



DADS & HEROES

INTERGENERATIONAL WORSHIP FOR FATHERS DAY

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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 and families 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/resources/all-age-worship/>

Please let us know how you use any of these resources. Send a brief email to children@sa.uca.org.au.

UPSIZING & DOWNSIZING

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

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

ALL AGE WORSHIP

WHAT IT IS

Intergenerational (all-age or whole-church) worship is, first and foremost, worship — 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, including a sense of humour
- focuses on a 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 outside the worship experience
- encourages interaction and dialogue among people of the various generations and people with different experiences, life-styles and experiences
- 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.

PLANNING

It's good to have an intergenerational team to plan an intergenerational worship event. A special team consisting of one, or better, two people representing each of the youngest, the middle and the oldest thirds 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 will help younger members understand worship practices; younger members will 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 'putting your toe in the water' of all-age worship: look through your regular worship plan and find elements that can be altered slightly to be more experiential or more sensory or more intentionally involving people of all ages.
OR
If you are ready to 'dive into' all age worship: look at the sample worship service and consider how the service or parts of it might work in your situation.
OR
If you are already swimming comfortably in all-age worship, pick up any suggestions in this resource that suits 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? what? when? where? and how?

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 worship for Fathers Day.

Encourage them to see worship as an integral part of their family's observation of Fathers Day.

You may provide an invitation to the Fathers Day worship that people can give to their fathers and others.

HOSPITALITY

Hospitality is the responsibility of all members of the congregation.

Those people who invite and bring other people to the service have the primary responsibility for looking after their special 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
- know who has had first aid training
- remove any hindrance to movement — blocked aisles, cables on the floor, 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/hear, but 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, helping parents with unsettled children or dealing with someone who has a fainting or epileptic episode.
- Usher people to Holy Communion or any other movement required in the service.
- Collect offerings.

After the service

- Be sure that each worshiper 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.

You may find that an all-age approach to worship will work best with a re-arrangement of existing furniture, or even in a hall rather than a sanctuary.

VISUALS

Many people who worship with you are visual thinkers; they take in information and express themselves most comfortably with images rather than with words. So make sure that you provide imagery that they can respond to.

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.

MUSIC

Many people who worship with you are musical thinkers. They take in information and express themselves most comfortably with music and rhythm than in other ways. Provide music that they can respond to and opportunities to make music.

Much of the music in worship involves congregational singing. Remember that not everyone is comfortable with this practice.

Try to select songs for congregational singing with lyrics that do not force people to make faith statements that they do not actually believe. Invite people to sing when they are comfortable doing so, or just to listen.

Display song words in your usual manner.

Your regular instrumentalists and vocalists (organist, band or choir) may perform some music as well as leading/accompanying congregational singing. You may also try to 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 choose to have the congregation sing with CDs or other recorded music. Any church may choose to use some recorded music.

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 5.

MOVEMENT

Many people who worship with you are kinaesthetic thinkers; they take in information and express themselves most comfortably when they are moving or touching, handling or manipulating concrete objects. So make sure that you provide something to do. This may be as simple as holding a hymnal or Bible, or making notes.

Some people may be reluctant to take part in this type of activity. 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 are relational thinkers; they take in information and express themselves most comfortably when they do something with others or talk with others.

Give them opportunities to interact with other people. Possibly make aspects of the service (the prayers, for example) more conversational or provide 'talk about it' spots. Several of these opportunities are included in the sample service.

SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS

Some people who worship with you are logical/mathematical thinkers; they take in information and express themselves more easily when it can be dealt with as facts, graphs, and patterns.

Where possible, include some factual thinking or simply dot-pointed lists as part of the worship.

SOMETHING TO TAKE HOME

People like to have souvenirs of special events. They are more likely to remember and talk about your message 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 to discuss in their household.

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.

In the sample service for Fathers Day, the role of Worship Leaders is shared by two people (a father and child).

Several other people (of different ages) can each lead different segments of worship.

- a hospitality team (all ages: an infant, held by their parent can help 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/projectionist team (all ages: an experienced adult or teen, possibly with a younger or older learner)
- a Bible presenter and Bible readers (all ages with a year 3 or above reading level and clear voice)
- a prayer leader (any age).

SERMON

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.

Starting points for a *Fathers Day* sermon could be any of the texts on pages 9,10 and 11.

