

spill the beans

worship and learning resources for all ages



issue 30

lent, easter and pentecost
5 march to 9 june 2019

A resource with a Scottish flavour for
Worship Leaders, Sunday Schools,
Junior Churches and Youth Leaders.

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introduction

Welcome to the third of a series of five issues of Spill the Beans that will take us through Lent and Easter to Pentecost Sunday. We are using our own lectionary plan of readings for this series. We also include in this issue resources for a service focussing on **Climate Change** and an **All Age Holy Week Communion** service.

The Spill the Beans Resource Team asked for feedback from congregations on both favourite Bible stories and those stories that we do not often hear in worship and many congregations wrote back to us. This information was most helpful. While we asked about favourite Bible stories, we were most interested in the stories people felt were not covered in the normal course of worship.

Using these ideas, and carefully considering what is already covered by the Revised Common Lectionary and Narrative Lectionary, we have created a plan that will take us on a different journey through the scripture, dipping into stories we do not often hear, or with which we spend little time.

We are excited about this new journey along lanes lesser travelled in the scriptures that it will be stimulating for us as worship and age group leaders, and will provide our congregations with an engaging and enlightening basis for our worship over the next year.

Revised Common Lectionary and Narrative Lectionary Resources

We have two Overspill packages that provide complete sets of past issues that give a huge library of resources for both the Revised Common Lectionary and Narrative Lectionary.

The Revised Common Lectionary Overspill Pack

Issues 1-12

1,536 pages

£50

Purchase through this link: <https://pul.ly/b/108820>

The Narrative Lectionary Overspill Pack

Issues 13-27 (plus summer extra) in higher quality render

2,082 pages

£60

Purchase through this link: <https://pul.ly/b/207215>

You are downloading a compressed archive of files which need to be unpacked so we recommend downloading these to a desktop or laptop computer rather than phone or tablet. Note that depending on future years there may not be resources for some Sundays depending on the timing of Easter and changes to the readings as a result.

Who Are We?

At the beginning of 2009 a conversation began amongst a couple, then a few, then a group about collaboratively creating resources that enabled us to tell the story of faith in a worship context and within age groups for younger people and teens. Spill the Beans was born as the result of that conversation and has grown and developed over the intervening years.

The ethos has remained the same, however. It is all about story. For we believe story is the lifeblood of faith. In story we can tell the truth and speak with honesty about things for which there are not yet words. Story contains mystery and is the poetry that forms faith. Stories grow as we grow and can reveal new truths at different times in our lives.

So we believe giving stories to people is one of the most important things we can do in sharing our faith. Children and adults hold stories in their being and keep coming back to them throughout life. Our culture is stored in story. The same is true for our faith.

Spill the Beans is a work of love. None of the contributors are paid for their contributions, these contributions are written and prepared with our own congregations in mind. Instead of working in isolation, we bring this work together, give it some spit and polish, and share it with others. This is how we can keep the cost so low.

In addition, we regularly pay it forward by using surplus monies to support other new ministries and projects.

Using Issue 30

In this issue of Spill the Beans you will find an extensive collection of things to use each week. Because each piece is written with specific congregations in mind there may be the need to be a little creative yourselves in adapting and evolving some of the ideas to suit your own place and culture and congregation. That is entirely purposeful.

Of course, if you are creative and would like to share what you have done, then have a look at our Facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/spillbeansresources> and the associated Facebook group that provides space for discussion and support. On our blog at <http://spillbeans.org.uk> you will find PowerPoint backgrounds for most weeks.

Each week we provide a selection of words, ideas and creative moments to take the theme and the passage a little further. We do not provide a ready made service or perfect prayers but ideas and pointers that hopefully scratch at your own creativity and provoke heaven's imagination within you.

Here are some helpful tips to guide you in your use of the material in age groups:

1. It presumes some introduction to the story will have taken place in worship together or will play a part in the service when children join it later.
2. Depending on the make-up of your own groups of children you will need to remain flexible in how you use the material.
3. Each idea has been given a guide age range to help your planning, but this is only a guide so use your own judgement about what will work with your group.
4. Before the sit-down activities if you have a group of young children or lots of boys, you may want to add a run-around type game to expend some energy.
5. Use the gathering time exercise with the whole group to get into the story together across the ages.
6. We encourage you to retell the story together.
7. Follow that by choosing as many or as few activities your space and time allow. You could offer a number of activities each at different stations all at the same time for all ages to self-select with a teacher staffing each one, or have traditional classes.
8. During activities, ask children to retell the story to you and ask about their week, what was happy and what was sad and if this week's story reminds them of other biblical and personal stories.
9. The intention is not to complete "the tasks" brilliantly, but rather to provide opportunities to begin conversations, build relationships, retell the story of the day, and talk about what it means for us today.
10. There are many websites that provide handout-type sheets that will have images, crosswords and word searches for the story of that week. They can be helpful in an emergency, but try to be more creative as leaders, the rewards are worth it.

Information

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Sleepless Nights Publications

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spill the beans resource team

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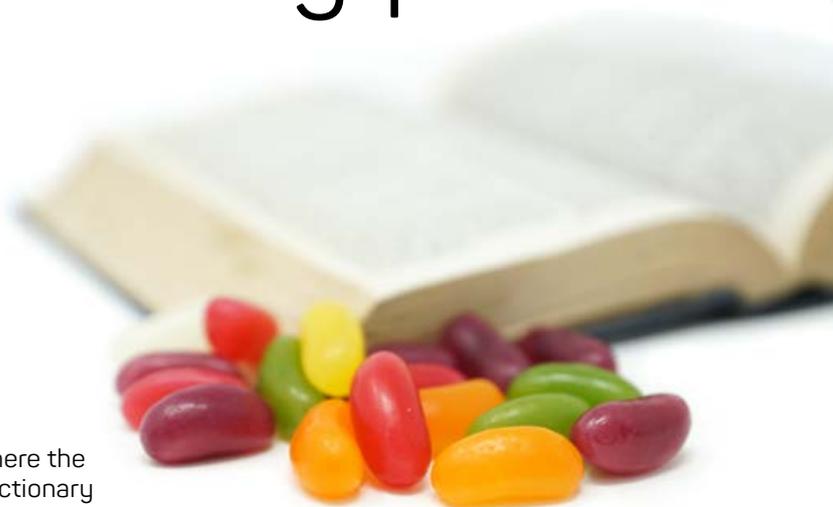
Key to Abbreviations

In the worship ideas section the following abbreviations may be used to indicate different sources of worship music:

ATAS	All the Assembly Songs You'll Ever Need
CG	Common Ground
CH4	Church Hymnary, 4th Edition
CH3	Church Hymnary, 3rd Edition
JP	Junior Praise
MP	Complete Mission Praise
SGP	Songs of God's People
WGP	Wild Goose Publications



the spill lectionary plan



2018-2019 Bible Readings

To assist you in your forward planning, we include here the complete plan of scripture readings for our own lectionary plan taking us through to the end of the 2018/19 liturgical year.

Date	Liturgical	Theme	Primary Text	Support Text	Notes
19 Aug 18	Pentecost 13	Children and Young People	Luke 2:41-52	Jeremiah 1:4-9	Jesus in the Temple
26 Aug 18	Pentecost 14		Luke 18:15-17	Numbers 6:22-27	Children being blessed (link to baptism)
2 Sept 18	Pentecost 15		Luke 22:54-62	Luke 9:46-48	Dangerous children, risk, welcome
9 Sept 18	Pentecost 16	Beginnings	Genesis 3:1-24	Ezekiel 28:13-18	Fall and Paradise Lost (link to Temple)
16 Sept 18	Pentecost 17		Genesis 4:1-16(17-24)	Leviticus 19:15-18	Cain and Abel
23 Sept 18	Pentecost 18		Genesis 9:1-17,18-29	2 Corinthians 5:1-5	Rainbow, Noah and Sons (fragility of covenant)
30 Sept 18	Pentecost 19		Genesis 11:1-9(10-32)	Psalms 49:1-12,16-20	Tower of Babel
7 Oct 18	Pentecost 20	Harvest	Psalms 104	Mark 4:26-29	Thanksgiving for Creation and Harvest
14 Oct 18	Pentecost 21	Joseph	Genesis 37:2b-36	Psalms 30:1-3	Joseph's Childhood to Enslavement
21 Oct 18	Pentecost 22		Genesis 41:37-57	Psalms 34:1-10	Joseph in Egypt gaining authority
28 Oct 18	Pentecost 23		Genesis 43:1-5; 45:1-18	Luke 15:11-32	Collision and Reconciliation in relationships
4 Nov 18	Pentecost 24	Numbers	Numbers 14:1-12; 16:1-5,23-25	Leviticus 21:6-8	All Saints / The Faithful
11 Nov 18	Pentecost 25		Numbers 1:1-16,44-54	John 15:9-17	Remembrance / Who made us who we are?
18 Nov 18	Pentecost 26		Numbers 11:16-35	Luke 10:1-17	Sending out elders/disciples
25 Nov 18	Reign of Christ		Numbers 17:1-13; 21:1-15	John 3:10-14	Aaron's Staff / Moses Servant
2 Dec 18	Advent 1	Important Births	Exodus 1:8-14,22; 2:1-10	Acts 7:17-22	Moses' Birth
9 Dec 18	Advent 2		Judges 13:2-14,24	Numbers 6:2-5	Samson's Birth
16 Dec 18	Advent 3		Luke 1:5-7,11-25,57-66	Malachi 4:5-6	John the Baptist's Birth (echo of Elijah)
23 Dec 18	Advent 4		Luke 1:26-42	Matthew 1:18-23	Mary and Joseph, two perspectives
24 Dec 18	Christmas Eve	Living in Anticipation	Isaiah 40:1-5,21-31	Matthew 1:18-25	Monday, Preparations
25 Dec 18	Christmas Day	The Nativity and Visitors	Luke 2:1-20	Isaiah 40:9-11	Tuesday, New Birth and Witnesses
30 Dec 18	Christmas 1	Political Repercussions	Matthew 2:1-23	Micah 5:2-5a	Magi, Flight to Egypt, Return Home (note intentional to move Magi forward a week)
6 Jan 19	Epiphany	Light Comes	John 8:12-20	John 1:1-9	Light of the World, light in the darkness
13 Jan 19	Baptism of Lord	John's Testimony	John 3:22-36	Hebrews 1:1-4	John the Baptist on Jesus
20 Jan 19	Epiphany 2	Parables	Matthew 21:33-46	Psalms 118:15-29	Wicked Tenants
27 Jan 19	Epiphany 3		Luke 6:46-49	Psalms 18:1-5,16-19,30-32	Building House on Rock/Sand
3 Feb 19	Epiphany 4		Luke 5:33-39	Galatians 4:8-9	Patch on cloak, wineskins
10 Feb 19	Epiphany 5		Luke 11:5-13	Isaiah 62:6-9	House at midnight, looking for bread, persistence
17 Feb 19	Epiphany 6	Jesus Challenges	John 6:26-71	Hebrews 8:8-12	Bread of Life, critique
24 Feb 19	Epiphany 7	Calm Before Storm	John 7:1-31	John 2:1-4	Jesus not seeking publicity, questions

