

**Hope is a Saviour
Born in a manger
Sent down from heaven
To rescue our hearts**

(*The Christmas Hope*, by NewSong)

AN ALL AGE WORSHIP RESOURCE FOR CHRISTMAS, 2013

CONTENTS

All Age Worship Notes	2
What is all-age worship?	2
Why have all-age worship?	2
Presenting all-age worship.....	2
Planning.....	3
Invitation and advertising	3
Hospitality	4
Worship space	4
Visuals	4
Music	4
Movement	5
Relationships	5
Science and mathematics.....	5
Something to take home	5
Worship leaders.....	5
Christmas worship notes.....	6
Hope	7
Symbols of Hope.....	9
Pattern	11
Hopeful hymns	12
A hopeful country.....	14
Bringing life to hope	15
Sample worship service	16

USING THIS WORSHIP RESOURCE

These notes have been prepared by the Children and Family Ministry Team of Mission Resourcing SA to help congregations plan worship that involves children as well as youth, young adults, middle-aged and older people.

You may make as many copies of the notes as needed for your worship planners and leaders. The use of music and other copyright elements is not covered in this permission.

Read through all the material. Discuss it as a planning team. You may use any of the ideas that are appropriate in your situation.

Bible quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the New International Readers Version.

For other intergenerational worship ideas see:
<http://sa.uca.org.au/cfm/ministry-leaders/all-age-worship/>

If you use these resources, please let us know how you use them. Send a brief email to children@sa.uca.org.au.

UPSIZING & DOWNSIZING

This resource can be used by large or small congregations and can even be adapted for use in a home setting.

Each planning group will need to adapt the ideas to suit their own particular situation: the people and the facilities.

ALL-AGE WORSHIP NOTES

WHAT IS ALL-AGE WORSHIP?

Intergenerational (all-age or whole-church) worship is, first and foremost, worship.

We worship to show the value (worth) we place on God and our relationship with God.

Worship is an encounter between God and God's people; a dialogue in which God speaks and people respond.

Intentionally intergenerational worship

- allows this dialogue to take place in a variety of ways, engaging several senses, possibly including the sense of wonder and the sense of humour
- focuses on a single, clear theme and connects that theme with the lives of the worshipers
- provides worshipers (young and old) with an experience they can remember and carry into their lives beyond the worship experience
- encourages interaction and dialogue among people of the various generations and people with different personalities, experiences, life-styles and interests.
- takes seriously the understanding of the church as the multi-faceted body of Christ
- recognises and values the children present in the worshiping congregation and 'the child within' each adult.

WHY HAVE ALL-AGE WORSHIP?

The biblical model of the Church is of a body with a variety of different parts fulfilling different functions; each valuable and all working together.

All parts of such a body suffer when one part is cut off. All parts of a worshiping congregation suffer when one part is segregated from the others.

In worship, God speaks to and through people of all ages. When children (as well as elderly and differently-abled people) are present in worship, they grow through the acceptance and respect shown by others. They show others a different — possibly truer — face of God, and they force worship leaders to focus on the basics of theology and of worship in a way that is clear and creative. This benefits everyone.

There are also some practical aspects to all-age worship at Christmas time, remembering, of course, that Christmas is all about a baby.

Australians see Christmas as a family time. We want worship to add to, rather than detract from, the family experience.

This applies to your church members and their extended family that joins them at Christmas time. It also applies to guests, fringe-members and people in the community who are drawn to do 'something religious' at Christmas.

The guests you invite to your church at Christmas may be of any age. You want to plan a worship that does not exclude anyone who comes -- either physically, by inference or by what you do and say.

PRESENTING AN ALL-AGE WORSHIP SERVICE

Try to keep the logistics as simple (and well planned) as possible, so that no one is overburdened or stressed at the last minute.

As early as possible, begin working with the various existing teams who will be called on to help present the service. If needed, organise new teams for this particular event.

People who decorate the worship area have a key role and should be involved in planning. You will want them to be part of the planning, so that visuals relate to the theme of the worship.

Your hospitality team is an important part of your worship team and must be consulted in the planning stage, especially if you are asking them to do something different from your usual worship.

Your tech team (and/or people responsible for preparing electronic or printed materials) have a vital role in presenting the worship.

In choosing your up-front worship leader/s you will need special wisdom to balance the desire to be inclusive with the desire to present the 'best' to a larger-than-usual gathering.

PLANNING ALL AGE WORSHIP

All age worship has elements of spontaneity and the unexpected. This is one of the special gifts young children and new-to-church adults can bring to worship.

Careful planning assures that all worship leaders understand and are comfortable with the direction and flow of the worship plan. This familiarity and understanding makes it easier for worship leaders and worshipers to cope with and embrace spontaneous (spirit-led) participation.

It makes sense to have an intergenerational team plan intergenerational worship. A special team consisting of one person (or better, two people) representing the youngest, the middle and the oldest age groups of the congregation can work with the pastor/minister/priest or lay ministry team.

Planning as an *intergenerational* team can be a valuable experience for all involved. Older members help younger members understand worship practices; younger members give older members fresh insights and enthusiasm.

A team that represents the wider congregation will also have a broader awareness of other people in the congregation with skills and interests that can be drawn on in the worship, including hospitality, music, drama, visual art and technology.

Suggested planning steps:

1. Begin with prayer, and trust God's Spirit to guide your planning.
2. Identify your purpose, date and theme.
3. Look through these notes to see how they can help in planning the service God is leading you to hold.
4. Develop a worship outline or flow chart.

If you are just starting to think about all-age worship: Begin with your regular worship plan. Consider how some of the ideas in this resource could help you make some elements of your regular service more experiential, more sensory or more intentionally involving people of all ages.

OR If you have had some experience with all-age worship: look at the resource and consider how the service, or parts of it, might work in your situation.

OR If you are regularly engaging in all-age worship, pick up any suggestions in this resource that suit the way you do it.

5. Flesh out the outline, considering your own people, traditions and facilities.
6. Work with worship leaders to plan details: who does what? when? and how?

AND

7. Practice!

If your service is going to involve movement, people, props and/or other elements that are different from your regular worship pattern, you will need a rehearsal.

Small groups may practice their part of the service individually, but you will also need a complete walk through or 'dress rehearsal'.

This will pinpoint any logistical problems, allow the worship leader/s to fine-tune instructions for the worshipers and ensure that the service itself runs smoothly.

The walk-through will also help you assess the timing of the service. If it looks as if it will run too long, find ways of streamlining or shortening it.

You can use rehearsal time as an opportunity to pray together and to remind one another that worship is not a talent show. Leaders are, themselves, worshiping God while they help others to know and worship God.

INVITATION AND ADVERTISING

The first people to speak to about your service are the worshiping members of your congregation. Begin early to let them in on the excitement of what is being planned. Help them catch the vision of a deliberately multi-generational Christmas worship.

Uniting Church SA postcards can be used as invitations to the Christmas worship and you can use the matching posters to promote it in public places.

Some churches do a letter-box drop in their neighbourhood with invitational postcards. Members can give the postcards to special neighbours, friends and family.