You may plan a service with no sermon as such, when the teaching aspect of worship is handled in other ways.

This resource includes a Bible study that can be done by adults, youth or young adults as preparatory 'learning' activity for the worship celebration (see page 15).

REHEARSAL

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

A complete walk-through 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 your planned service.

It is often good to schedule the rehearsal in conjunction with the band or choir's normal practice time.

You can use rehearsal time as an opportunity to pray together and to remind one another that worship not a talent show. If they are performing it is for 'an audience of One', and they are helping others to know and worship God.

FATHERS, HEROES, AND FATHERS DAY

FATHERS DAY WORSHIP

FATHERS DAY

Fathers Day is observed in Australia on the first Sunday of September. It is a day to show appreciation for fathers and father figures (step-fathers, fathers-in-law, guardians and family friends).

The idea of a special day to honour fathers and celebrate fatherhood was introduced in the early 20th century. Sonora Smart Dodd was inspired by the American Mothers Day celebrations and planned a day to honour fathers. The first Father's Day was celebrated in Spokane, Washington on June 19, 1910. Father's Day has become increasingly popular the world over.

Fathers Day is neither an official religious holiday nor a public holiday in Australia.

However, as an event that has become part of popular culture, it provides an opportunity for the church to meet with people 'where they are'. In some families, it's an opportunity for younger generations to go back to grandpa's church. In some families it can be an opportunity for non-worshipping fathers to be invited to a special service by their wife or children.

A clear distinction exists in such a worship service between *honouring* fathers (as we are commanded to do) and *worshipping* God, who gives us fathers and who helps people to be good parents.

Fathers Day worship must acknowledge that not all fathers are 'heroes', and 'life with father' (or without father) is often difficult. Fathers Day worship (and, perhaps, prayer and counselling that you offer as a follow-up) can be a time for healing and forgiveness.



TEXTS

The Revised Common Lectionary Texts for 1 September (Proper 17, 15th Sunday after Pentecost) are in no way a tribute to fathers, but, like all Bible passages, they can shed some light on our topic of discussion.

- Jeremiah 2:4-13 -- Israel's Unfaithfulness; the Lord accuses his people of very 'unheroic' behaviour.
- Psalm 81:1,10-16 -- God makes us strong, God's faithfulness is a stark contrast with Israel's unfaithfulness, as described by Jeremiah.
- Proverbs 25:6,7 -- Don't try to seem important. Humility is a characteristic of heroes.
- Luke 14:1,7-14 -- How to be a guest. Jesus continues the humility theme.
- Psalm 112 -- God blesses his worshippers. This text includes a range of characteristics of good fathers and other heroes.
- Hebrews 13:1-8,15,16 -- Service that pleases God -- another list of heroic behaviours, including empathy and love.

SONG SUGGESTIONS

Dads' favourite hymns: Consult with a number of congregation members. Compile a list of dads' favourite hymns. Choose songs for this service from your list. The person who nominated each song may introduce it in the service and explain any special meaning it has for them.

Otherwise use some of these suggested songs or others that are familiar to your congregation and that they can sing comfortably.

Christian songs about family and fathers

- We are heirs of the Father (Owens)
- Part of the family (Manley) You may want to substitute 'father's warm embrace' for 'mother's' on Fathers Day
- *Faith of our Fathers* (Faber)
- *Bind us together* (Gillman)
- *One family* (Strelan)

Songs about Jesus

- *Where are the words* (Peterson)
- *Jesus, you're my Super Hero* (Hillsong)
- *He's a mighty God* (Gerry Holmes)
- *Super Saviour* (Colin Buchanan)
- *Fairest Lord Jesus* (various translations)
- *Amazing Love* (Tomlin)
- *Jesus, what a beautiful name* (Zschech)
- *Majesty* (Hayford)
- *Shout to the Lord* (Zschech)

Secular songs about fathers

- *Song for Dad* (Keith Urban)
- *Cats in the cradle* (Chapin/Stevens)
- *Daddy's hands* (Holly Dunn)
- *You're my hero* (Teresa James)

Secular songs about heroes

- *Wind beneath my wing* (Silbar Henley) sung by Bette Midler. You may omit the first verse.