Date	Liturgical	Theme	Primary Text	Support Text	Notes
3 Mar 19	Transfiguration	Jesus' Proclamation	John 7:32-52	Isaiah 55:1-5	Jesus preaching at Temple, attempts to arrest Jesus, guards confused
6 Mar 19	Ash Wed	Encountering Forgiveness	John 8:1-11	Hebrews 9:11-14	Sins, forgiveness, ashes, casting first stone
10 Mar 19	Lent 1	Command to Love	John 13:31-38	Proverbs 3:3-4	Commandment to love, foretelling Peter's denial
17 Mar 19	Lent 2	Four Forms of Love	Song of Songs 1:2; 2:10b-13; 4:1-7; 8:5-7; 5:10-16	1 Corinthians 13	Love: Eros (erotic, 'in love')
24 Mar 19	Lent 3		Luke 5:17-26	1 Peter 3:8-12	Love: Philia (friendship)
31 Mar 19	Lent 4		Romans 12:9-21	John 4:46-54	Love: Storge (familial empathy)
7 Apr 19	Lent 5		John 3:16-17	1 John 4:7-21	Love: Agape (unconditional)
14 Apr 19	Palm Sunday	Mounting Pressure	John 10:22-39	John 12:12-16	Jesus challenged, attempted stoning, escape, entrance to Jerusalem
15 Apr 19	Holy Week		John 12:20-36	Ephesians 5:1-9	Monday: Walk in the light
16 Apr 19			John 15:1-17	Isaiah 5:1-7	Tuesday: I am the true vine, love one another
17 Apr 19			John 16:1-28	Hebrews 10:19-23	Wednesday: A little while, hour is coming, new relationship
18 Apr 19	Maundy Thurs		John 17:1-26; 18:1-12	Hebrews 4:1-13	Thursday: Prayer and arrest
19 Apr 19	Good Friday		Luke 23:1-25; 32-47	Hebrews 7:26-28	Friday: An innocent man, Barabbas, Crucifixion
21 Apr 19	Easter Day	Love Wins	Luke 23:55-56; 24:1-12	1 Corinthians 15:45-55	Resurrection
28 Apr 19	Easter 2		John 21:1-14	Ephesians 3:14-21	Jesus on beach
5 May 19	Easter 3		John 21:15-25	John 18:25-27	Peter's Denial, forgiveness
12 May 19	Easter 4		John 14:1-27	Matthew 7:7-8	Jesus is the Way, (Christian Aid Week in UK)
19 May 19	Easter 5	Buildings	Matthew 17:24-27	Exodus 30:11-16	Temple taxes and fish
26 May 19	Easter 6		Ezra 3:1-13	Psalms 136:1-16,26	Worship restored, rebuilding
2 June 19	Easter 7		Matthew 23:13-36	Proverbs 4:5-7	Right use of buildings, woes
9 June 19	Pentecost	Spirit Comes	Acts 2:1-11	Numbers 11:16-30	Pentecost renewal
16 June 19	Trinity	Paul's Journeys	Acts 13:1-5,13-16(a),42-47; 14:1-2,21-28	Ephesians 3:1-13	1st Missionary Journey: Mission to Gentiles
23 June 19	Pentecost 2		Acts 15:36-41; 16:1-5; 17:1-4,10-15; 18:1-4,18-22	Romans 8:1-4,31-34; 16:3-5a; 1 Cor. 2:1-10	2nd Missionary Journey: Paul proclaims Christ
30 June 19	Pentecost 3		Acts 18:22-23; 19:1-10,21-31; 20:1-3; 21:7-15	Romans 6: 1-4; 2 Corinthians 13:1-5	3rd Missionary Journey: Baptised into Christ
7 July 19	Pentecost 4	Apocryphal Tales	Susanna vv. 1-64	Judith 9:1-8	Additional book to Book of Daniel
14 July 19	Pentecost 5	The Judges	Bel and the Dragon vv. 1-22	Numbers 21:8-9	Dragon and Bel, priests and dragon (addition to Book of Daniel)
21 July 19	Pentecost 6		Bel and the Dragon vv. 23-42	Psalms 54:1-7	The Lion's Den
28 July 19	Pentecost 7		Tobit 1:3; 2:1-14; 3:1-6,11-17	Job 3:1-11	Tobit 1-5: Laments, hopes for the future
4 Aug 19	Pentecost 8		Tobit 5:10-6:6; 7:1-2,9b-13; 8:1-21	Genesis 24:40-44	Tobit 6-8:18: Raphael, fear, trust, marriage to Sarah
11 Aug 19	Pentecost 9		Tobit 10:1-6; 11:1-17; 12:1-22	Luke 15:11-32	Tobit 8:19-12:22: Tobias returns home, healing, welcome to Sarah
18 Aug 19	Pentecost 10		Judges 14:5-20; 15:1-8	1 Corinthians 12:4-7	Samson the Riddler, cycle of violence, selfish
25 Aug 19	Pentecost 11	Judges 16:4-31	Jeremiah 20:7-10	Samson and Delilah, enticement, deception	
1 Sep 19	Pentecost 12	Judges 4:1-16; 5:1-9	Psalms 84:9-18	Deborah, the judge	
8 Sep 19	Pentecost 13	Judges 6:11-18,25-40; 7:2-9,19-23	1 Kings 18:20-40	Gideon, warrior farmer	
15 Sep 19	Pentecost 14	Judges 11:1-10,29-40	Deuteronomy 23:21-23	Jephthah, mighty warrior, ridiculous vows	
22 Sep 19	Pentecost 15	Elisha Taunted	2 Kings 2:15-25	Proverbs 3:1-8	Elisha, alopecia, curses and she bears
29 Sep 19	Pentecost 16	Judah Humbled	Genesis 38:6-26	1 Samuel 16:8-19	Judah and Tamar
6 Oct 19	Pentecost 17	David's Care	2 Samuel 9:2-13	1 Samuel 20:14-17	David's compassion for Mephibosheth (Jonathan's son)
13 Oct 19	Pentecost 18	A Revelation for the Church	Revelation 2:1-29	1 John 4:1-6	Messages to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira
20 Oct 19	Pentecost 19		Revelation 3:1-22	Colossians 1:15-20	Messages to Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea
27 Oct 19	Pentecost 20		Revelation 4:1-11	Psalms 33:1-9	Vision of God enthroned
3 Nov 19	Pentecost 21		Revelation 21:1-14	Isaiah 65:17-25	All Saints
10 Nov 19	Pentecost 22	Remembrance	James 1:19-27	Psalms 146:1-10	Remembrance Sunday, words, actions
17 Nov 19	Pentecost 23	Faith Heroes	Hebrews 11:1-40	Judges 5:12-15; Esther 7:2-4; Acts 16:14-15	Heroes of faith (intersperse Hebrews passage with stories of female faith heroes)
24 Nov 19	Reign of Christ	Changing the Divine Mind	Matthew 15:21-28	1 Samuel 16:14-19	God or Jesus changing mind



holding hope as climate changes

Ideas and resources for a service focussing on climate change

Reflecting On Despair And Hope

John Anderson explores the tension between despair and hope that we find in the climate crisis. This article first appeared in the Methodist Recorder and can be found at <http://operationnoah.org>.

We Christians face the future. We are bringing in Christ's kingdom on earth. We have faith and hope. But the world about us is quietly despairing and soon will noisily lament.

For it is now accepted that climate change is happening. Rather than comfortable 'global warming' which might lead to sunnier summers in Britain, people are realising that a more realistic description of climate change is "global heating."

Fire-ravaged forests in Russia, Alaska, Australia and the USA will take years to recover. Even in damp Britain, devastating fires left famously moist moors seriously damaged. For example on the wildlife-rich Smithhills estate, near Manchester 200 hectares of Woodland Trust land, including the very first plantings for the Trust's flagship Northern Forest have been irretrievably burnt. There peat burned for six weeks killing innumerable frogs, toads and newts. One British firefighter said this summer: "This is climate change in action."