Consider raising the hope theme well before Christmas, and encouraging members to think of acquaintances who are in need of hope. They might give a special invitation to those people, but they will need to do more than invite them. They will have to be willing to follow through, listen to their guests' concerns and serve them in ways that demonstrate the Hope born at Christmas.

HOSPITALITY

Hospitality is the responsibility of all members of the congregation.

Members who invite and bring guests to the service have the primary responsibility for looking after their guests.

A designated **HOSPITALITY TEAM** may have special responsibilities.

At all times

Keep the worship space (and any other spaces used) safe:

- know where to find alternate exits and first aid equipment
- know how to use the fire extinguishers (particularly if you are using candles in the service)
- know who has current first aid training
- remove any hindrance to movement — blocked aisles or doors, cables on the floor, etc. Remove any broken or damaged furnishings.

Before the service

- Greet people as they arrive.
- Help people find seats and get settled. Pay special attention to the very young, the very old and people with physical disabilities. Seat them where they will be able to see and to hear, but will not feel conspicuous.

If the service is going to involve small group interaction, try to seat people in appropriate groupings.

- Provide information about what to expect.
- Distribute books, papers and materials required for the service.

During the service

- Watch for and respond to any signs of disturbance or distress. This may be anything from helping someone find the toilet or a drink of water to helping parents with disruptive children or dealing with someone who has a fainting or epileptic episode.
- Usher people to Holy Communion.
- Collect offerings.

After the service

- Be sure that each worshiper (young or old) is sent on their way with a handshake and/or blessing.
- Provide after-service cuppa or snack.

And, as they say in other job descriptions, 'other duties as may be required'.

WORSHIP SPACE

A clean, tidy and comfortable worship area can help guests and regular worshipers feel welcome. Make sure the people who keep your church clean know they are valued as part of the worship team.

An all-age approach to worship may work best with a re-arrangement of furniture, or even in a hall rather than a sanctuary.

VISUALS

Some people who worship with you prefer to take in information and express themselves with images. Make sure that you provide imagery that they can respond to and, where possible, opportunities to respond in this way during worship.

Involve people with artistic talent and your technology team (if you project images electronically) in creating memorable visual impact for all worshipers. Be sure that visuals support the intended worship theme and are not unrelated decoration.

The postcard image can be the starting point for visuals. In the sample service, a manger, plus a candle and a wrapped gift provide a visual focus. You may choose to emphasise the blue and brown (sky and earth) colours of the postcard rather than the traditional red and green Christmas colour scheme.

MUSIC

Some people who worship with you prefer to take in information and express themselves with music and rhythm. Provide music that they can respond to and participate in.

Much of the music in worship involves congregational singing. Invite people to sing, but allow them to simply listen if they are more comfortable doing so.

Your regular instrumentalists and vocalists (organist, band or choir) may perform some music as well as leading/accompanying congregational singing. You may also involve musicians of all ages who are not regularly part of your music team.

Small congregations, or congregations that do not have strong musical leadership, may use recorded music to lead singing.

Include traditional hymns (perhaps hymns that carry a lot of memories and meaning for older worshipers) as well as more contemporary songs and songs written with children in mind.

You'll find some song suggestions on page 12.

MOVEMENT

Some people who worship with you prefer to take in information and express themselves through movement and manipulating concrete objects. Make sure that you provide something to do.

In the sample service this involves handling a card and making the Auslan signs for hope.

Some people may be reluctant to take part in unfamiliar physical activity in worship. Encourage them to give it a go or even to help someone who needs assistance.

RELATIONSHIPS

Worship is about our relationship with God. Congregational worship is also about our relationship with other people. All-age worship encourages the growth of these relationships.

Some people who worship with you prefer to take in information and express themselves as they do something or talk with other people.

Give them opportunities to interact with others. In the sample service there are a number of talk spots.

Some people may be uncomfortable when asked to talk to others in small groups. Provide an intra-personal alternative. Let everyone know that it is perfectly OK if some people choose to pray or to think about the question by themselves.

SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS

Some people who worship with you prefer to take in information and express themselves through facts, lists, graphs, and patterns.

In the sample service there is a clear pattern centring on three symbols of hope.

SOMETHING TO TAKE HOME

People like to have souvenirs of special events. People are more likely to remember and talk about your worship service if you provide them with a tangible memento or conversation starter.

It could also be really helpful to provide people with some questions or Bible verses related to the theme of worship that they can take home and discuss in their household.

In our sample service each worshiper receives a hope gift — a candle or packet of seeds.

WORSHIP LEADERS

One person (or a pair of people) is the overall worship leader for the all-age service.

Worshipers (particularly guests) will recognise this person as the host/compeer who is responsible for helping them engage with what happens in worship.

Several other people can each lead different aspects of worship.

The sample worship service, may involve children as well as grown-ups in leading worship, as:

- a hospitality team (all ages: At Christmas it would be particularly appropriate for an infant, held by their parent, to greet worshipers.)
- a music team: instrumentalists and vocalists (all ages, including primary school aged children who are learning music) with a song leader
- a technology/projection/sound team (all ages: an experienced adult or teen, possibly with a younger or older helper)
- six 'people' who move the symbols; some have spoken parts
- a Bible reader
- several actors: Mary, Joseph, shepherds and angels
- a prayer leader (any age).

SERMON

Some people who worship with you process information best when they simply listen to a speaker (a person of knowledge and authority) who presents them with facts, ideas, challenges and encouragement. In traditional worship this happens in a sermon.

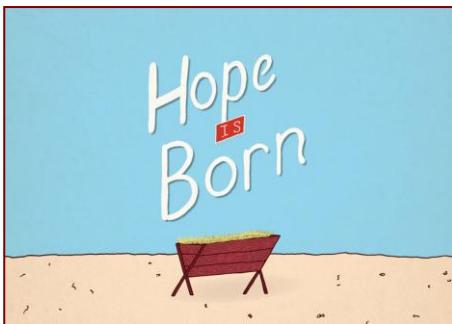
The following pages have many starting points for a sermon about Christmas hope.

You may plan a service with no sermon as such, when the teaching, ideas, challenges and encouragement are handled in other ways. But most worship services have a sermon, homily, address or message of some sort.

An all age worship service does not require different sermons for different groups of people. There is a single all-age sermon — short, generally a simple application of the overall theme of the service, and (where possible) incorporating visuals and actions.

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP NOTES

POSTCARD THEME



This worship resource is coordinated with the Christmas 2013 postcard campaign of the Uniting Church SA.

'Bethlehem was the place where God came to us face to face, demonstrating that we are never forgotten, abandoned or left alone.'

'At Christmas time, we are reminded that through God's love and grace, we have been given the gift of hope and life.'

'Christmas heralds a fresh beginning – a beginning where we can pray for the world and the way it ought to be, with the knowledge that God's grace will prevail.'

'This year's Uniting Church SA Christmas postcard campaign will reach beyond just residential letterboxes, livening up Adelaide buses with advertisements and reaching into communities through A3-sized posters. In this way, we hope to spread the hope and joy that this time of year brings.'

