as they are,
to follow the Good Shepherd, just as they are!

Lord, we have heard your voice,
And we respond to you, together. *[pass the 'sheep']*

Lord God, we know of those in our community who find it hard to hear you. They are tired, or scared, or angry, or ill. Lonely, grieved and forgotten. Speak to us Lord and call us once again to serve them because of Your love.

Merciful Father,
Accept these prayers, for the sake of your son,
our saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen

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FOLLOW

Lent 2 March 20th

COLLECT:

God our Father,

you lead your people on the journey of faith, and you have sent your Son Jesus Christ to walk before us and with us.

Give us grace to follow in his footsteps as we walk our journey of discipleship for the sake of your kingdom, and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

READING

Matthew 8:18-22

We recommend using the following adapted and incorrect version of the passage. As there is an element of risk in this approach, it might be a good idea to ask a reader who has a certain amount of credibility to do the reading (someone who is trusted by the congregation). The idea is that the incorrect reading will trigger the congregation to question what the correct version was – prompting them to engage with the text before the preacher even begins.

Today's reading is adapted from Matthew's Gospel, chapter eight:

The Cost of Following Jesus

When Jesus saw the crowd around him, he gave orders to cross to the other side of the lake. Then a teacher of the law came to him and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, so you are more than welcome to come find me whenever you want to follow me...in the meantime carry on making sure your own den is in order."

Another disciple said to him, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." But Jesus told him, "Sure - no problem. When you have finished then please do come and follow me, unless you can't get time off work, or you need to get some shopping done, or you want to have a lie in. Don't worry, I'm very understanding."

Here ends our reading...

TALK IDEAS

"Who are you following?"

- ⌄ Idols, peer pressure, keeping up with the Jones'
- ⌄ Why should/would we choose to follow Christ?
- ⌄ What is the cost of following Christ?

If you use the adapted reading (above) it is important to start by correcting Jesus' responses – this could be a very interactive part of the talk whereby the congregation is asked to suggest what Jesus actual responses were... it could go as far as asking the congregation to suggest what those responses meant.

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PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Follow the Leader: invite the younger members to physically follow the person leading the prayers around the church, stopping at significant points to lead each line of the prayer.

Gather at the Font:

Lord God, as we reflect on our call to follow you, we think of our baptism and remember the moments of our journey that act as road markers of our journey.

Lord, we pray for our journey together

Lead us into Your service.

Move to the Lectern:

Lord God, our world often seems to be filled with darkness. We pray that our leaders would follow the Christ of the scriptures, who is the light of the world.

Lord, we pray for our journey together

Lead us into Your service.

Move to (or near) the altar:

Lord God, we trust in Your unearned and unwarranted grace, which we remember whenever we join our brothers and sisters at Christ's table. We think now of those we know and love who need to be fed, consoled, healed, embraced and forgiven.....

Lord, we pray for our journey together

Lead us into Your service.

Move to the Door:

Lord God, we may come and go through this door, but there are many who do not. We believe that Your love reaches out to all. We pray that You would encourage, embolden and empower us to be vehicles for that Love wherever we go.

Merciful Father,

Accept these prayers,

for the sake of your son,

our saviour, Jesus Christ.

Amen

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LEARN

Lent 3 March 27th

COLLECT:

Jesus Christ, our teacher and master, you lead your people into the ways of truth.
Make us eager to learn from you, quick to respond to you,
and hungry for all you have to teach us,
for you have the words of eternal life.

READING

Matthew 5: 1-12

Consider using a modern translation/version [The Message, The Street Bible or NLT]
Develop (create) your own 'interpretive dance' or signed actions to demonstrate the reading. Pick a handful of repeated words in whichever version you are using and decide on a suitable action using one or both hands. Practise doing the reading with two or three people demonstrating the actions: invite the congregation to join in.

TALK IDEAS

Illustration: A quick quiz – use any quiz (Google “pub quiz” as a starting point) BUT make the last few questions truly impossible (there are a few websites and news articles with questions and answers from BBC’s University Challenge, which would be ideal)

The more we learn, the more find we don’t know about God.

- ⌚ God is a mystery by definition
- ⌚ We seek to know God more while acknowledging that we can never know God entirely
- ⌚ We follow Christ’s lead from the bible and our fellowship and worship together, which continually points us to the Father - John 14:7

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PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

If possible provide everyone with a bottle of bubbles – alternately use a bubble machine or have a few strategically placed bubble blowing volunteers [the younger the better: when else will they be allowed to blow bubbles in church!] around the church. Make sure the bubbles keep coming for the entire time of prayer...

Dear Lord, we gather our thoughts to share our collective concerns and cares with You and each other. We see our world as a place increasingly driven by desire for money, power and influence. We pray that Your Spirit will move through our world like a flock of bubbles – spreading out to the entire world spreading Love, Joy and Hope.

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer

Dear Lord, we know that our leaders, nationally and locally, are under pressure from all sides. We pray that their knowledge and expertise would become wisdom: a wisdom that settles as briefly and profoundly as a bubble – fragile enough to prevent arrogance, but beautiful enough to inspire our nation and our community.

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer

Lord God, we think of our own experience with You. We long to know You more, we long to truly see the Father as we follow the Son. We desire the humility to seek You, the courage to follow You, and the strength to share Your love with others...

We pray for those in our community who need Your healing, loving touch. May they too, know the Joy of bubbles as we seek to serve You.