The warmed sea is rising globally 3mm a year. The devastation seen in North and South Carolina was made worse by the increasing violence of hurricanes because of rising sea temperature, and by the storm surges which are accentuated by the sea level rise. The major US Navy base on the eastern seaboard at Norfolk, Virginia is gradually being inundated. These facts are now common knowledge.

Uncommon knowledge, however, is the fact that there is no end in sight for the increasing temperatures and rising sea level.

Adaptation is occurring. Sophisticated flood alerts are in place in rich countries. Seawalls are being raised. Drains are being re-blocked on upland Yorkshire farms to hold water back from surging downstream to flood York yet again. In Bradford I have seen a one metre high wall quietly erected round an electricity substation so that this vital infrastructure is not taken out of action when the local beck floods again. In Russia, Greenpeace is training volunteers to spot fires in their vast forests before they become raging infernos.

I have been at a water engineers' conference where all their talk was on how to adapt our infrastructure to deal with future floods. At the end, in despair I rose and said that it was impossible to adapt to an ever-rising sea-level and ever more violent downpours of rain. We cannot raise the dykes for ever; finally they will be overtopped.

The only long-term answer is to reduce carbon dioxide emissions to mitigate climate change, not attempt forlornly to adapt to the inexorable. Mitigation trumps adaptation.

As Christians we believe in God the Creator, the evolver. Made as the only creature which has the consciousness of how we are affecting the integrity and continuance of God's wonderful world, we can see what needs to be done and can do it. Our mistake has been to think that we can fashion the world for our own benefit. Yet the Bible is clear: we are tenants of God's earth; we are gardeners of our globe. In Matthew 20:1 and Luke 20:9 Jesus tells parables of the

vineyard in which God is the landowner. In Genesis 2:15 we read: "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to till it and keep it." In other words, we are charged to care for the earth for our God. Moreover, as Sir John Houghton, the former Director-General of the Meteorological Office said: "In dedicating to humans the care of his creation, God has not left us to do it on our own." He sent Christ, Houghton said. So we have hope, not despair.

We are not constrained by the need to win votes in the next election or make our bottom line balance. We speak words of eternity. We do actions of everlasting significance. To try to adapt is to fiddle with the controls of an earth running away driven by a myopic and power-mad driver, the human being. Mitigation of global heating is our calling. The Qur'an puts it well in Surah 55: 3-9 when referring to our role as part of the Creator's purpose: "Keep the balance with equity."

As Leo Tolstoy famously said, "What, then, must we do?" Significantly, he wrote: "Property is the root of all evil". So we must preach and act to show that the earth is not our property. Every action of us as individuals and corporately as a church must be to help preserve the God-created biodiversity of our globe and to do this by reducing the emissions of carbon dioxide: as Christians we should not just ask how much does this action or product cost in money but how much in addition does it cost the earth in carbon dioxide emissions.

We can use only renewable electricity; we can move on foot or by bicycle or use public transport (except aeroplanes) wherever possible. We can grow as much food as we can, especially fruit trees which absorb carbon dioxide and emit oxygen as well as producing food. We can act so that we take as little as possible from our Lord's Earth and give it as much as we can.

This means moving beyond the shy greenery of the church to influence the proud world, establishing eco-groups such as Friends of the Earth, and by supporting Greenpeace. We can install photovoltaic panels, not only on our own buildings but also on local schools.

Members of Baildon Methodist Church, for example, have initiated such actions by helping to raise £13,000 to install solar electricity-generating panels on a nearby primary school, and by helping to establish and maintain a local community orchard where the fruit and berries are available for all to pick and use. Members of the church are also taking part from Resurrection Day to Ascension Day in 2019 in a discussion based on "Tenants of the King", an excellent small group study published by Operation Noah.

Bradford North Circuit has sent a Memorial to the Methodist Conference supporting the divestment of Methodist money from fossil fuel investments such as those in gas and oil. The Circuit now asks every church at each March Circuit Meeting to bring replies to the two questions. "How have we this year reduced our carbon dioxide emissions as individuals?" and "How has our church this year reduced our carbon dioxide emissions?"

Our faith and hope is undimmed: we express this through

love of this world as an emanation of God's love for the whole cosmos. We are not trying to save life in this world for scientific or human-centred reasons; we are worshipping our God by reverencing all creation. We are one bright thread in the tapestry of creation designed and woven by God. We rejoice with enthusiasm in our calling.

Call To Worship

Leader: And God spoke:
"Let us make human beings in our image,
make them reflecting our nature
so they can be responsible for the fish in the sea,
the birds in the air, the cattle,
and, yes, Earth itself,
and every animal that moves on the face of Earth."

**All: And God blessed us saying:
"Prosper! Reproduce! Fill Earth! Take charge!
Be responsible for fish in the sea
and birds in the air,
for every living thing
that moves on the face of Earth."**

Leader: And we did take charge,
and we did prosper,
and we did reproduce.

All: But we failed to be responsible.

Leader: Let us approach God in humility
to worship and reconnect,
to grieve and hope,
to acknowledge and change.

Prayer of Adoration

God of creation and joy,
in whose world we find ourselves overwhelmed
by the diversity and wonder,
we approach you as your kin,
part of your creation,
intimately linked with all we see around us
and knowing that our future
is tied to the future of this planet.

The great storytellers of the past
reflected on your spirit of creativity,
day by day,
seeing that it was good, very good,
and we rest ourselves in that same knowledge:
that we are also part of that story.
May we take up the responsibilities
with which you have blessed us,
and in the living out of those responsibilities
glorify your creative urgency
for the sake of all.
Amen.

holding hope

Prayer Of Lamentation

What have we done, Lord?
How did we not realise our impact?
Whose voices did we fail to heed?
Why did we let our greed take over?
Where are people suffering today?

Fires destroying towns amidst parched forests;
hurricanes fuelled by warm ocean waters;
smog trapped cities;
rising sea levels;
global temperatures breaking records;
politicians floundering;
decisions delayed;
deadlines coming and going;
and the echo of your voice
to be stewards responsible for it all
do not go away.

What can we do, Lord?

Prayer Of Confession

God who is love and grace,
God who brings second chances and reconciliation,
God who offers forgiveness and healing,
we fall before you
admitting our failure to address climate change
in a way fitting to its impact on future generations.

We confess
that we have damaged our environment,
sometimes unaware of the damage we were doing,
sometimes all too aware,
but heedless of the costs.

We confess
that we have borrowed from future generations
in order to defend our current way of life,
that we have taken advantage of developing nations
in order to protect what we believe is ours,
that we have burnt away options
with little regard for what we were doing.

We confess
that those with no voice suffer most,
in the animal kingdom,
in our seas and oceans,
generations not yet born,
the poor and most vulnerable,
as the effects of climate change take hold.

As we offer our humble confession,
aware of the power that forgiveness
and reconciliation possesses,
convict us to change our priorities
and to count the cost of our global footprint.
Prepare us for the challenges with which we must grapple,
and to do so, step by step,
with the assurance that the more we change our ways
the greater the mitigation of crisis will be.

Hear us, God of all creation,
heal us and forgive us.
Amen.

Prayer For Ourselves And Others

This prayer is based on one from Operation Noah.

Father, we thank you
that you are the Creator of the world,
and you sustain it by your power.

We thank you for its fruitfulness,
beauty and the wonder and love it inspires.

We recognise that changes in the climate
are already damaging the ecosystems which sustain life.

We remember how in the days of Noah and the flood
you gave the rainbow as a sign of your care
for the earth and those who live in it,
and ask that you would help us
as we grapple with the problem.

We pray for scientists seeking to understand
the complexity of what is happening;
for the politicians faced with big decisions;
and for your wisdom for all
who are seeking to reduce the threat of climate change
to this and future generations.

We pray for those seeking truth about those
who deny climate change
and defend the powerful and rich
at the expense of the poor and vulnerable.

Lord Jesus,
we remember that you gave your life for everyone
to be reconciled to you and find life in all its fullness.

We pray that as we enjoy reconciliation and new life in you,
so your Spirit would open our hearts
and transform our attitudes
both to other people and to your creation.

Please make our lives more truly fruitful
so that in our actions
we may work for the good of all.

Help us to pursue the wellbeing of all your children,
both in this generation and in times to come.

Father, we bring before you in our prayers
areas of the world that suffer great environmental problems,
including flooding, storms,
drought and uncertain weather patterns.

We pray for the people in those parts of the world
which are already feeling the impacts of climate change –
such as... [Bangladesh, island nations everywhere, many
parts of Africa facing climatic instability].

[We remember especially...]

We pray for your blessing on those
who work to alleviate the impacts of climate change,
wherever they are found,
and to provide for those made destitute in poor countries.

We pray for the work of all those charities
and campaigning organisations
which seek to educate people
and to bring pressure to bear on governments
so that problems will be addressed.

Help them to operate effectively and with integrity, and we ask that their voices may be heeded.

Father, we thank you for your promise that one day there will be a renewed heaven and earth in which your Son will reign in righteousness, and where sorrow and suffering will be no more, and your people will be one in him.

We bring these prayers to you in Jesus' name. Amen.

Reflection

Moving Mountains

Based on resource from Operation Noah.

Please read your section slowly and clearly, leaving a bit of silence between each one. Have a pile of stones available at the front of the church in an easily accessible place.

Voice A: 'I tell you the truth, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, "Go, throw yourself into the sea," and it will be done.'

Voice B: Anyone who thinks that they are too small to make a difference has never tried to fall asleep with a mosquito in the room.

Voice C: To transform all our oversized carbon footprints from what they are now to what they need to be by 2030 is an impossible task.

Voice D: 'My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.'

Voice B: 'Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.'

Voice D: 'You shall not covet your neighbour's house. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour.'