AFTER WORSHIP OPTIONS

- A prayer counsellor to chat with anyone about prayer needs — relating to family or other concerns
- A display of information about activities of your congregation that impact on men, particularly fathers and grandfathers. You might also have info from the council or other agencies
- A dads-only session about the gift of the blessing*, see page 13
- A family (household) values workshop* in which people can create artwork that depicts the values of their household.

The workshop has two parts

- (1) Discussing and determining what your values are. To help people with this you might provide them with samples, eg
- (2) Creating a poster or plaque to display the values decided on. You want this to be a valued item, so provide quality materials for people to use. Consider several options — if you have people who can demonstrate techniques, for example invest in canvas blocks and acrylic paints.

IN THIS HOME

We do second chances. We do grace.
We do real. We do mistakes.
We do fun. We do loud really well.
We do I'm sorry. We do hugs. We do love.
WE DO FAMILY

A HERO LUNCH

Jesus said:

Suppose you give a lunch or a dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, or your relatives, or your rich neighbours. If you do, they may invite you to eat with them. So you will be paid back.

But when you give a big dinner, invite those who are poor. Also invite those who can't walk, the disabled and the blind. Then you will be blessed. Your guests can't pay you back. But you will be paid back when those who are right with God rise from the dead. (Luke 14:12-14)

Do you have some heroic dads, children, teens, seniors and others in your congregation who might take up Jesus' challenge?

Instead of the usual 'family' Fathers Day dinners or other activities, put on a special Hero Lunch.

Invite people (specifically men, or families) who are isolated on Fathers Day, due to disabilities, financial problems, or other difficult situations. Use your own networks and associations to identify people to invite or work through service agencies in your community.

In addition to a good meal (which could be built around a 'hero sandwich' or a formal Sunday roast) you might

- show a 'super hero' video
- encourage people to talk about the heroes they admire and to think of ways they are in some way heroes to others.
- talk briefly about Jesus as our super hero
- provide a listening ear for those experiencing emotional problems associated with Fathers Day.

Be open to listening and discovering ways you as a church can continue to serve these people, so that it's not a one-off, easily forgotten event.



* Note: these activities could be done at another time.

HEROES AND SUPERHEROES

'Dads and Heroes' -- those two words fit well together, don't they?

A dad is said to be a son's first hero.

There are wartime heroes and peace time heroes, sports heroes and political heroes, great heroes and little heroes, honoured and awarded heroes, unsung heroes and reluctant heroes, everyday heroes and local heroes. And there are Superheroes.

Of course not every dad has the characteristics we associate with a hero.

DEFINITION

Hero:

1. a person (usually a man) of distinguished courage or ability, admired for his brave deeds and noble qualities.
2. a person who, in the opinion of others, has heroic qualities or has performed a heroic act and is regarded as a model or ideal
3. the principal male character in a story, play, film, etc.
4. *In classical Mythology:*
 - a. a being of godlike power and generosity who often came to be honoured as a divinity.
 - b. a warrior-chieftain of special strength, courage, or ability.
 - c. an immortal being; demigod.

A group of children suggested that a hero is someone who

- tries to make the world a better place
- does something that is more than what is expected
- doesn't do something for his or her own problems but for the benefit of others

WEB SITES

Here are some sites that focus on heroes:

[The Giraffe Project](#) – celebrates the heroes of the past (who stuck out their necks) and inspiring heroes of the future.

[You Are My Hero](#) – examples of real-life heroes, written by students.

[Heroism in Action](#) -- a ThinkQuest site with lots of information about heroes and what you can do to become a hero. Includes an interview with Peter Garrett.

[My Hero](#) -- a search engine for heroes and heroines.

SUPERHEROES

Comics and films are full of super heroes, and most of us love their stories.

In *The Incredibles*, 2004, we were introduced to a couple with superhero powers for 'saving the world, who struggle — like everyday parents — with the challenges of being parents!

But when it comes to superheroes, there is none greater than Superman. In the trailer for this year's *Man of Steel* movie, we hear:

'Good bye, my Son. Our hopes and dreams travel with you.'
(Russell Crowe as the Kryptonian father, Jor-El)

'He'll be an outcast. They'll kill him.'
(Ayelet Zurer as Lara, the Kryptonian mother)

'He'll be a God to them.'
(Crowe)

'You're the answer, Son. . . I have to believe that you were sent here for a reason.'
(Voice of Kevin Costner as the adoptive earthly father Jonathan Kent)

'You will give the people of earth an ideal to strive for . . . In time you will help them accomplish wonders.'
(Crowe)

Henry Cavill as Superman/Clark Kent explains to Lois Lane that where he comes from the S is a symbol of hope.