This year there are two options for the post card front. The other choice features a poem by Michael Leunig.

Postcard cost: \$69 per 1000
(minimum of 1000)

Poster cost: \$10 for 10 posters
(minimum of 10)

Orders close: Wednesday 23 October 2013

Available for pickup:

during the Presbytery and Synod meeting,
31 October-2 November 2013, and from
212 Pirie Street after this date.

Enquiries:

Can be directed to the Communications Unit:
Phone: (08) 8236 4249
Email: communications@sa.uca.org.au

LECTIONARY TEXTS

Revised common lectionary texts for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day include:

Gospel: the Luke 2 account of the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem and the visit of the shepherds.

Old Testament: passages are from the prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah 9:2-7, includes two familiar passages: 'The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light...' and 'For a child has been born for us...'

Psalms 96 and 97 sing praise to a god of righteousness, which we hope for with confidence even though the reign of righteousness is not yet visible on earth.

Epistle readings from the letter to Titus both mention our hope:

Titus 2:11-14 . . . we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Titus 3:4-7 . . . This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.



HOPE

WHAT IS HOPE?

Hope has to do with a desired future. In common usage 'hope' can be either a verb ('I hope') -- looking forward to something positive, or a noun ('my hope') -- the feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen.

The opposite of hope is despair.

In Auslan there are two signs that show different dimensions of the English word 'hope'.

In the first sign, the speaker touches their forehead, then turns their hand outward with fingers crossed. This hope is a wish that something will happen, with no great confidence that it will.

In the second sign, the speaker touches their forehead, then makes a fist, bringing it down forcefully, hitting the other hand. This hope is a confidence about something that cannot be seen and has not happened. This is firm solid-rock hope that is closely related with faith.

[To see the signs, Google 'Auslan + hope'.]

CHRISTIAN HOPE

In Scripture, the Hebrew and Greek words translated as 'hope' indicate certainty -- a strong and confident expectation.

Christian hope may refer to the God-given ability to hoping, or to the object hoped for — the content of one's hope. It deals with things we can't see or haven't received or both.

Biblically, the object hoped for is salvation and its many blessings, past, present, and future, as promised in Scripture.

Hope is the confident expectation, the sure certainty that what God has promised in the Word is true, has occurred, and or will in accordance with God's sure Word.

In the Bible, hope is never a static or passive thing. It is dynamic, active, directive and life-sustaining. Biblical hope is not an escape from reality or from problems. If our hope is based on God's promises, it will motivate us.

Hope has results. It changes how we see ourselves. It changes us into pilgrim people who see this life as temporary sojourn. It changes what we value. Biblical hope makes us heavenly minded rather than earthly minded. It affects what we do with our lives — our talents, time, treasures.

Hope has rewards and blessings. It gives us joy and peace, protection, strength, courage and boldness. Hope gives us endurance, comfort, confidence.

Scripture warns against putting our hope in anything other than the Lord, because these things will leave us ashamed, frustrated, disappointed and in ruin.

God is the source of all real hope. It must come from him for he alone has the power to give it.

Hope depends on knowing the Word of God.

Hope depends on knowing and resting in God's grace.

[This discussion of Christian hope is based on an article at <https://bible.org/article/hope>)

SOME HOPE TEXTS FROM THE BIBLE

- The Lord your God has given you the land. Go up and take it. Do what the Lord says. He's the God of your people. Don't be afraid. Don't lose hope. (Deuteronomy 1:21)
- Here is what I am commanding you to do. Be strong and brave. Do not be terrified. Do not lose hope. I am the Lord your God. I will be with you everywhere you go. (Joshua 1:9)
- Then Hezekiah worked hard repairing all of the broken parts of the wall. . . He gathered the officers together in front of him in the open area at the city gate. He gave them words of hope. He said, 'Be strong. Be brave. Don't be afraid. Don't lose hope. The king of Assyria has a huge army with him. But there's a greater power with us than there is with him.' (2 Chronicles 32:5-7)
- Lord, you hear the longings of those who are hurting. You cheer them up and give them hope. You listen to their cries. (Psalm 10:17)
- But the Lord looks with favour on those who respect him. He watches over those who put their hope in his faithful love. (Psalm 33:18)
- You are my place of safety. You are like a shield that keeps me safe. I have put my hope in your word. (Psalm 119:114)

- Blessed are those who depend on the God of Jacob for help. Blessed are those who put their hope in the Lord their God. (Psalm 146:5)
- The synagogue rulers sent word to Paul and his companions. They said, 'Brothers, do you have a message of hope for the people? If you do, please speak.' Paul stood up and motioned with his hand. Then he said, 'Men of Israel, and you non-Jews who worship God, listen to me!' (Acts 13:14-16)
- 'Today I am on trial because of the hope I have. I believe in what God promised our people long ago. It is the promise that our 12 tribes are hoping to see come true. Because of this hope they serve God with a true and honest heart day and night. King Agrippa, it is also because of this hope that the Jews are bringing charges against me. (Acts 26:6,7)
- And that's not all. We are full of joy even when we suffer. We know that our suffering gives us the strength to go on. The strength to go on produces character. Character produces hope. And hope will never let us down. (Romans 6:3-5)
- We hope for what we don't have yet. So we are patient as we wait for it. (Romans 6:24,25)
- Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us. The Scriptures give us strength to go on. They cheer us up and give us hope. (Romans 15:4)
- May the God who gives hope fill you with great joy. May you have perfect peace as you trust in him. May the power of the Holy Spirit fill you with hope. (Romans 15:13)
- God has saved us from deadly dangers. And he will continue to do it. We have put our hope in him. He will continue to save us. (2 Corinthians 1:10)
- I also pray that your mind might see more clearly. Then you will know the hope God has chosen you to receive. You will know that the things God's people will receive are rich and glorious. (Ephesians 1:18)
- We never forget you when we pray to our God and Father. Your work is produced by your faith. Your service is the result of your love. Your strength to continue comes from your hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thessalonians 1:3-4)
- We have put our hope in the living God. He is the Saviour of all people. Most of all he is the Saviour of those who believe. (1 Timothy 4:10)
- Faith and understanding rest on the hope of eternal life. Before time began, God promised to give that life. And he does not lie. (Titus 1:2)
- Our hope is certain. It is something for the soul to hold on to. It is strong and secure. (Hebrews 6:19)
- Let us hold firmly to the hope we claim to have. The One who promised is faithful. (Hebrews 10:23)
- Give praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In his great mercy he has given us a new birth and a hope that is alive. It is alive because Jesus Christ rose from the dead. (1 Peter 1:3)
- But make sure in your hearts that Christ is Lord. Always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks you about the hope you have. Be ready to give the reason for it. But do it gently and with respect. (1 Peter 3:15)

SYMBOLS OF HOPE

SOUL ANCHOR

(a song by Michael Card) points to an ancient Christian symbol of hope.



Christian use of the anchor symbol echoes Hebrews 6:19: 'We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.' (NIV)

Archaeologists have found anchors on believers' tombs

from the end of the first century. They were displayed beside messages of hope such as: 'peace be with you' that speak to the hope Christians felt in their anticipation of heaven.