Merciful Father,

**Accept these prayers, for the sake of your son,
our saviour, Jesus Christ.**

Amen

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CHANGE

Lent 4 April 3rd

COLLECT:

Lord Jesus Christ,
you left the splendour of heaven, emptied yourself,
and entrusted yourself to a human mother and father, growing and changing like us within
a human family.
Set us free from the fear of change,
and give us grace to embrace the future with hope, for you are the one who makes all
things new.

READING

The usual readings for Mothering Sunday or those below may be used, but the 'flavour' might be 'Growing up' – exploring how we change as we grow as human children and the need to change and grow in our discipleship.

Luke 2: 40-52 – Jesus in temple

Dramatise the story by either miming the action as a suitable version is read, or get a cast together to learn an adaptation. Either way, be creative in how the scene is portrayed: develop a realistic Mary who is almost overplayed ~ she could add lib and act the wounded mother playing on Italian or Yiddish stereotypes for comic effect: "if you weren't the son of God, you'd be in such trouble!"

TALK IDEAS

This passage is our only glimpse of Jesus as an adolescent

- ⌄ adolescence is our human rite of passage
- ⌄ it is a time of upheaval and change
- ⌄ Jesus' disappearance challenges Mary's expectations
- ⌄ Mary's response (v52) is to accept the change

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PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Ensure that everyone has an envelope which conceals a single match (or each row could have an envelope with enough matches for each person on that row).

At the beginning of the time of intercession ask everyone to get a match from their envelopes.

Lord God, we are gathered today to share in worship, in fellowship and in prayer. We each have our part to play in the body of Christ, we are each a single match in a box full of matches. Help us to see the change that we need to face, if we are to serve You in the world...

As it is in heaven

May it be so on earth

A match is useless if it resists change. In order to bring light it requires friction. We too, Lord are resistant to change. Change brings friction, and we tend to shy away from it. Yet we long to see Your light in our world, where so much darkness remains. We pray that the leaders of our world would be open to the transformation that Your love brings...

As it is in heaven

May it be so on earth

The light of Christ shines into the darkness and nothing can stay hidden. We pray for truth and justice in our community, our nation and our world...

As it is in heaven

May it be so on earth

The Spirit of God was seen as tongues of flame on the disciples at Pentecost. We pray for the transforming and renewing work of the Spirit to be real in the lives of those who we know and love... whether they are surrounded by darkness of stress, loneliness, anger, hurt or grief... come Holy Spirit and burn brightly with the light of Christ...

As it is in heaven

May it be so on earth

We pray for the courage to face the transformation to a life of abundance. A match is changed forever as it brings light and life to its surroundings. Grant us the strength to be transformed into the people that you have created us to be...

**Merciful Father,
Accept these prayers, for the sake of your son,
our saviour, Jesus Christ.**

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Amen

GO

Lent 5 April 10th

COLLECT:

Father God, you send your people not just to be blessed, but to be a blessing to others. Help us to leave selfish ways and comfortable places, and equip us to bring the knowledge of your love and compassion to the places of darkness and despair, for the glory of your name.

READING

Matthew 28:16-20

If facilities allow: show a PowerPoint (or similar) slideshow of a succession of faces (from as many cultures as possible) and as many places as possible. Set the slideshow to run automatically so that there is a new face or place every few seconds. Announce the reading, allow the slideshow to run for a few seconds then read the passage – the pictures will provide a real context for what Jesus is calling us to GO to.

Alternately: write up each part of the Great Commission [go, make disciples, teaching, baptising etc.] on large pieces of card, which can held up at the appropriate point while the passage is read. If you can get images of faces or places big enough then they could also be displayed during the reading.

TALK IDEAS

Illustration: You will need a table and two large spinning tops. Invite a volunteer to come to the front and challenge them to a spinning top competition. As the tops are spinning, make a point to mention the erratic nature of a spinning top, the fact that the two tops' paths will cross repeatedly (or not at all) and that they will both wobble and fall over, sooner or later.

We are called to be a journey with God, through Christ, together

- ✚ The journey is unpredictable: we follow God's Way and submit to that leadership!
- ✚ The journey is fun: Christians are not the boring, stick in the mud's we are often accused of being.
- ✚ The journey leads to a life of abundance!
- ✚ we will fall over: but the key point to our journey with God is that we have the support and encouragement to get up again!

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PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Before the prayers begin (or at an appropriate point in the service) give out a map of your town to everyone (or to smaller groups or for each pew etc). Ideally everyone would have be able to see the map and the younger members will be able to do the sticking of stickers!

Invite the congregation to Draw/Stick a star on the relevant place in your area on the map as the prayers are read.

Lord God, we pause to pray for our community.

We pray for the places where people meet to discuss, decide, discern or share in dialogue.

Lord, we have heard you calling us

We will go to serve You in love.

We pray for the places where people travel: by foot, on wheels, together or alone.

Lord, we have heard you calling us

We will go to serve You in love.

We pray for the places where people find rest.

Lord, we have heard you calling us

We will go to serve You in love.

We pray for the places where loneliness, hurt, grief, pain or despair find root.

Lord, we have heard you calling us

We will go to serve You in love.

We have heard you call us just as we are. We long to respond to that call, just as we are. Even though we talk about being sent, we know, Lord, that you are already 'there'. Ahead of us, before us, beside us and within us. Calling us to join You in the work of building the Kingdom of God, here and now.

Merciful Father,

**Accept these prayers, for the sake of your son,
our saviour, Jesus Christ.**

Amen