These excerpts point to the parallel between Superman and Jesus Christ, our bringer of hope and our Hero of Heroes.

Who needs a
SUPERHERO
When you have
DAD!

HEROES AND FATHERS IN THE BIBLE

HEROES

Many characters from the Bible have been identified as heroes: Moses, Abraham, David, Elijah, Paul, Stephen. These people are held up as role models and heroes of faith. But they are clearly shown as flawed human beings. Any super powers they demonstrate are gifts from God for God's purpose in particular situations.

The word 'hero' is not used in the New Testament. In the Old Testament it is used (in some translations) primarily referring to war leaders and sportsmen or protagonists of songs and stories.

- The children of the supernatural beings who had married these women became famous heroes and warriors. (Genesis 6:4 CEV) also translated as 'mighty men'
- (Joseph's brothers) said to one another, "Look, here comes the hero of those dreams!" (Genesis 37:19 CEV) also translated as 'dreamer'
- The Philistine army had a hero named Goliath. (1 Samuel 17:4 CEV) also translated as 'champion'
- David sang a song in memory of Saul and Jonathan: ... Israel, your famous hero lies dead on the hills.' (2 Samuel 1:17,19 NIV) also translated as 'gazelle'
- The inspired utterance of David son of Jesse . . . the hero of Israel's songs. (2 Samuel 23:1 NIV) also translated as 'psalmist'
- [The sun] rises like a bridegroom and gets ready like a hero eager to run a race. (Psalm 19:5 CEV) also translated as 'strong man'
- Controlling your temper is better than being a hero who captures a city. (Proverbs 16:32 CEV) also translated as 'he who takes a city'
- Here is something else I have learned: The fastest runners and the greatest heroes don't always win races and battles. (Ecclesiastes 9:11 CEV) also translated as 'the strong'
- How do you say, 'We are heroes and mighty men of war'? (Jeremiah 48:14 RSV) also translated as 'strong men'
- They were not given a proper burial like the heroes of long ago. (Ezekiel 32:27 CEV) also translated 'the mighty'

FATHERS

- Your father's God helps you. The Mighty One blesses you. He gives you blessings from the highest heavens. He gives you blessings from the deepest oceans. He blesses you with children and with a mother's milk. (Genesis 49:25)
- Honour your father and mother. Then you will live a long time in the land the Lord your God is giving you. (Exodus 20:12)
- May anyone who brings shame on his father or mother be under the Lord's curse. (Deuteronomy 27:16)
- My son, listen to your father's advice. Don't turn away from your mother's teaching. (Proverbs 1:8)
- You know that we treated each of you as a father treats his own children. We gave you hope and strength. We comforted you. We really wanted you to live in a way that is worthy of God. He chooses you to enter his glorious kingdom. (1 Thessalonians 2:11,12)
- Remember today that it was not your children who have not known or seen the discipline of the Lord your God, but it is you who must acknowledge his greatness, his mighty and his outstretched arm. (Deuteronomy 11:2)
- If you train your children, they will give you peace. They will bring delight to you. (Proverbs 29:17)
- Fathers, don't make your children bitter. If you do, they will lose hope. (Colossians 3:21)

GOD AS JESUS' FATHER

- 'My Father has given all things to me. The Father is the only one who knows who the Son is. And the only ones who know the Father are the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to make the Father known.' (Luke 10:22)
- God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life. (John 3:16)
- 'I came from the Father and entered the world. Now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.' (John 16:28)

GOD AS OUR FATHER

- Remember, he's your Father. He's your Creator. He made you. He formed you. (Deuteronomy 32:6b)
- Your father knows what you need before you ask. You should pray like this: 'Our Father in heaven, help us to honour your name.' (Matthew 6:8,9)
- My dear children, I'm writing this to you so that you will not sin. But suppose someone does sin. Then we have one who speaks to the Father for us. He stands up for us. He is Jesus Christ, the Blameless One. (1 John 2:1)