Card writes: 'The first century symbol wasn't the cross; it was the anchor. If I'm a first century Christian and I'm hiding in the catacombs and three of my best friends have just been thrown to the lions or burned at the stake, or crucified and set ablaze as torches at one of [Emperor] Nero's garden parties, the symbol that most encourages me in my faith is the anchor. When I see it, I'm reminded that Jesus is my anchor.'

The anchor symbol may have been a word play in Greek—ankura resembling en kurio, or 'in the Lord'.

An anchor is a device that is used to connect a boat to the bed of a body of water to prevent the boat from drifting in the wind or current. The traditional anchor symbol has pointed ends for catching on to solid rock. It has a ring on which a rope is knotted, connecting it to the boat which may be quite a distance from the anchor itself. It is often shown with a cross piece, so that the symbol of the cross is embedded in the anchor symbol; as our hope is embedded in the cross of Jesus Christ.

We all need something to hold on to. Hope is the anchor that allows us to hold on to Jesus and his promises in a world that might have us drifting away.

'Before we call, he answers us with hope.'
(from Soul Anchor)

THE CHRISTMAS HOPE

(a song by Newsong) points to three other hope symbols.

HOPE is a CANDLE, a light in the window

A candle is a source of light. The candle light symbol comes from such passages as



John 1:5,9 — The light shines in the darkness... The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.

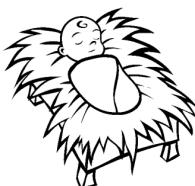
and John 8:12 — Jesus said, 'I am the light of the world. Those who follow me will never walk in darkness. They will have the light that leads to life.'

The song speaks of a candle lit in a window in hope that a loved one will return. The candle, on a dark night, also gives the traveller hope that they can find their way home.

Both a candle and hope seem brightest when they shine in darkness.

HOPE is a SAVIOUR born in a manger

In the familiar account of Jesus birth, angels announce to the shepherds:



Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:11)

The birth of every child is a sign of hope. But 'the hopes and fears of all the years' were met in that one baby, lying in a manger. The child whose birth we celebrate at Christmas is the Saviour who fulfilled the hopes of all who went before and gives hope to all who believe in him.

HOPE is a PRESENT, a gift freely given.

Both our ability to hope and the thing we hope for are gifts from God.



Paul reminds us of that fact in Romans 15:13 — May the God who gives hope fill you with great joy. May you have perfect peace as you trust in him. May the power of the Holy Spirit fill you with hope.

[This song forms the framework for the sample worship service, page 16)

SEED

A seed, like hope, is something of a mystery. The power of a seed is revealed and actualised, not through something spectacular, but through its death.



'Very truly, I tell you,' said Jesus, 'unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.' (John 12:24)

Hope also grows, often, when we give up reliance on things we feel we can control.

Jesus also spoke of the mustard seed. The seed — so small we can hold it between our fingers, so small there are hundreds in a spice jar at the supermarket — has the potential of growing into a living structure larger than a house.

In a similar way, a small glimmer of hope, when nourished, can become greater and greater.

Jesus also told a story of a farmer scattering seeds. Like the soil that received the seeds in different ways, we can accept or reject the hope God gives us.

Whenever we plant a seed it is an act of hope — that the seed will produce something greater than itself: a flower, or a plant or a tree. We often forget the greater dimension of hope: We can see the tree that will grow from the apple seed; but we may not see the seeds in the apples that grow on that tree.

Poets sometimes speak of the 'seed' of an idea, the start of hope that something greater will emerge.

Aid agencies (eg Uniting World, through the Everything in Common gift catalogue) provide 'seed money' for the start of new micro businesses, with the hope this will lead to a better life for the people involved.

Some people see the indigenous yellow dandelion and its seeds as an appropriate symbol for hope in Australia. It is a robust plant that thrives wherever its seeds land.

Children blow on the puffball and as the seeds are scattered, they express their hope/wish for something better.

Of course, some of us hope that the dandelion will be eradicated from our gardens. (There may be some deep symbolism there.)

THE SYMBOLS IN WORSHIP

As part of your worship service you may give each person a seed or candle to take home, as a symbol of Christmas hope.

See the next page for a pattern that can be used as a holder for either item.

Seed

A gardener in your congregation (or a garden centre) can advise you as to an appropriate plant — an easy-care plant that sprouts readily and is hearty — and the instructions you will need to provide.

It may be possible to line the container with plastic, fill it with dirt and plant the seed in the container until it sprouts. Alternatively, supply the seed and an instruction sheet in a small plastic bag that will go into the holder, or make the holder the size of a small pot.

Candle

Adjust the size of your pattern so that the centre square is the diameter of a taper candle. Note that the paper holder itself is not strong enough to hold a candle erect.

Better still (and much safer) invest in inexpensive votive candles and candle holders. Adjust the pattern to fit the candle holders.



PATTERN

Copy the pattern onto light card. You might have a variety of colours, so that people can choose, or use the light blue of the postcard. Adjust the size to the type of container you are making and the capability of your printer. If possible trim the outside edges before distributing and just give people the square.