Voice C: We are called to impossible tasks.

Voice D: But we are not called alone. We have the Holy Spirit. And we have each other. Let us move mountains together.

Voice A: During the next piece of music, as a sign of our commitment to work together to cut our carbon emissions, one at a time, let us move one stone of the mountain from where we are now to where we must go. And let us do it joyfully, out of obedience and love, with praise and thanksgiving.

Let people come forward to take a stone with them, perhaps encouraging them to write their aspiration for themselves onto that stone and then to take it home as a reminder of their commitment.

Activity

You will need: sand pit, play sand, bucket of water, jug, strips of paper, pens.

Add a layer of sand to the sand pit and then, using a world map as a guide, create elevated regions of sand to represent the continents. This does not have to be exactly correct, so long as the general outline is earth-ish!

Invite people on the strips of Post-It to write a short prayer of concern for those who are living in the regions most affected by Climate Change, such as those living in coastal communities.

As they are doing this, start to fill the sand pit with water, gently using a jug and not straight from the bucket which will overwhelm your continents, so that the water starts to fill the lower areas of sand until the point where the raised continents you have created are recognisable.

Then invite people to come forward to lay their prayers onto the continents, picking an area that particularly concerns them.

Either following this or later in the service to emphasise the predicament of so many in our world and the seeming hopelessness of their situation you can add more water so that the level rises and starts to overwhelm the edges of the continents and indeed the prayers offered.

Useful Links

Eco Congregation Scotland
<http://www.ecocongregationscotland.org/>

Operation Noah
<http://operationnoah.org/>

CAFOD
<https://cafod.org.uk/Pray/Laudato-Si-encyclical>

Christian Ecology
<http://www.greenchristian.org.uk>

Sending

From Kathy Galloway, The Pattern Of Our Days, Wild Goose Publications, 1998.

The love of the faithful Creator,
the peace of the wounded Healer,
the joy of the challenging Spirit,
the hope of the Three in One
surround and encourage you,
today, tonight and forever.

through the season

Introduction

In this issue, Through the Season comes in three parts. One for Lent and up to fourth Sunday of Easter, the second for Easter 5 and 6 and a final suggestion for Pentecost Sunday.

Part 1

This Lenten and early Easter series has the theme of love (in all its forms) threaded through it. The heart is the universal symbol of love. The suggestion for a visual that takes us through to Easter is to create a large heart on cardboard. Over the weeks things will be added and taken away. This will require some preparation. So please read through each week to begin with.

10 Mar Lent 1

Scripture: John 13:31-38
Proverbs 3:3-4

Title: Command To Love

Visual: A large heart on cardboard. This could be a cardboard box flattened and painted or you can buy large sheets of craft card from craft shops. It should be as large as possible.

Over the next four weeks we will be exploring four kinds of love (Eros, Philia, Storge and Agape). The idea is to gradually piece together a heart-shaped jigsaw over the top of the heart created for Lent 1. So you may want to create a template to draw the heart and then use this template to make jigsaw pieces. Each piece should be a different colour and have one of the four 'loves' written in big letters on it. The jigsaw pieces should be attached to the heart 'base' using blu-tak as they will require to be removed again nearer Easter. The reverse of the jigsaw pieces should be painted black as these will be required on Good Friday.

17 Mar Lent 2

Scripture: Song of Songs 1:2; 2:10-13; 4:1-7
1 Corinthians 13

Title: Love: Eros

Visual: Having created your jigsaw (see above) please attach the piece with 'Eros' on it to your heart.

24 Mar Lent 3

Scripture: Luke 5:17-26
1 Peter 3:8-12

Title: Love: Philia

Visual: Add the jigsaw piece for Philia.

31 Mar Lent 4

Scripture: Romans 12:9-21
John 4:46-54

Title: Love: Storge

Visual: Add the jigsaw piece for Storge.

7 Apr Lent 5

Scripture: John 3:16-17
1 John 4:7-21

Title: Love: Agape

Visual: Add the jigsaw piece for Agape.

14 Apr Palm Sunday

Scripture: John 10:22-39; 12:12-16

Title: Mounting Pressure

Visual: Remove the jigsaw pieces (these could be left scattered around the front of the church) and either rest a real palm branch against the heart shape or make one from card and attach this to the heart shape.

Holy Week

15 Apr Monday

Scripture: John 12:20-36
Ephesians 5:1-9

Title: Walk In The Light

Visual: Attach an image of a lamp or candle to the heart shape or place a large candle in front of it.

16 Apr Tuesday

Scripture: John 15:1-17
Isaiah 5:1-7

Title: The True Vine

Visual: Attach an image of a bunch of red grapes with vine leaves to the heart shape, or lay a bowl of grapes and vine leaves in front of it.



17 Apr Wednesday

Scripture: John 16:1-28
Hebrews 10:19-23

Title: The Hour Is Coming

Visual: Attach the image of a large clock face to the heart shape or place a clock in front.

18 Apr Maundy Thursday

Scripture: John 17:1-26; 18:1-12
Hebrews 4:1-13

Title: Arresting Prayer

Visual: Attach images of praying hands and a coil of rope on the heart shape. Or, if you have praying hands ornament place this in front of it along with a coil of rope.

19 Apr Good Friday

Scripture: Luke 23:1-25, 32-47
Hebrews 7:26-28

Title: An Innocent Man

Visual: Clear everything away leaving just the heart on display. During the reading of verses Luke 23:32-47 attach a black heart over the original heart. If you have painted the back of the jigsaw pieces from earlier these can be used.

21 Apr Easter Sunday

Scripture: Luke 23:55-56; 24:1-12
1 Corinthians 15:45-55

Title: Love Wins

Visual: Some churches cover a cross with daffodils on Easter Sunday, either during the service or prior. A twist on this could be to do the same but with a heart shape. The heart shape could be made out of florist oasis or chicken wire. This would then replace the painted heart used during lent and Holy Week. Or if you want to use the same heart shape then you could cover it with pictures of spring flowers like daffodils.

**28 Apr–12 May
Easter 2–4**

Visual: For these three weeks in the season of Easter add the hashtag #LOVEWINS to the original heart shape.

Part 2**19 May–2 June
Easter 5–7**

Visual: A relatively simple suggestion for these three weeks. Use large children's building blocks built into a fancy 'temple' structure for week one, a half built structure for the second and a pile of blocks for the third. These could be placed on a table at the front of the church.

If you have time another idea could be to use shoe boxes painted in bright colours similar to children's building blocks instead of the smaller blocks. An excuse to involve the children or to embrace your inner child!

Part 3**9 June Pentecost**

Visual: Pentecost Sunday is an excuse to go wild with your imagination and decorate your church accordingly. Red, yellow, orange—the colours of flames and white for wind are all appropriate. Streamers made from crepe paper, banners from cloth, voile all work well.

Suitable words written in different languages could also be displayed.

If you have a Pinterest account there are lots of ideas to be found there for Pentecost decorations, see <http://www.pinterest.com>.



tuesday 5 march 2019

shrove tuesday

All-Age Service

Opening Responses

Leader: Tomorrow is Ash Wednesday,
today is Shrove Tuesday.

All: We're getting ready.

Leader: Clean out the cupboards,
clear up the mess we've made.

All: We're getting ready.

Leader: Find all the eggs.
It's time to make pancakes.

All: We're getting ready.

Song

Jesus loves me
or
We belong to God

CH4 564

CH4 726

Reading

Mark 1:9-11.

A Reminder Of Baptism

Move to the font or to where you usually conduct baptisms.

Our lives are a journey and we are going to think for a few moments of where our journey in the church begins, so we gather around the font. Before Jesus went into the desert to think and pray he was baptised in the river Jordan by John. His baptism gave him strength for the journey and let him know how much God loved him.

God loves us even before we are born and our journey in the church begins with baptism. Today we are going to use water to remind us of our baptism and of God's love.

Dip a spray of heather into the font/bowl of water and sprinkle each person who comes forward with these words: "God loves you. You belong in God's family."

Demonstrate the sprinkling and words on a volunteer first. With a small group who know each other, you can use people's names, for instance: "John, God loves you. You belong in God's family."

If you are feeling brave you can all say the words and let everyone sprinkle each other in turn.

Song

Lord of life we come to you

CH4 782

Prayer And Batter

Led from the communion table.

Where it is marked "Action" in the batter preparation you can ask for volunteers to come and assist. Note that a tablecloth will make clearing up afterwards much easier!

We come to God as we are.
We come with our own stories.
We come aware of our good days and our bad days.
We come to God who loves us.

We do not always want to change.
We do not want to make mistakes.
We are sometimes scared of new adventures.

God calls us to let go of the past and move on.
God wants to show us something new
God loves us.

So let's get ready.

First we sift some flour into the bowl
sifting out the bumps, the things we regret.

Action

Then we add a pinch of salt
to remind us to be curious and full of flavour.

Action

Next we add in the milk
to give us strength for our journey.

Action

Then we add some sugar
to keep us sweet and cheerful

Action

And lastly we add the eggs,
symbols of new life and new possibilities.

Action

And we mix everything together;
bits from the past,
strength and curiosity and cheerfulness,
hope for the future,
as we get ready to journey together
through Lent towards Easter.

All are invited to come and stir the mixture.

Song

Use the tune Streets of Laredo / The Bard of Armagh (CH4 522).

1. Today we remember that God always loves us.
Today we remember that here we belong.
Today we were splashed from a font(bowl) full of water.
Today is Shrove Tuesday and this is our song.
2. Today we ask Jesus to help us be loving.
Today we make pancakes to help us grow strong.
Today we eat pancakes with chocolate and syrup.
Today is Shrove Tuesday and this is our song.