COMPARING EARTHLY FATHERS AND OUR HEAVENLY FATHER

A father is tender and kind to his children. In the same way, the Lord is tender and kind to those who have respect for him. (Psalm 103:13)

My father and mother may desert me, but the Lord will accept me. (Psalm 27:10)

The Lord trains those he loves. He is like a father who trains the son he is pleased with. (Proverbs 3:12)

So have mercy, just as your Father has mercy. (Luke 6:36)

We have all had human parents who trained us. We respected them for it. How much more should we be trained by the Father of our spirits and live! (Hebrews 12:9)

HONOURING FATHERS

Honour your father and your mother so that you will live a long time in the land that the Lord your God is going to give you. (Exodus 20:12 CEV)

The Ten Commandments are listed in Exodus 20 as part of the account of the tribes of Israel becoming a unified people through 40 years wandering in the wilderness. To this day, God's people see the Ten Commandments as a summary of God's law — the way he directs and expects us to live in relationship with him and with one another.

One of these commandments is particularly significant to us on Fathers Day: Honour your father and your mother.

Here are some implications of this commandment.

Why should we honour parents?

(1) God tells us to honour them. So honouring them is obeying and honouring God.

Children, obey your parents as the Lord wants, because this is the right thing to do. (Ephesians 6:1)

(2) God promises good things to those who honour their parents.

This is the first command that has a promise with it — then everything will be well with you, and you will have a long life on the earth. (Ephesians 6:2,3)

Obeying God by honouring parents brings — not so much living to a ripe old age — but enjoying the blessings of happiness, health, family, peace, good government, etc. for several generations.

(3) Parents represent God in our lives.

It is our duty to show the world that we are grateful for all the good things we have received from our parents. They are the ones through which God has given us so much — physically, materially and spiritually.

How we honour fathers

Honouring parents involves such things as: loving them, obeying them, serving them, doing cheerfully what they ask us to do, control ourselves when we speak to them and repaying them with kindness and love for their care of us.

We show by our attitude that we look on them as having the highest status after God — no matter how poor, frail or odd they may be.

Parents don't lose their honour because of their way of life or their failings.

We serve them, giving them a helping hand and looking after them when they are old, sick, frail or poor. We do this respectfully as a thing that is done in God's eyes and enjoy doing it.

Nothing is to count more than the will and word of parents. However, we are to refuse to obey our parents when they command us to do what is sinful.

We must obey God, not human authority! (Acts 5:29)

What God requires of parents

God requires that parents are worthy of love and respect.

Every parent is to bring up his children above all to know and respect God.

Such parents do not make their children angry, but raise them with the training and teaching of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4)

The 'fathers' we honour

We honour four kinds of parents:

- parents by blood relationships or adoption
- parents in charge of a household
- parents of their people, eg teachers, employers, government leaders
- spiritual parents who encourage and guide us by God's word.

Paul wrote: 'Through the Good News I became your father in Christ Jesus.'
(1 Corinthians 4:15)

The good news

No human parent can, by himself or herself, completely fulfil their God-given role.

No child can, by himself or herself, completely fulfil their duty as a child.

Jesus was a perfect Son of a perfect Father. Yet he chose to pay the penalty for our shortcomings and our wilful disobedience.

Because of Jesus, we are restored to the roles God intended for us in our relationship with God and with one another.

JESUS CHRIST, HERO

Jesus blows the standards when it comes to heroes. He is unique. He is supreme. He is different. Different in the same way that a candle is different from the sun. They both give off light but that is where the comparison ends.

The closer we get to mystery the further we get from our ability to explain and describe that mystery.

Let's examine Paul's description in Colossians 1:15-22

These verses tell us that the hero Christ is supreme over all other heroes because his nature is unique and because his actions are unmatched.

Who he is

1. The hero Christ is divine (15a). When a Hebrew or Gentile looked on the person of Christ they were seeing the very nature and being of God — an exact image.

2. The hero Christ is the Creator and Sustainer (15b-17). After creating all things the eternal creator continues to sustain them by his power. Christ made all things and he has not given up his control of them or his power to govern them.

The 'first-born over all creation', is both before and supreme over his creation. Someone is indeed in charge of this crazy world we live in and it's the hero Jesus Christ.