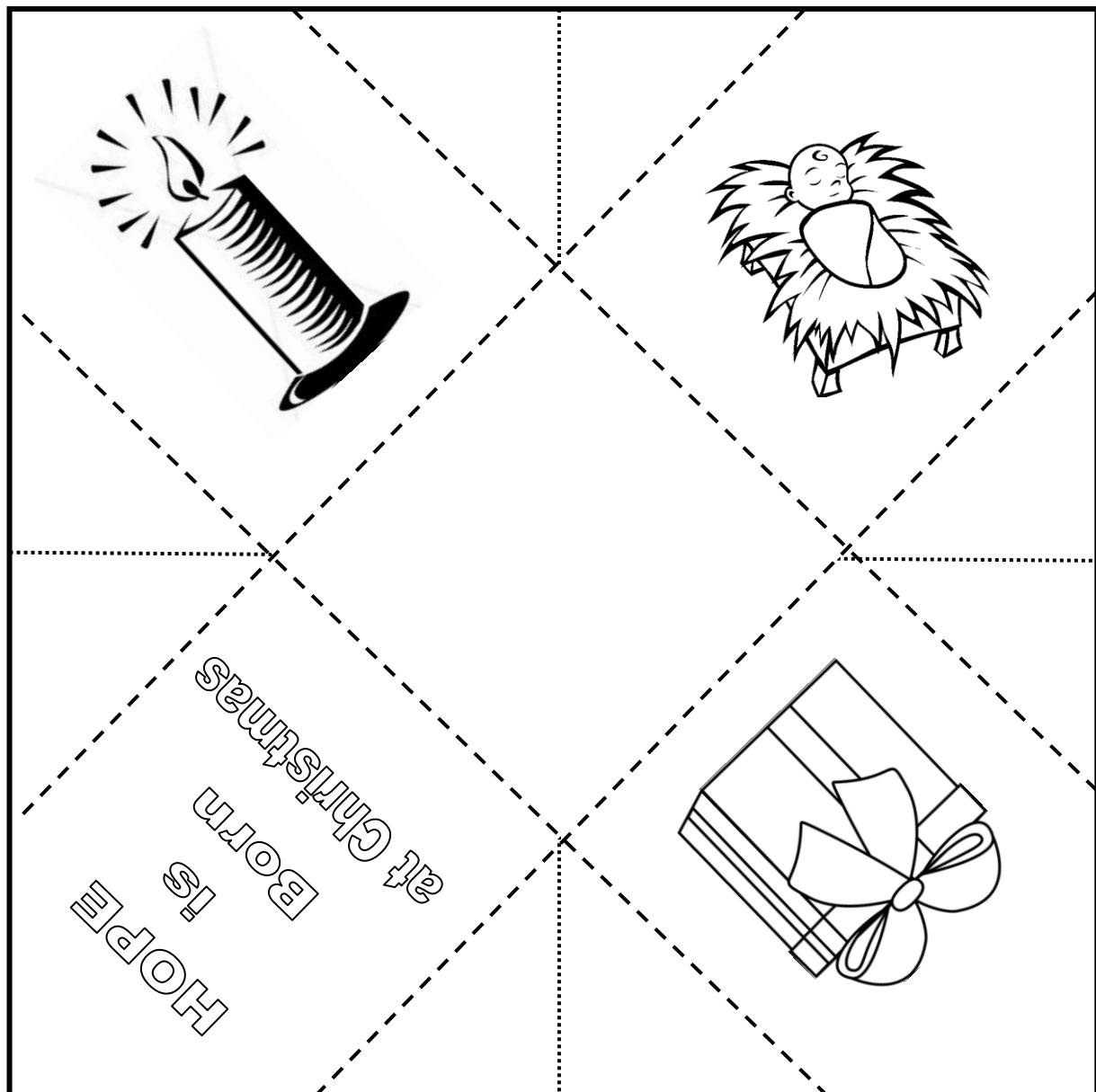
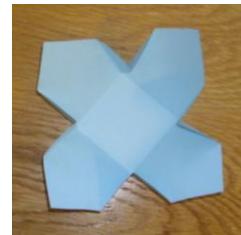
To assemble: Note that there are two kinds of lines on the pattern. Some marked with dots; some marked with dashes. The dashes indicate the main folds.

Fold each of the dashed lines with the decorated side on the outside. Once you have made each fold mark, open it out again.

Carefully fold each of the four short dotted fold lines with the decorated side inside and then open them out again.

Once you have made all the folds, carefully begin forming the container by squeezing the four points upward and moving the long sides to the inside. The result will look a bit like a flower or a Chinese take-away tub.

The container can be completed by taping the outside or carefully stapling together two inside bits on each of two sides.



HOPEFUL HYMNS

Many of our favourite Christmas carols go beyond the circumstances of Jesus' birth and describe (or hint at) the hope that comes with Jesus' birth:

Angels from the realms of glory

(James Montgomery, 1771-1854) concludes with our hope that Jesus, who came at Christmas will come again:

*Saints, before the altar bending,
watching long in hope and fear,
suddenly the Lord, descending,
In his temple shall appear;*

Away in a manger

(v 3, John Thomas McFarland, 1851-1913) concludes with the hope and prayer:

*Be near me, Lord Jesus . . .
and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.*

Born in the night, Mary's Child

(Geoffrey Ainger, 1925) speaks Jesus as Hope of the world, coming soon to reign.

Christmas blessing

(Aubrey Podlch, 1946-) like most blessings, this Australian song is a prayer based in hope:

*May the feet of God walk with you,
and his hand hold you tight.
May the eye of God rest on you,
and his ear hear your cry.
May the smile of God be for you,
and his breath give you life.
May the Child of God grow in you,
and his love bring you home.*

Hark! the herald angels sing

(Charles Wesley, 1707-1788) speaks of Jesus, reconciling God and sinners, and

*born that we no more may die,
born to raise the sons of earth,
born to give them second birth.*

I heard the bells on Christmas day

(William W Longfellow, 1807-1882) was written during the American Civil War. Like many of the Old Testament Psalms, it begins in despair: Christmas bells seemed to underline grim reality:

*There is no peace on earth, I said;
For hate is strong,
and mocks the song
of peace on earth, good-will to men!*

But the bells' Christmas message lifts the despair to the hopeful ending:

*God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;
the Wrong shall fail,
the Right prevail,
with peace on earth, good-will to men.*

It came upon the midnight clear

(E.H. Sears, 1810-1876) begins with the angels' song. Verse three identifies people in need of hope:

*All who beneath life's crushing load,
whose forms are bending low,
who toil along the climbing way
with painful steps and slow.*

It urges them to have hope, for the days are coming

*when the new heaven and earth shall own
the Prince of peace their king,
and all God's people raise the song
which now the angels sing.*

Joy to the world

(Isaac Watts, 1647-1748) is a catalogue of hopes:

*No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
he comes to make his blessing flow
far as the curse is found.*

*He rules the world with truth and grace
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love.*

Mary's boy Child (Jester Hairston, 1901-2000) restates the hope of John 3:16:

*man shall live forevermore
because of Christmas day.*

O come, o come Immanuel

(form the 12th century O Antiphons, translated John Mason Neale, 1818-1866) brings together the Old Testament hope for the coming of the Messiah with the new Testament hope for the kingdom brought in by the Messiah and the promise of heaven.

*From every foe deliver them
that trust your mighty power to save;
bring them Victory through the grave . . .
Make safe the path that leads on high,
And close the part to misery.*

O little town of Bethlehem

(Philips Brooks, 1835-1893) links the historic birth of Jesus with our contemporary hope:

*No ear may hear his coming,
but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him still
the dear Christ enters in.*

Once in royal David's city

(Cecil Frances Alexander, 1823-1895) points to Jesus coming again, not to King David's city but in his own city — heaven where he is Lord:

And our eyes at last shall see him,
through his own redeeming love . . .
And he leads his children on
to the place where he is gone . . .
set at God's right hand on high;
where like stars his children crowned
all in white shall wait around.

Many other hymns have themes of Christian hope. Two of the most significant are

My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness (Edward Mote, 1797-1874) is a faith statement as solid as the rock the lyrics refer to:

*My hope is built on nothing less
than Jesus' blood and righteousness.
No merit of my own I claim,
but wholly trust in Jesus' Name.
On Christ the solid Rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand;*

The hymn can be sung to two alternative tunes: *Melita* (John B. Dykes, 1823-1876) and *The Solid Rock* (William B Bradbury, 1816-1868). The 2012 Hillsong version is based on the Bradbury tune, and adds a new refrain.

Jesus, hope of the nations (Brian Doerksen (1965-) reaffirms that Jesus is the heart of Christian hope. Jesus is:

*hope of the nations
comfort for all who mourn
the source of Heaven's hope on earth*

A HOPEFUL COUNTRY

HOPEFUL BEGINNINGS



Soon after the First Fleet arrived at Sydney Cove in January 1788, a large deposit of white clay was found. Arthur Phillip, the Governor of the new convict settlement, sent a sample of the clay to botanist Sir Joseph Banks in London. Banks passed it on to Josiah Wedgwood, who confirmed the clay to be 'an excellent material for pottery'.