Closing Response

Leader: Time to go.
Time to go and eat our pancakes.

All: We're ready.

Leader: Time to choose our pancake toppings.
Time to experiment and be adventurous.

All: We're ready.

Leader: Time to go in the blessing of God,
Maker, Traveller and Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Pancakes

Retire to the hall/kitchen to make and eat pancakes made from your batter or batter you made earlier plus some pancakes made earlier if you need them.

Provide toppings: sugar, lemon, jam, syrup, marshmallow, marmalade, nut spread, chocolate spread, sprinkles and so on. As always, make sure to check for any allergies.

Note

This liturgy borrows ideas from "A short liturgy for Shrove Tuesday" by Judith Jessop in Eggs and Ashes, published by Wild Goose Publications.



ash wednesday
wednesday 6 march 2019

encountering forgiveness

bible notes

John 8:1-11

Hebrews 9:11-14

Time To Examine Ourselves

This story sits well on Ash Wednesday, which marks the beginning of Lent, season of penitence, and the start of our journey with Jesus to the Cross and Resurrection. It takes us to the very heart of the gospel message and illustrates the deep-seated difference between Jesus and the religious leaders of his day, which led ultimately to his death.

The Scribes and Pharisees were legally in the right as far as the punishment for adultery was concerned: their stance was orthodox and 'Bible-based', but in every other way they were profoundly wrong, and would have known that themselves had they stopped to think about the wider context of the law that they knew so well.

How was it that the woman had been caught in the act of adultery? Had she been deliberately entrapped? Who was the man involved and why was he not also brought for punishment as the law required (Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22: 22)? Had she been a willing participant, or had he forced himself upon her? And why drag her before Jesus and the crowd to be publicly shamed? According to the story-teller, she was simply a pawn in their plan to catch Jesus out in error and be rid of him.

Jesus refuses to be drawn into their game (see Eric Berne, *The Games People Play*, 1964). He attempts to defuse the situation and buys himself time by breaking eye contact and scribbling on the ground. For his opponents, the woman was an object to be used; no more than a handy visual aid. For Jesus, she was a human being, a person with her faults certainly, but also with intrinsic worth—just as they all were. Jesus challenges the accusers to look to their own consciences and they sidle shamefacedly away.

Lent is traditionally a time for self-examination, penitence

and self-denial. It is not, or should not be, a time for shaming and demeaning ourselves or other people. From the stool of repentance to inflammatory tabloid headings to public shaming on social media, there is a human tendency to draw attention away from our own shortcomings by vilifying and scapegoating other people. Jesus will have none of this: we must attend to the plank in our own eye before worrying about the speck in someone else's.



And even our own self-examination can be gentle and balanced. The Ignatian practice of the *examen* encourages us to look at sources of 'consolation' and 'desolation' in the events of the day, which will include our own actions and decisions.

This story invites us to look inwards and see a human being with faults and weaknesses, but also with valuable qualities and strengths. Putting the former behind us and focusing on the latter enables us to grow and move forward in our faith, without needing to put ourselves or anyone else down (see Nelson Mandela's inaugural speech, "Our deepest fear...").

The Roman Catholic tradition of 'imposing' or placing ashes, made from burning the palm crosses from the previous year, on a person's forehead or sometimes on their arm, has something to offer to people nowadays who are increasingly suspicious of doctrine and looking for meaningful rituals.

The physicality of the ashes reinforces the words spoken: "From dust you are and to dust you shall return." This is not to say that we are worthless—far from it. How different does it sound if we say instead: "You are made of stardust"? Yes, we are mortal and here only for the briefest flicker of time, but we are also "fearfully and wonderfully made"; flawed and fallible, but precious too and full of potential for good.

worship ideas

All-Age Liturgy

Notes

This service needs a worship leader, a reader and at least three people to give out the words and actions at each station. (Children can lead words or actions at the font and the communion table.) If you can, spread the stations around the building and have some music playing quietly in the background. The stations can be visited in any order.

People at each station should memorise the words until they are comfortable saying them... but have a copy nearby in case they forget!

The ashes: made from last year's palm crosses if possible, mixed with oil or scentless hand cream. You may find it easier to have one person holding the pot of ashes for the person giving out the ashes. You mark a small cross on each person's forehead or palm as you say the words.

The sand: you need a tray of sand (a bit damp makes it easier to write in) at least an inch deep placed on a table. When the person has written in the sand, smooth the sand clean then look at them as you say the words.

The water: have a font/bowl of water and a small bunch of heather. Say the words as you sprinkle the water.

Try to make it possible for the people at the stations and the musician to participate in the stations.

Opening Responses

Leader: From dust we come,
to dust we will return.

All: We belong to God.

Leader: We gather in penitence.
We gather in confidence.

All: We belong to God.

Leader: At the beginning of Lent,
at every moment of our lives,

All: we belong to God.

Song

Prayer Of Approach

We are here, God.
Here to think about our lives.
Here to think about the life of Jesus.
Here to tell you what we've been up to.
Here to listen and to learn.
Here to get ready for Lent.

You know us, God.
You know how much we love you and love our neighbours.
You know when we make a good job of it.
You know when we fail.
You know when we learn from our mistakes.

Remind us today/tonight, God, how much you love us.
Remind us that we belong to you.
Through our songs, our words and our actions

bring us close to you.

We are here, God.
Help us to get ready for our journey into Lent.
Amen.

Reading

Based on John 8:1-11. Here are two versions that could be used.

Version 1

Voice 1: He was teaching.
He was sitting down in the Temple
and we had gathered around him, listening.
The Scribes and the Pharisees came in
bringing a woman with them.
She looked scared.

They spoke to Jesus.
They spoke loudly so that we could all hear.
"Teacher," they said:

Voice 2: This woman now standing before us
was caught in adultery,
in the very act of adultery.
You know that in the Law of Moses
it says that we should stone such a woman.
What do you think we should do with her?

Voice 1: Clearly the Scribes and Pharisees
were testing Jesus.
They were always trying
to find a charge to bring against him.

Jesus didn't even look at them.
He stayed sitting down
and he bent over
and wrote something with his finger in the dirt.

They kept on haranguing him.
We were all wondering
if he was going to say anything.
Then he straightened up
and looked at them and said:

Voice 3: Let anyone who is without sin
be the first to throw a stone at her.

Voice 1: Then Jesus bent down again
and wrote some more words in the dirt.

It was a brilliant answer.
The Scribes and Pharisees looked at each other.
None of them were perfect.
All of them had done something wrong.
None of them were able to throw a stone.
Beginning with the eldest they walked away
one by one.

The woman was still standing there.
Jesus straightened up
and he looked at her and spoke to her:

Voice 3: Woman, where are they?
Has no-one condemned you?

worship ideas

Voice 1: And she answered him,

Voice 4: No-one sir.

Voice 1: And Jesus told her,

Voice 3: Neither do I condemn you.
Go on your way and sin no more.

Version 2

Once a woman who had done something wrong
was brought to Jesus by some men who wanted to see her
punished.

They told Jesus that their laws said that she should be
punished and asked him what he thought.

Jesus didn't answer them, instead he bent down and wrote
some words in the dust with his finger.

The men asked him again what he thought and he sat back,
looked at them for a moment and said... If any of you has
never done anything wrong, you can punish her.

The men looked at each other...all of them had done
something wrong. Nobody is perfect. They knew that they
couldn't punish the woman and they walked away.

Jesus was left alone with the woman. He straightened up
and said to her: "Where are the men gone? Didn't anyone
want to punish you?"

"No-one, sir," she said.

"I don't want to punish you either," said Jesus. "Go on your
way. Don't do wrong again."

- Should people be punished when they do wrong?
- What helps people to do the right things?
- What can people do to put wrong things right?

Reflection

Dawn light softens honey-coloured colonnades.
He is eager to be in his Father's House once more.

Others gather, also eager—
to drink in words of hope, of life, perhaps of liberation.

He sits, readies himself to teach,
but there are others who are eager:
Teachers of the Law and Pharisees bundle in,
flinging stony words
and raining accusations down upon her head.

Gentle morning light is ruptured,
crushed under a cacophony of howling wolves
bringing words of hate, of death, of probable execution.

Rough hands
push her forward, front and centre.
Fingers point,
denouncing,
as she stands, shivering in her shame.

"Justice! Justice!"
cry the moral arbiters,
polishing doctrine and dogma
as if fashioning them as halos.

Her mouth,
as dry as dust and ashes with fear,
remains closed;
no words to offer—
what would it matter?

A fleeting thought as she hears the echo
of her partner's fleeing feet:
"If a sacrifice is needed, the woman always makes it."

Battered down
by their bickering and badgering,
she waits for death.

He stoops,
is quiet,
finds, and traces, words
in the holy ground.
In the eye of the storm
of their arguing,
he stands, calm.
Invites these righteous pillars of sinlessness
to cast the stones.

Bluster and babble stop.

No 'first' sinless one to cast stones
as aspersions had previously been cast?

The sound of shuffling in the silence.

Accusers slink away,
nurse their anger for another day,
and let her be.

"No one?"

"No one."

"Then, not me, either. Go, start afresh."

The earlier crowd, still watching,
learn that Law is not the master
waiting to strike,
but a servant:
an instrument for grace,
when love's at the core.

A Short Period Of Silence

Song

Stations

- 1. The ashes** (near the communion table). You are invited to come forward and ashes will be placed on your palm or your forehead (please indicate which you would prefer). These words will be spoken to you, "From dust you came, to dust you will return."
- 2. The sand** (in the centre of the church). You are invited to come forward to the tray of sand and write a confession in the sand: a word, a name, a picture. When you have finished the sand will be smoothed and these words will be spoken to you, "Jesus said, I don't want to punish you. Go on your way and don't sin again."
- 3. The water** (at the font). You are invited to come forward and either stand or kneel. You will be sprinkled with water and these words will be spoken to you, "Baptism both welcomes you home and sends you out. Go and journey with God."