3. The hero Christ is the Head of the Church (18a). The church too is Christ's creation. And as its Creator, he is its Head. The church refers here to both the local assembly of believers and the universal church of all Christ-followers. He is the leader of the church through which he exercises his power.

4. The hero Christ is the Victor over death (18b). Christ is the first to rise in an immortal body. The first to look death square in the eye and defeat it. And because he rose from the dead he can offer life to those who are dead.

Our hero Christ is supreme.

Christ has not only the character or nature to be our hero; Through his deeds he warrants hero stature.

What he has done

He died to reconcile you and me to himself (19-22).

We all admire people who are willing to lay it all on the line for what they believe or for people they care about.

Colossians 1:15-22

¹⁵Christ is the exact likeness of God, who can't be seen. He is first, and he is over all of creation. ¹⁶All things were created by him. He created everything in heaven and on earth. He created everything that can be seen and everything that can't be seen. He created kings, powers, rulers and authorities. Everything was created by him and for him. ¹⁷Before anything was created, he was already there. He holds everything together.

¹⁸And he is the head of the body, which is the church. He is the beginning. He is the first to be raised from the dead. That happened so that he would be far above everything. ¹⁹God was pleased to have his whole nature living in Christ. ²⁰God was pleased to bring all things back to himself because of what Christ has done. That includes all things on earth and in heaven. God made peace through Christ's blood, through his death on the cross.

²¹At one time you were separated from God. You were enemies in your minds because of your evil ways.

²²But because Christ died, God has brought you back to himself. Christ's death has made you holy in God's sight. So now you don't have any flaw. You are free from blame.

Christ looked Pilate straight in the face and said, 'It is as you say. I am the King of the Jews'. Then he paid for that truth with his life.

Christ prayed in the garden and wrestled with the Father over what to do. Then went to his death.

Christ called his followers 'friends' and he died for them.

But there is something even more astounding regarding the work of this hero Christ. And it is this.

Jesus Christ calls you his friend; he died for you!

The hero Christ also died for the fathers who struggle as a parents, the fathers who are absent from their children and the fathers who abuse their children.

This is the Christ.

Do you want him as your hero?

Based on a sermon by Mark Green, Burk Community

Church. See www.sermoncentral.com/.../jesus-the-ultimate-hero-mark-green-sermon...

QUOTES ABOUT HEROES AND FATHERS

HERO

If I were the blushing kind, I would blush to be called a hero. **Aung San Suu Kyi**

My dad is my hero. He's 85 now and he is in great health. He is handsome and strong. He has an incredible moral and ethical backbone. I couldn't have been luckier with my parents. **Harry Connick, Jr.**

Do I want to be a hero to my son? No. I would like to be a very real human being. That's hard enough. **Robert Downey, Jr**

A hero is someone who understands the responsibility that comes with his freedom. **Bob Dylan**

The real hero is always a hero by mistake; he dreams of being an honest coward like everybody else. **Umberto Eco**

A hero is no braver than an ordinary man, but he is brave five minutes longer. **Ralph Waldo Emerson**

If you're an underdog, mentally disabled, physically disabled, if you don't fit in, if you're not as pretty as the others, you can still be a hero. **Steve Guttenberg**

The heroes and heroines created by our society are people who have made it big, but not necessarily people who have done big things. **Sidney J. Harris**

A boy doesn't have to go to war to be a hero; he can say he doesn't like pie when he sees there isn't enough to go around. **E W Howe**

My daddy was my hero. He was always there for me when I needed him. He listened to me and taught me so many things. But most of all he was fun. **Bindi Irwin**

What is a hero without love for mankind. **Doris Lessing**

A hero is an ordinary individual who finds the strength to persevere and endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles. **Christopher Reeve**

Hard times don't create heroes. It is during the hard times when the 'hero' within us is revealed. **Bob Riley**

It doesn't take a hero to order men into battle. It takes a hero to be one of those men who goes into battle. **Norman Schwarzkopf**

FATHER

Blessed indeed is the man who hears many gentle voices call him father.

Lydia Maria Francis Child

Every parent is at some time the father of the unreturned prodigal, with nothing to do but keep his house open to hope. **John Ciardi**

A father is a man who expects his son to be as good a man as he meant to be. **Frank A. Clark**

Nothing I've ever done has given me more joys and rewards than being a father to my children. **Bill Cosby**

It was my father who taught me to value myself. He told me that I was uncommonly beautiful and that I was the most precious thing in his life.