Wedgwood used the clay to make medallions commemorating the settlement at Sydney Cove and Phillip's hope for the colony's future.

The medallion's design has the long title: *Hope encouraging Art and Labour under the influence of Peace to pursue the employments necessary to give security and happiness to the infant colony.*

It shows four classical figures on the shores of a bay, on which there is a sailing ship. To the left, Hope stands on a rock before an anchor. She extends her right hand to the other figures: Peace (with a horn of plenty and an olive branch), Art (with an artist's palette) and Labour (with a hammer).

Wedgwood had always been inspired by the ceramic art of the ancient Etruscans. He put the word ETRURIA below the figures to indicate that 'The Arts of Etruria are reborn'.

HOPEFUL STORIES

An 'Eternity' display in the National Museum of Australia (<http://www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/eternity/hope>) describes hope:

To hope is to dream.
Of what might or will be.
Of the possible and the mere possible —
hope against hope.
To hope is to strive for the best.
To build on glimmers of new beginnings.
To hope is to never give up.
To remain expectant,
against hopes dashed,
disappointments, falsities.
To hope is to believe there is a way.

The display features a variety of Australians and their stories of hope, including:

- Benita Collins' hope for children's learning
- Joan Winch's hope for better Aboriginal health
- Mary Hamm's hope for a family
- Tommy Tomasi's hope for a new life in a new country
- Ben Chifley's hope for social welfare
- Tan Le's hope for Australia's future and the hope of new immigrants

HOPEFUL PLACE NAMES

'Hope' features in the names of many places in Australia

There are Hope Lakes in Western Australia and South Australia, and Hope Island in Queensland's Gold Coast.

Hope Mountains are found in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia, and there's a Hopes Hill in Western Australia.

There's a Mount Hopeful in Queensland and a Mount Hopeless in the Northern Flinders Ranges of South Australia.

Hope is a river in Western Australia.

You'll find a Hopetoun (or Hopetown) in Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia; a town of Good Hope in both New South Wales and Queensland and Hopefield in New South Wales.

There's a Hope Valley in South Australia, and Hope Vales in Victoria and Queensland.

BRINGING HOPE TO LIFE

Many Christian service projects in Australia and around the world seek to bring hope to people. Here are two that you might consider promoting in your congregation.

KIDS HOPE AUS.



Positive human relationships are essential for children to grow up happy and healthy. Yet many Australian children lack

significant close relationships with a caring adult, other than their parents.

Over half a million school-aged Australian children could benefit from a one-to-one mentoring relationship.

KIDS HOPE AUS. is a mentoring program that helps Australian children needing additional support, and their families.

Through a partnership between local churches and primary schools, KIDS HOPE AUS. works to improve opportunities for mentored children in the areas of education, self-confidence and wellbeing.

For one hour each week, a caring adult from the church mentors a child needing additional support at their school. This usually involves helping the child with homework, playing games, arts and crafts, or just spending time together.

KIDS HOPE AUS. assists churches to recruit and prepare caring mentors for ongoing mentoring relationships with vulnerable children. Churches are responsible for appointing a coordinator to run the program with the assistance of World Vision.

KIDS HOPE AUS. focuses on children at primary school because during this phase the children are most likely to benefit from a close relationship with an adult. This is when self-esteem and values are learned, and critical academic skills are acquired.

Children who receive help early on, especially those considered vulnerable and at-risk, significantly improve their chances for a good education, health and wellbeing, and social competence.

(<http://www.worldvision.com.au/takeaction/Volunteer/KidsHopeAus.aspx>)

FAMILIES OF HOPE



One of the challenges of parents in Australia is to help their children work through issues of poverty and injustice. We need to help our

children realise that most people in the world do not have access to the resources and opportunities we have here.

How do we help each other appreciate what we have and find practical ways to help make this world a fairer place?

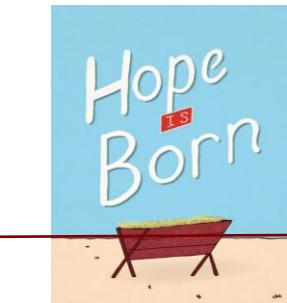
FAMILIES OF HOPE is a TEAR Australia program designed to help families of all shapes and sizes both here in Australia and overseas.

Whatever shape your family takes, FAMILIES OF HOPE will support you on this journey. Four times a year, you will receive a Family Card that can be used around the table as you share a meal with others. This will introduce you to a range of TEAR partners and some of the families they work with. There will be stories, photos, activities, Bible studies, prayer points and ideas for action.

There will also be opportunities to connect with other FAMILIES OF HOPE supporters here in Australia by joining their online Families of Hope community, 'liking' Families of Hope on Facebook, or becoming part of a TEAR Group near you.

FAMILIES OF HOPE helps empower kids to make a difference and to realise that as Christians they are called to serve.

(<http://www.tear.org.au/give/families-of-hope>)



SAMPLE WORSHIP SERVICE

Spoken 'script' is in italics;
comments and instructions are in plain type.

If possible arrange your worship space so that all worshipers will be able to see the symbols that will be placed in the centre (or the front) and also see the screen if you are using one.

Throughout the service, the **TECH TEAM** may display a slide of the 'Hope is Born' postcard whenever there is no other visual indicated. Consider using a background like this:



1. AS PEOPLE ARRIVE,

The **HOSPITALITY TEAM** greets each person, gives them a square card with the container pattern (page 11) printed on it, and helps them find seats.

The **MUSIC TEAM** leads a sing-along of three or four favourite Christmas carols. Include one that will be familiar to the children.

The **TECH TEAM** displays words of the carols.

2. OPENING STORY

At the announced starting time, with just a loud chord or two by the **MUSIC TEAM** as introduction:

STORY READER 1 begins:

A story:

In the year 1839, a man named William Holden bought land for a farm in an unnamed valley, some 15 kilometres north east of Adelaide. It was near the track that would one day be called Grand Junction Road. There was no town or village, just a few scattered farms.

William started his farm and built a house for his wife and four children. He also set up a butcher shop and store to serve other families who were moving into the district.

About three years later, the family went on a trip to Adelaide. While they were away, a bushfire swept through the district.

TECH TEAM may display a bushfire picture right through to the end of this section, eg *Black Thursday, February 6th, 1851*, by William Strutt in the State Library of Victoria.

STORY READER continues

Returning home, William Holden and his family discovered that everything they had worked so hard to establish was destroyed. There was nothing left.

It was then that William Holden named the district, he said, 'We'll call it "Hope Valley".'

TECH TEAM may insert the name 'Hope Valley' over the bushfire picture.

WORSHIP LEADER: I wonder why William Holden chose that name.

Please talk to the people sitting near you about William's choice.

You may also like to think about what the Holden family's Christmas was like that year.