Closing Responses

Leader: Marked by a cross,
cherished and forgiven.

All: We go out in peace.

Leader: Called to be holy,
called to be happy.

All: We go out in hope.

Leader: Resisting evil,
working for justice.

All: We go out in love.

further resources

Litany

- Voice A: Remember that you are dust.
Voice B: Remember that you are made of stardust.
Voice A: Remember that you are a sinner.
Voice B: Remember that you are forgiven.
Voice A: Remember how short your life is.
Voice B: Remember to make each moment count.
Voice A: Remember that you are only human.
Voice B: Remember that you are made in the image of God.

Prayer

"Dust you are and to dust you shall return."

Creator God,
those words fill us with a mixture of dread and elation,
and so they should—
for we are fearfully and wonderfully made.
You formed us out of the dust of the earth,
the very same substance as the stars.
We are here and then gone in the twinkling of an eye;
and we are held in your love for all eternity.
We could not matter any less;
we could not be loved any more.

We give thanks for this opportunity to stop
and take stock of our lives:
looking in the mirror held up for us by Jesus
and seeing both how far we fall short of what we could be,
and the full potential of who we may yet become.

As we feel the mark of the ashes on our foreheads,
may we dare to ponder our mortality,
imagining a time, however soon or far in the future,
when the world will continue without us in it.
What do we need to know?
What do we need to say or do?
What reassurance do we need for that to be a challenging,
but not a terrifying thought?

In the safety and silence of this place, loving God,
hear us as we make our confession;
speak to us your words of forgiveness and peace.

Silence

"The Lord is merciful and gracious;
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love...
He knows our frame;
he remembers that we are dust."
Thanks be to God! Amen.

worship ideas

Reflection

The crowd has gone now;
only a few stragglers remain,
talking quietly among themselves
about what just happened.

The older ones went first:
they had the decency to be shamed
by the Teacher's words;
they had lived long enough to know
they weren't perfect.

The younger ones brazened it out a bit longer:
who was he to lecture them about sin?
But the silence got to them in the end;
they left, with a final, defiant swagger.

One by one the onlookers dispersed,
and when there was just the two of them,
the Teacher straightened up and looked at her.

For a long, long time she couldn't meet his eyes;
then she realised he wasn't trying to shame her.
There was a gentleness in his voice
as he asked his question,
and sent her on her way, still traumatised,
but walking a little bit taller than she had before.

And now the temple courtyard is all but empty;
the ground disturbed by hundreds of sandalled feet.
Right in the centre, where the Teacher had been,
there is a space where the earth has been smoothed over,
and, ever so faintly, the traces are still there
of the words that were written on the ground.

It's quiet enough.
Why don't you go over and look?
What does it say?
What has he written that he wants you to know?

Prayer for Others and Ourselves

Gracious and most loving God,
never have we been more grateful
than we are today/tonight
for the privilege that is ours
of coming to know you through Jesus,
a real human being like us,
but without all the insecurities and fears
that lead us so often to imagine you condemning us
as inwardly we condemn ourselves.
Sometimes the shame goes inwards
and pulls us down into depression and self-loathing;
sometimes we point it outwards
and heap blame on one another.

Our God, we thank you for Jesus,
who breaks the vicious circle of accusation and shame;
who lifts us up and looks on us with eyes of love;
whose forgiveness opens up the possibility for us
to begin to forgive ourselves.

We pray this evening (morning/afternoon)
for those who are weighed down by guilt or shame:
guilt for real wrongs that they have done;
shame laid on them by others;
both equally pernicious and debilitating
if we cannot let them go.

We pray for children brought up
with constant criticism or neglect;
for young people fearful of abuse
that comes to them on social media,
but unable to live without it;
for adults who never knew as children that they were loved,
and who bear the scars of that still.
We pray for those who try to hide their own inadequacy
by bullying others, in playground, church or workplace.

Compassionate God,
help us to show compassion
to ourselves and those around us.
Reach out to us with your acceptance and grace;
surround us with your unconditional love,
which does not condone our wrongdoing,
but offers the only possibility of change.
May we learn to love as you have loved us,
in Jesus Christ your Son,
who says to us as he said to an unnamed woman long ago:
"Go in peace, and sin no more."
Amen.

Praise/Hymns

And Jesus said don't be afraid	CH4 344
Approach, my soul, the mercy seat	CH4 548
Christ's is the world in which we move	CH4 724 / MP 1163
Come down, O Love divine	CH4 489 / MP 89
Father of heaven, whose love profound	CH4 483 / MP 827
Forgive our sins as we forgive (Alternative tune: UNIVERSITY, CH3 438)	CH4 486
Forgiveness is your gift	CH4 361
God forgave my sin in Jesus name	MP 181 / ATAS 78
Humbly in your sight	CH4 496
I heard the voice of Jesus say	CH4 540 / MP 275
I walked through the lonely streets	<i>Enemy of Apathy</i> , WGP
It's me, O Lord	CH4 493 / ATAS 136
Jesus Christ is waiting	CH4 360
Jesus, lover of my soul	CH4 490 / MP 372 & 997
Kyrie Eleison	CH4 776,777
Meekness and majesty	CH4 356 / MP 465
O God you search me and you know me	CH4 97
O for a closer walk with God	CH4 552 / MP 494
One more step	ATAS 190 / CH4 530
Take this moment	CH4 501
The other person	<i>Known Unknowns</i> , WGP, 73
Up from the depths I cry to God	CH4 88
We your children	<i>Bring It All To Me</i> , Fischy Music





lent 1
sunday 10 march 2019

love

command to love

bible notes

John 13:31-38
Proverbs 3:3-4

It's All About Relationship

From the start of John's gospel, there has been a recurrent thread of people looking for Jesus and wanting to know where they can find him (see John 1:38-42; 4:42; 6:24; 7:11; 12:21, for examples). Now his own friends, who in the past had pointed others to Jesus, are told that they will soon be unable to find him. It is important to remember that the gospel was written for people who had never met Jesus in person, and had to do their living and believing, as we do, without his physical presence.

Jesus' interjection of his *new commandment* seems to interrupt the flow of conversation about where he is going and how his disciples are to manage without him, but in fact it is the key to their continued survival and the success of their mission.

There is a beautiful irony in the nature of Jesus' *new commandment*, one that he must surely have been aware of. Food laws, rules about sabbath observance, ritual purity and the rest may have been detailed and tiresome, but they were straightforward and a diligent Jew could make a choice to observe them.

Love is in a different category altogether: it has to do not with rules but with relationship. It involves choices about behaviour certainly, but is essentially an orientation of the heart and not merely an act of will. Jesus, in other words, quite deliberately sets out as his supreme commandment something which cannot be commanded, but only given freely, with no guarantee of return.

The incident is set in John's gospel just after Judas had gone out into the night, intent on betrayal, and just before Jesus' words to Peter about his impending denial. The close-knit group of disciples was beginning to disintegrate just as Jesus was getting ready to go "where they could not follow", and needed them to stick closely together.

The story was recorded for and read for the first time



within a Christian community far distant from the events in geography and in time (it is thought to have been written around the end of the 1st century for a community in Ephesus or in Syria), but where unity of purpose would have been essential and division a constant threat, given external opposition to the new faith and the wide variety of backgrounds from which new converts had come.

Jesus' insistence that his followers should love one another as constantly and as generously as he had loved them is as relevant now as ever it was, and for exactly the same reasons. Christians are once again living in a minority situation with some opposition and widespread indifference to the gospel we claim to live by. No-one is going to pay the slightest attention to the fine words we say about love if they look at the church and see only hostility and division.

There is encouragement, however, in the fact that Jesus says what he does about love, and about God's glory being seen in him, in full knowledge of how two of his closest friends and allies will let him down. Judas' betrayal and Simon Peter's denial are all the more painful because of the strong, intimate bonds of love within the group, but the good news is that love is still strong enough to hold them and us. There is no reason to think that Judas was excluded from the love that Jesus so wanted his disciples to share; he needed it more than any of them.

the story

The Night Before The Passover

It was the night before the Passover festival.
We had just eaten
and then Jesus did something very strange.
He got up from the table, took off his outer robe
and tied a towel round his waist.
Then he poured some water into a bowl
and began to wash our feet,
then dry them with the towel.

When he got to Peter,
Peter nearly exploded.
No way was Jesus going to wash his feet!
That was a servant's work!
But Jesus told him that unless his feet were washed
he couldn't be a disciple
and Peter responded with:
"Not just my feet then, my head and hands as well!"

After this Jesus talked to us about caring for each other.
And then he looked at us, one by one, around the table
and he said that one of us was going to betray him.
We had no idea who he meant.
Soon after this Judas left.

Jesus talked to us again about caring for each other,
loving each other.
He said if we did this other people would be able to see
that we were his disciples.
He told us that he would not be with us much longer
and Peter tried to find out where he was going.
Jesus told Peter that he was going somewhere
where Peter could not follow him,
and when Peter protested
Jesus told him that he could not follow him now,
but that he would follow him later on.
Peter told Jesus that he was ready to follow him now,
he was ready to die for him.
And Jesus looked at Peter and told him:
"Before the cock crows to signal dawn tomorrow
you will tell people three times that you do not know me."

We didn't understand.
Jesus had just talked to us about the importance of loving
and caring for each other.
We were to love one another as he had loved us.
Did he really think that we, his disciples,
would leave him alone?