After a minute or two:

MUSIC TEAM plays a chorus of *The Christmas Hope* to end the discussion time.

3. WELCOME

WORSHIP LEADER: Welcome to this Christmas worship at [name of church]. My name is [name]. I'll be leading you in worship. I hope that this time with God — Father, Son and Spirit — will be a special time for you and that you will gain a sense of the hope born at Christmas.

4. DEFINING HOPE

TECH TEAM may display the question: 'What is hope?'

WORSHIP LEADER: What is 'hope'? If we're going to be talking about hope, we'd better get an idea of what it is.

Please talk to the same people you spoke with before, and see if you can come up with a definition of hope.

After a minute or two:

WORSHIP LEADER: Thanks for being part of that discussion. We all have different ideas about hope, don't we? I'd like you to consider a definition 'that I prepared earlier':

TECH TEAM displays the definition.

WORSHIP LEADER reads:

**Hope is
the God given ability
to imagine, desire and expect
future good.**

I suspect my definition is not too different from yours.

Hope is a verb — something you do.
Hope is also a noun — something you have.

Australian sign language helps us understand that there are also two kinds of hope.

For the signs, see page 7.

If possible, the **MUSIC TEAM** works together with the **WORSHIP LEADER**, providing musical interpretation of the signs.

For the 'fingers-crossed' sign: boppy music that some people may recognise as the Dusty Springfield song
Wishing and hoping and thinking and praying, planning and dreaming each night of his charms.

For the rock-solid sign: solid, dignified music that some people may recognise as the Dykes hymn tune MELITA.
... on Christ, the solid rock I stand all other ground is sinking sand.

WORSHIP LEADER: The sign for one kind of hope is this.

Demonstrate the fingers crossed hope sign. This is a fingers-crossed sort of hope. It's like wishing that something might happen.

Try making this sign a few times for yourself. And as you do it, think of some things you hope for in this way this Christmas.

You can write or draw some of your fingers-crossed hopes on the back of your card.

After a minute or two:

WORSHIP LEADER: The sign for another kind of hope is this.

Demonstrate the rock-solid hope sign. This is a rock-solid sort of hope (what St Paul described as 'faith -- a sure and certain hope').

Try making this sign for yourself a few times. And as you do it, think of some things you hope for in this way.

You can write or draw some of your rock-solid hopes on the back of your card.

After a minute or two:

5. SONG

MUSIC LEADER: Let's sing our theme song about Christmas hope.

MUSIC LEADER may demonstrate and invite people to make the Auslan hope signs when the word hope occurs in the song (5 times).

TECH TEAM may display the song words as **MUSIC TEAM** leads the congregation in singing *The Christmas Hope* (NewSong).

Omit the 'story' part of the song, and sing just the four 'hope is . . .' verses.

During the 'candle' verse, two **CANDLE PEOPLE** of different generations bring in a large candle and candle stand and place it at the front of the worship space.

During the 'Saviour' verse, two **MANGER PEOPLE** of different generations bring in a wooden manger and place it at the front of the worship space.

During the 'present' verse, two **PRESENT PEOPLE** of different generations bring in a large gift-wrapped carton and place it at the front of the worship space. The carton contains either seed packets or candles (see page 10) to be distributed later in the service.

6. HOPE IS A CANDLE

TECH TEAM displays the 'candle' verse of the theme song.

CANDLE PERSON 1: Without light there is darkness.

CANDLE PERSON 2: In darkness there is fear, uncertainty, despair, hopelessness.

BIBLE READER: Long before the first Christmas, the Prophet Isaiah passed on God's message of hope to his people. He said:

The people who are now living in darkness will see a great light.
They are now living in a very dark land.
But a light will shine on them.

A child will be born to us.
A son will be given to us.
He will rule over us.
And he will be called
Wonderful Adviser and Mighty God.
He will also be called Father Who Lives
Forever

and Prince Who Brings Peace.
The authority of his rule will continue to grow.
The peace he brings will never end.
... The Lord's great love will make sure that
happens.
(from Isaiah 9)

CANDLE PERSON 1 lights the candle.

CANDLE PERSON 2: A candle gives a flicker of light. The prophet's words gave the people a flicker of hope.

BOTH CANDLE PEOPLE make the fingers-crossed hope sign.

CANDLE PERSON 2: It was the person who made the promise — Almighty God, speaking through his prophet — who gave it the power of sure and certain hope.

BOTH CANDLE PEOPLE make the 'rock-solid' hope sign.

CANDLE PERSON 2: 'The Lord's great love will make sure it happens.'

WORSHIP LEADER: And it did happen. But possibly not the way people hoped it would.

7. SONG

MUSIC LEADER: Let's sing a song about how Isaiah's prophecy happened.

MUSIC LEADER may demonstrate and invite people to make the Auslan hope signs when the word hope occurs in the song (once).

TECH TEAM may display the song words as **MUSIC TEAM** leads the congregation in singing 'O little town of Bethlehem.'

During the singing **ACTORS** in traditional costume form a tableau around the manger: Mary (who places a baby — real or a doll — in the manger), Joseph, some angels and some shepherds.

The tableau does not have to be completely motionless, but movement should not be distracting to worshipers.

8. HOPE IS A SAVIOUR

TECH TEAM displays the 'manger' verse of the theme song.

WORSHIP LEADER: The light of the promise came into the world in an unexpected way. The Saviour of the world, the wonderful advisor and Prince of Peace came as a helpless baby and was laid in an animal's feed box.

You probably know the story.

ACTORS tell the story from Luke 2 as if it is their own story.

They may stay in the tableau and speak memorised words, OR each may stand as

they speak and read from the script which is placed in a Bible. They pass the Bible from one to another.

JOSEPH: Because of a Roman order, I had to go from Nazareth in Galilee to Bethlehem in Judea. Bethlehem is the city of David and I am descended from the house and family of David.

I went there to be registered with Mary, to whom I was engaged and who was expecting a child.

MARY: While we were there, the time came for me to deliver my child.

I gave birth to my firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for us in the inn.

A SHEPHERD: We shepherds, living in the fields nearby, were keeping watch over our flock that night.

An angel of the Lord stood before us, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and we were terrified.

AN ANGEL: But I said to the shepherds, 'Do not be afraid; for, see -- I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.'

You will find the child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.'

Suddenly a multitude of angels joined me as we praised God and said,

'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!'

A SHEPHERD: When the angels had left us and gone into heaven, we said to one another, 'Let's go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.'

So we went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child was lying in a manger.

When we saw this, we made known what had been told to us about this child. Everyone who heard it was amazed at what we said.

We returned to the field, glorifying and praising God for all we had heard and seen.

MARY: But I treasured all these words and pondered them in my heart.

9. SONG

MUSIC LEADER: Who is this child? Let's sing a song about the baby born at Christmas.

TECH TEAM may display the song words as **MUSIC TEAM** leads the congregation in singing '*What child is this?*'

Consider using the following simplified words. You may form two groups, eg males and females, with one group singing the questions and the other singing the answers.