Retelling For Young People

Broken Promises, Love Unbroken

- Have you ever broken a promise to a friend?
- Have you ever let someone down?

John had promised Iain that he would call for him on Saturday and they would go down to the park and play football. John forgot all about his promise and did not turn up.

- How do you think Iain felt about this?
- What do you think Iain and John said to each other when they next met?

Clare had told her mum that she would clean up her bedroom on Saturday morning. When Clare's mum had gone out shopping Clare's friend Jenny had texted her and asked her if she would come round to help her with her homework. Clare left her mum a note: "Gone round to Jenny's, I'll clear up my bedroom tomorrow." When Clare's mum came back from doing the shopping, Clare was out and her bedroom was still a mess.

- If you'd been Clare what would you have done?
- What do you think Clare and her mum said to each other when Clare came home?

Andrew had promised his dad that he would be home by 5 o'clock. At 10 minutes to five when he was on his way home Andrew saw a puppy shivering under a tree. Andrew went over and picked the puppy up. It cuddled into him and whimpered. The puppy had a collar on with its address on. Andrew saw that it was only 3 streets away and he decided to take the puppy home. The puppy's owner was very grateful. He had not realised that the puppy had got out of his garden. Andrew got home at 10 past five. He was late.

- If you'd been Andrew what would you have done?
- Was it right or wrong for Andrew to break his promise?
- What do you think Andrew and his dad said to each other?

Sometimes we break promises.
Sometimes we let people down.
Sometimes we can put things right.
Sometimes we cannot make things right.

Jesus' disciples sometimes made mistakes.
Jesus' disciples sometimes let him down.
But Jesus went on telling them to care for each other,
to go on loving each other.

worship ideas

Through the Season

Please visit [pages 10-11](#) where you will find ideas that can be used to help create a linking theme through each series in this season.

Gathering Activity

As people gather invite them to write a short litany (simply, a list) of things that are important to us and add the following words to each item on their list: "love comes first".

For example:

- Before family, love comes first.
- Before careers, love comes first.
- Before church, love comes first.
- And so on...

Some of the ideas may be added to the Call to Worship.

Call to Worship

Little children,
Love comes first.
Before fame,
before wealth,
before our names,
before gifts,
before worship,
before today,
before now,
before everything:
Love comes first

So let us love God
as God first loved us.

Let us worship God.

Call to Worship (Alternate)

Leader: In so many things
there is a beginning and an end,
a start and a finish,
a before and after.

All: **Not here!
No beginning or ending in love
no start and no finish
no before and no afterwards.**

Leader: What makes it so?

All: **This is an eternal place
and what makes it eternal
is nothing more
than love
that gathers us in
and makes us whole.**

Prayer of Adoration and Confession

Lord God,
whose name and whose very essence is love,
we have seen glimpses of your love in other people:
some who have cared for us,
and allowed us the privilege of caring for them;
some about whom we have read and heard,
whose selflessness and courage
must surely come from you;
but nowhere has your love been seen more clearly
than in Jesus Christ, your Son:
in his living and his dying,
and his presence with us still.

He, too, had love at the very centre of his being;
everything he said and did had love at its core;
and that was both his glory and his downfall.
Such intensity of goodness puts us to shame;
such concentration of love is more than we can bear.
And so we betray and deny the one we most want to serve;
and still he holds us in love;
still he entrusts us with the impossible task
of loving as we have been loved.

Gracious God, we have let him down at every turn,
just as he knew that we would.

One thing only he asked of us,
that we love one another:
our divisions and rivalries speak of our failure,
and give the lie to all the fine words we say
about love's transforming power.

We need to live it before we can share it.
We need to let the barriers down
and allow ourselves to be forgiven.
We need to take the risk of believing
that we are actually loved and worth loving;
then, and only then, will his love be able
to heal and change us;
then, and only then, will we be able
to keep his new commandment,
because love will be part of our being
as we are part of him,
and your glory will shine in us as it did in him.
Amen.

All-Age Prayer

Leader: When our friends let us down
and we feel lonely and sad,

All: help us to love one another.

Leader: When we've done something wrong
and feel guilty and bad,

All: help us to love one another.

Leader: When we get in a fight
and each think that we're right,

All: help us to love one another.

Leader: When we go in a huff;
when enough's not enough,

All: help us to love one another.

Leader: When we want to please you
and don't know what to do,

All: help us to love one another.

Leader: When we want to find out
what this life's all about,

All: help us to love one another.

Leader: How will other folk know
that we love Jesus so?

All: if we love one another.

Leader: What would he have to say
if he came here today?

All: Please just love one another!

Leader: Lord, we want to, we really do,
but it's not easy, so please:

**All: help us to love one another.
Amen.**

Prayer of Dedication

Loving God, in Jesus you gave us
far more than just wise teaching,
healing hands and an example to follow.
He did not just talk about goodness;
he was good to his very core.
He did not just speak about forgiveness;
he forgave those who hurt him most.
He did not just teach about loving,
he loved us and let nothing stand in love's way.

What can we offer that would not be an insult
to such absolute, self-giving grace?
Certainly not just money,
nor a portion of our talents and time.
Nothing less than our love will do,
and we offer it now,
in Jesus' name.
Amen.

Prayers for Others and Ourselves

Lord God,
you have no hands on earth now but ours
with which to reach out and touch the untouchables;
to hold those who are lonely or dying or afraid.
You have no other ears with which to listen to a story
that needs to be told.
Only through our eyes can you see the person hiding away,
trying not to be noticed,
but desperately needing to be.
Your heart is bigger than all of ours put together,
but you need us to make that love tangible.
You are relying on us to continue the ministry
that Christ began here on earth;
there is no other plan.

That is an awesome and a terrifying thought, O God.
We want to live up to the trust that you have placed in us,
but we cannot do it on our own.
And so we pray for the church and for ourselves today,
not just for our own sakes,
but for the sake of those who need us
to step up to the mark
if they are to be reached by the power of your love.

Jesus prayed that we should be one,
and we ask that too,
knowing how far it is from being true.
Heal our divisions over the things that do not matter,
and teach us how to live with our differences
over the things that do.
Help us to see the best in one another,
instead of suspecting the worst.
Help us to look at the person who most annoys us,
the one who is hardest to love,
and may we see Christ there, and hear him saying,
"Love one another".

We give thanks for the rich diversity within the Church:
different buildings and styles of worship;
different ways of reading the Bible and understanding it;
different practices of prayer;
different histories that have given us
different perspectives on faith.

Loving God, may we not be afraid of our differences,
but grateful for them,
aware that each of us has something to learn
and something to share with one another.

God who made us and who makes us whole,
we believe that your love reaches out to the whole world
and every person in it.
You have no favourites among your children,
and if we have been specially privileged
to have come to know you
through the lens of Christian faith,
that gives us a special responsibility
to live in a Christlike way.
Help us to be faithful to that high calling, we pray.
May our Lenten journey together be a time of learning,
and of re-learning how to love, as you have loved us in him.
Amen.

worship ideas

Reflection

A meditation.

Word of life,
honed in love,
created before the universe was imagined
and in whose imagination the universe was created;

Word of grace,
breathed into life by love,
known anew each day
and each day renewed by love;

Word of light,
kindled by love
that buries the darkness in the light
and whose light is stronger than all darkness;

in this love
we gather
and pause our living
to breathe again
in the space made by love
to touch us
and know us
and hold us
through forgiveness
and back to life again.

In such a space
let us lay down
the shadows we carry
that dull our lives
and those of others.

Let us lay down the hurt we bring
that limits us
and the well-being of others.

Let us lay down the words we have said
that have affected our relationships
reduced them
make them more fragile.

In so doing
may we pick up love
that might call us,
redeem us,
renew us
in time
with patience.

Word of life,
made all of love
may you continue to change us,
heal us,
transform us,
to be who you long for us to be.

Reflective Prayer

This uses the hymn, Lord, can this really be? (CH4 205).

Leader: Jesus said, "I am giving you a new commandment:
that you love one another."

Group A: Lord, can this really be?
Is this your Church, the people that I see,
who gather here and worship you with me?

Group B: And must I love them all,
shoulder their loads, and answer when they call,
forgive their faults and raise them when they fall?

Group A: Are these the ear, eye, hand,
your body, Lord, bound firmly in one band
and learning to obey your great command?

Group B: Is this the very place,
the school of love, where we would see your face,
and through your spirit gain enabling grace?

Pause

Leader: Jesus said, "This is how people will know that you
are mine: if you love one another."

Group A: Our faith a channel made
to bring us grace. Our judging hearts now take,
and lead us into oneness for your sake.

Group B: The true Church we'll become
when all the world will see us live as one,
and know you, Jesus, as the Father's Son.

Pause

All: Lord, could this really be?
Lord, let it really be.
Amen.

Take Home Ideas

Start this week a journal to accompany you through Lent in which you can write down your reflections on the theme of Love that we will be exploring throughout the season.

This week, each night take five minutes to write down an example from that day of when you experienced the opportunity to show love to someone else or had the experience of being loved. You may want to draw a picture if the words do not come easily.



Sending

May we go now into the world,
a new season,
a new beginning,
a new colour to everything
and share the news
in everything new,
love comes first.

May we live renewed by that love
in the world.

Praise/Hymns

A new commandment	ATAS 2 / MP 1
Brother, sister, let me serve you	CH4 694 / ATAS 30
Fairest Lord Jesus`	CH4 463
Gracious Spirit, Holy Ghost	CH4 627 / MP 198
He came down that we may have love	CH4 259
Inspired by love and anger	CH4 253
Jesus loves me, this I know	CH4 564
Join all the glorious names	CH4 460 / MP 392
Lord Jesus, as the shadows long are stealing	CH4 372
Love came down at Christmas	CH4 316 / MP 451
Love divine, all loves excelling	CH4 159 / MP 449
Love is the touch of intangible joy	CH4 115
O Jesus I have promised	CH4 644 / MP 501
Open are the gifts of God	CH4 390
Peace, perfect peace	ATAS 198
Saviour, teach me day by day	CH3 450
Son of God, eternal Saviour	CH4 468
Spirit of the living God	CH4 619 & 620
The great love of God is revealed in the Son	CH4 358
This is my will	CH4 357
We are one family together	ATAS 256
When I needed a neighbour	CH4 544 / ATAS 265
When I receive the peace of Christ	CH4 566
Will you come and follow me?	CH4 533

Sampler

age group ideas

gathering

Love Is...

all age

You will need: a selection of "Love is..." cartoons by Kim, which are readily found online.

Look at the cartoons together and talk about some of the different ways we can show love.

games

Symbol Of Love

age 3-5

You will need: A3 red card / paper cut out in heart shape (one for ever three children), cut into four or five sections to form simple jigsaw, you could also use silver and gold card.

Give each team the pieces of card to fit together to form a whole heart.

The heart is a symbol of love and we saw it recently on Valentine's Day. We also see it on engagement, wedding and anniversary cards. People who have been in love for a long time will get silver hearts on their 25th wedding anniversary and gold hearts on their 50th wedding anniversary. You may wish to show the children a broken heart and that can happen when a loved one dies or their pet dies and that is because we love one another. Finish with God mending our heart and hurt.

God Loves It When...

age 6-12

Sit the children in a circle for this game. The first person starts it off by saying "God loves it when..." and adds their own idea, for example: "...I hold the door for someone"; the next child says "God loves it when... I give to charity and hold the door for someone" adding their own idea so that the chain of ideas gets longer and longer as you go around the circle.

Once the game is finished discuss the various answers that were given and why this was showing love for one another.

Family Fortunes

age 6-12

You will need: a bag with items that people love (wedding couple, picture of a child, image of music note, image of McDonald's logo, cuddly toy, flowers/seeds, postcard for a holiday, image of a house, image of a pet, and so on. Ten images in total would be good.)

You will need two teams of five children or just one group if your numbers are lower. In turn they are to guess something that people love that is in the bag. If correct they keep the image in their team.

Love can seem very easy when we use the word to describe something we treasure at the moment but loving someone can be hard work especially when they do something that hurts us or upsets us. God loves us no matter what and we must try to love one another no matter what!

activities

Who Should We Love?

age 6-12

You will need: images of happy family, victims of a disaster (such as flood or earthquake), homeless people, someone with addiction (such as drug/alcohol, or perhaps unseen like gambling).

Take each image in turn and discuss what they see. A happy family, a nice house, food on the table, children probably attend clubs and activities: what is not to love? It is easy to love people like this. When you discuss the other images delve more deeply into the situations talking about the differences. Have the children, your group or church ever done anything to love people in situations unlike your own?

It does not matter which country you are from, the colour of your skin, the problems you may have brought upon yourself in this country and further afield, we are commanded by Jesus to love all and help in any way we can. Think about how you can show your love through prayer and action.

When Loving Is Difficult

age 9-12

You will need: individual slips with scenarios on them (being grounded by parents, getting into trouble by parents or teachers, your best friend gets better praise than you, your best friend gets the latest gadgets while yours are old, your parents/friends lie to you, a bully does well in the class, and so on).

Give each child a scenario to read out and let the group discuss the situations. What are the children thinking and feeling about these situations: annoyed, angry, hurt, upset, do not care, it happens all the time? If you feel able, tell the children about a situation of your own.

Jesus tells us to love one another even when we feel they have let us down or lied to us. That can be very difficult but we need to try to rise above our hurt and angry feelings because we do not always know what is happening with the other person in their lives at that time. Be the better person.

I Love...

all age

You will need: an object that you love and a picture of someone you love, ideally invite children the previous week to bring in a toy that they love most.

Show the children the object that you have brought along and explain to them what it is about it that you love. Then move onto the picture of the person that you love and explain who they are (it does not necessarily mean a member of your family, it could be a celebrity or person from history, for example). Ask the children to show you the toy they love and let them tell you about it.

Once everybody has shown their loved possessions lead on to everyone in the church loving Jesus because of what he did for us and then move onto the love God has for us and his Creation.



Films

all age

There are numerous films that can be selected to talk about or show clips from including Frozen (an act of love at the end), or Toy Story 3 (the toys love Andy so much they will do anything to get him back).

Love Hearts

all age

You will need: some packs of Love Heart sweets.

Share a sweet with the children noting the wee messages found on the sweets. Chat about those love messages.

crafts

I Love You To Pieces Card

age 3-5

You will need: white A4 card folded to A5 with a heart drawn centrally on the front of it, red tissue paper (shredded), PVA glue, glue spreaders, coloured pencils, felt tip pens.

Give each child one of the cards and ask them to simply cover the heart with the tissue paper by gluing it into the heart shape. Let them copy the words 'I love you' above the heart and 'to pieces!' below the heart.

Talk with the children about what and who they love. Discuss how we show love to each other and get them to think about how sometimes that means we make promises to each other. Let them decide who they love to pieces and then write a dedication inside the card to that person.

Promises! Promises!

age 6-8

You will need: coloured paper cut into voucher shapes approx. 15 cm x 7 cm (at least five or six for each child), coloured pencils, felt-tip pens, self-stick stickers and stars, stapler.

Talk with the children about the story and the promises that the children made and why and how they were broken. Discuss if they always keep their promises. Encourage them to think of any promises they might make to their family and friends which might show how much they love them and care for them. Explain they are going to make some promise vouchers which they can tear out their book and give to their family and friends as a sign of their promise to them.

Give the children their voucher shapes and ask them to think of promises they might make to their parents, family or friends, such as I promise to tidy my room, I promise to help with the washing up, I promise to go to bed when I am told, I promise to do my homework, I promise to look after the dog and so on. Now get the children to write a promise on each voucher and decorate each voucher around the edge. Give them a further voucher as a cover to label as 'MY PROMISE VOUCHERS' and let them decorate it before stapling their promise vouchers together.

Promise Knots

age 9-12

You will need: lots of string, scissors, A4 card in darker colours, PVA glue, glue spreaders, pictures of promise knots, promise rings and of knots in general.

Talk with the children about the story and the promises that were made by the children and then sadly broken. Sensitively discuss promises they may have made or made and broken. Explain the tradition of people making promise knots from two lengths of string which were then sometimes formed into rings as a sign of them making a binding promise to each other. Discuss the importance of keeping our promises.

Show the children the images of the knots, promise knots and rings. Then give them two lengths of string and ask them to knot them as if they are making a binding promise with someone, perhaps encourage them to make a promise to each other before binding their own pieces of string together. Then either let them form them into a ring shape or glue their knots to a contrasting piece of card as a promise card.

Large Shiny Heart

all age

You will need: large sheet of red cardboard, lots of red or silver holographic paper cut into small rectangular shapes, PVA glue, glue spreaders, scissors, strong ribbon or string, heart-shaped Post-It pads, colouring pencils, felt pens.

Prepare a very large heart shape from the sheet of cardboard. Now ask the children to work together to make the edges of the heart shiny on both sides by gluing the holographic paper around the perimeter of each side of the heart. Remind them to overlap the pieces of holographic paper. When complete make two holes at the top of the heart and thread through the ribbon and knot securely in preparation for it to hang.

Talk with the children again about those "Love is..." cartoons. Ask the children what love is... for them and discuss their answers. Now give the children a heart-shaped Post-It note and let them write or draw on it what "Love is..." for them. Let them then stick the post-its to the centre of each side of the heart and then hang it for all to see. It might be useful to come back to this visual over the weeks when the different sorts of love are being discussed.

discussion starters for teens

last words and parting gifts

Preparation

Either print out some lists or have access to the internet where you meet so you can look up some famous last words. There are many websites which such lists.

Opening Activity

Last Words

Together have a look at some famous last words from people across history.

- What similarities / differences are there?

Keep things light hearted—not too much focus on death!—and give everyone a chance to think what would be memorable last words.

- What last words would you like to be remembered as having said?
- What last words would you suggest would be fitting for others in your group?

The Word

Read John 13:31-38 together.

Activity/Discussion

A Parting Gift

Although we have been thinking about famous last words, the words that we hear Jesus speak in this week's reading are not his final words, but they do feel like part of his final message to his friends and followers. Jesus is preparing his disciples for the future when he will no longer be with them.

- What do people do to mark a parting?
- How do you react to saying goodbye to someone, knowing you may not see them again for a long time?
- Have you ever had that experience before?

Jesus parting gift is a message that is extraordinarily simple:

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.



- What do you make of Jesus' message?
- How do you see this around you today?
- What more could we do to make it a reality?

Today's reading ends with a further famous moment after Peter has told Jesus he will always follow him and Jesus alerts him that he will deny Jesus three times.

- Can you relate to Peter in this story?
- If you had been in Peter's shoes would you take Jesus' warning seriously?
- Have you found yourself contradicting your principles to save face?
- What does it feel like to fail to do what you know you should do?
- What did Peter do? (You might want to skip to John 18: 25-27)

Living It Out

Give everyone a piece of paper and ask them to write at the top "My New Commandment is..." then ask them to think about and write something positive they wish to take on this week (and longer). Encourage everyone to take their ideas away and try to make them a reality in the week.

Sampler

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