QUESTION

What child is this who laid to rest
on Mary's lap is sleeping;
whom angels greet with a song so sweet
while shepherds watch are keeping?

ANSWER

This, this is Christ the King
whom shepherds guard and angels sing.
Come now to bring him praise:
the Babe, the Son of Mary.

QUESTION

Why is he in such a humble place
where animals are feeding?
Hope is born among wheat and corn
where a star above is leading.

ANSWER

This, this is Christ the King
whom shepherds guard and angels sing.
Come now to bring him praise:
the Babe, the Son of Mary.

ALL

So like the wise ones from the East,
come young and old to know him.
The King of kings salvation brings,
Let loving hearts enthrone Him.

Raise, raise a song on high,
as Mary sings her lullaby.
Joy, joy for hope is born —
The Babe, the Son of Mary!

ACTORS may leave the tableau at this time.

10. SERMON

PREACHER may present a brief Christmas message, possibly exploring one of these themes:

- Christmas hope is about peace, justice, forgiveness and salvation. The birth of Jesus seals the hope that God is working for these good things in our world.
- Hope in Jesus is a rock-solid hope (link to the Auslan sign).

- Hope is active. When we have hope, we
 - ▶ tell other people about our hope
 - ▶ work to bring about what we hope for
 - ▶ live as if the hope is already here — or just around the corner
 - ▶ pray: thanking God for hope and asking to be a part of making his will for the world and our hope for the world happen.

11. HOPE IS A PRESENT

TECH TEAM displays the 'present' verse of the theme song.

PRESENT PERSON 1: What would Christmas be without presents?

PRESENT PERSON 2: Christmas **wouldn't be** without the Baby who is God's free present to us.

PRESENT PERSON 1: But this looks like another present. I wonder what's in it. I hope it's something good.

They may invite several people to help unwrap and open the gift box and discover the hope gifts.

CANDLE OPTION

PRESENT PERSON 1: It's candles. Lots of them! It looks like there are enough for everyone here.

PRESENT PERSON 2: Yes, candles. Remember how we said that hope is a candle. We want everyone to have a candle to take home as a reminder of Christmas hope.

SEED OPTION

PRESENT PERSON 1: It's little packets . . . of seeds. Lots of them! It looks like there are enough for everyone here.

PRESENT PERSON 2: Yes, seeds. Seeds are another sign of hope. Every time we plant a seed we hope that there is life inside the seed and that it will grow into something wonderful, something that will be beautiful to look at — like a flower, or something that will give us food, or something that will give us shelter — like a tree.

We want everyone to have a seed [or some seeds] to take home and plant as a reminder of Christmas hope.

12. RESPONSES

WORSHIP LEADER: Most of the time we're a bit formal in our worship here. Now we're going to move into a much more informal time.

For the next ten minutes or so, you can work as individuals or families. There are five things to do. You may choose to do as many as you wish. You can do them in any order you wish.

Let me explain:

TECH TEAM displays the following options as the **WORSHIP LEADER** explains them.

1. PRAY about your Christmas hopes.

You may write your prayers on the back of your card. You might even turn those hopes you wrote earlier into prayers.

2. GIVE a donation

to [name your cause] which is bringing hope to many people by [explain, briefly]. You can put your donations in the manger or in the bowls [wherever you can place offering bowls].

3. RECEIVE your faith gift

[seeds/candle]. If you bring your card with you to the gift box, my helpers will show you how to fold it into a [seed/candle] holder.

4. TALK

with someone about the hopes in your life.

5. MEDITATE

There's a poster [where] with a poem by Michael Leunig. You may go over there, read the poem and think about what it means for you.

When you hear the band playing, please return to your places for the final part of our worship.

After about ten minutes —

TECH TEAM changes the screen display to 'Please return to your places.'

13. SONG

MUSIC TEAM begins playing Jesus, Hope of the Nations (Doerksen)
OR Born in the Night, Mary's Child (Ainger).

As people settle —

MUSIC LEADER: Thanks for taking part in that free time. Let's sing now about Jesus — our hope.

MUSIC LEADER may demonstrate and invite people to make the Auslan hope signs when the word hope occurs in the song.

TECH TEAM may display the song words as

MUSIC TEAM leads the congregation in singing the chosen song.

14. ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORSHIP LEADER OR CONGREGATIONAL LEADER makes any needed short announcements.

Invite people to any upcoming activities of the congregation.

Invite people to join with you after the service for a special time of fellowship.

Remind people to take home their hope gifts and use them.

15. HOPE IS A PROMISE

TECH TEAM displays the 'promise' verse of the theme song.

WORSHIP LEADER: Let's pray about our hope for a better tomorrow.

Two prayer leaders (or a group of prayer leaders) lead this prayer. **A** speaks the 'bidding' statement, making the rock-solid hope sign as they speak the word hope.

B speaks the petition of the Lord's Prayer, or lead's the congregation in reading the petitions which are displayed one at a time by the **TECH TEAM**.

A: We hope and pray for a tomorrow when everyone lives in the hope of Christmas:

B: Our Father in heaven, hallowed by your name,

A: We hope and pray for a tomorrow when everyone lives God's way.

B: Your kingdom come; your will be done on earth as in heaven.

A: We hope and pray for a tomorrow when everyone on earth has all their needs met.

B: Give us today our daily bread.

A: We hope and pray for a tomorrow when hurt and anger give way to forgiveness.

B: Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

A: We hope and pray for a tomorrow when each person is free from temptation to do evil and free from being hurt by evil.

B: Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

A: We hope and pray for a tomorrow when the prince of peace rules

B: with power and glory, now and forever. Amen.

16. SENDING OUT

WORSHIP LEADER: We are coming to the end of our worship time together.

As you go out, remember that

- hope is born as the Christmas child
- hope is God's promise for a better tomorrow.

In a world filled with sorrow, may you always have hope.

[Make the rock-solid hope sign.]

Amen.

17. CLOSING SONG

MUSIC LEADER: Let's sing our theme song one more time.

MUSIC LEADER may demonstrate and invite people to make the Auslan hope signs when the word hope occurs in the song (5 times).

TECH TEAM may display the song words as **MUSIC TEAM** leads the congregation in singing 'The Christmas Hope'.

Omit the 'story' part of the song, and sing just the four 'hope is . . .' verses.

During the 'candle' verse, the two **CANDLE PEOPLE** extinguish the candle and carry it (with the candle stand) out of the worship space. They place the candle where people will pass it as they leave the worship.

During the 'Saviour' verse, the two **MANGER PEOPLE** carry the manger out of the worship space. They place the manger where people will pass it as they leave the worship space.

During the 'present' verse, the two **PRESENT PEOPLE** pack away any scattered wrappings, in the box and carry it out of the worship space. They may stay by the door and give a hope gift to anyone who did not collect it during the service.

18. FELLOWSHIP

At Christmas time, many families will want to get home (or to other commitments) immediately after the worship service. That's fine.

However there may be some people (possibly those most needing hope at Christmas time) who will welcome the opportunity to have a cuppa, a slice of Christmas cake and a chat with someone ready to listen to their stories. Provide time and space for this to happen.