Dawn French

I cannot think of any need in childhood as strong as the need for a father's protection. **Sigmund Freud.**

I've had a hard life, but my hardships are nothing against the hardships that my father went through in order to get me to where I started. **Bartrand Hubbard**

My father didn't tell me how to live; he lived, and let me watch him do it.

Clarence Budington Kelland

Perhaps that is what it means to be a father: to teach your child to live without you.

Nicole Krauss

Children are gifts. They are not ours for the breaking. They are ours for the making.

Dan Pearce

Good fathers, and by that I mean real fathers who are there, have the ability to change almost every social problem we now find ourselves facing. **Dan Pearce**

The greatest thing a father can do to his children, is to love their mother.

Anjaneth Garcia Untalan

My father gave me the greatest gift anyone could give another person, he believed in me. **Jim Valvano**

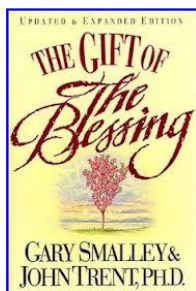
The child is father of the man.

William Wordsworth

DAD DADA DADDY
PROVIDER
ENCOURAGER
LOVING FUNNY SMART
PATIENT UNDERSTANDING
COMFORTING STRONG
HARD-WORKING
MY HERO

FATHERS DAY BLESSINGS & PRAYERS

A FATHER'S BLESSING



In their book *The Gift of the Blessing*, Dr. Gary Smalley a respected expert on family relationships and Dr John Trent, founder of The Institute for the Blessing at Barclay College, talk about the importance of parents blessing their children.

They use Biblical models to describe a blessing that has five

components. These components apply to both a formal time of blessing and a parenting style that blesses the child continually.

Meaningful Touch — In a formal blessing, a father will 'lay on hands' — touching their child's head or shoulder. Much has been written about the importance in human development of a father's appropriate touch including also hugs, pats, and handshakes — not just at one formal occasion, but as a continuing lifestyle.

Spoken Words — In addition to touch, the blessing has words — considered, encouraging words. Much has been written about the importance of father-child conversation. The words may be carefully chosen for a formal occasion, but they are reaffirmed in ongoing conversation.

Expressing High Value — The spoken words of blessing express the high value a father places on his child. This contributes to the child's own feeling of self-worth. Christian fathers value their child as a gift from God, someone who has been created in God's image and saved by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Picturing a Special Future — A father values their child now, at whatever their life stage. But the father also has dreams of a special future for the child. He expresses that dream in the blessing. The father must be careful here to picture a fairly general future based on the child's own gifts and talents, a picture that allows the child freedom to be themselves. The imagined future is not one in which the child becomes a clone of the father or is expected to fulfill the father's unattained dreams for himself.

An Active Commitment — A father makes an ongoing commitment of prayer, support, time, energy, and finances to help the child attain that visualized future.

What better time than Fathers Day for heroic fathers to intentionally hold a blessing conversation with their children — young and old!

A MODEL BLESSING

The following model incorporates the suggested components of blessing.

Father, I receive, welcome, and acknowledge each of my children as a delightful blessing from you. I speak your blessings on them and over them.

Children, I bless you in the name of Jesus, proclaiming the blessings of God, my Redeemer, upon you. May he give you wisdom, a reverence for God, and a heart of love.

May he create in you a mind that seeks to hear and know his word, a heart that desires to obey his will, and the strength and courage to do the will of our heavenly Father.

May your eyes look straight ahead with purpose for the future. May your tongue speak the truth in love. May your hands do the works of the Father; may your feet walk the paths that he has for you.

I have no greater joy than this, to hear that my children are living their lives in truth.

May the Lord prepare you and your future mate to love and honour one another, and may he grant to your union upright sons and daughters who will live in accordance with his word.

May your source of livelihood be honourable and secure, so that you will earn a living with your own hands.

May you always worship God in spirit and in truth.

I pray above all things that you may always prosper and be in health, even as your soul prospers.

'I know the thoughts and plans that I have for you,' says the Lord, 'thoughts and plans for welfare and peace and not for evil, to give you hope in your final outcome.'

In the name of Jesus, my Lord and my God, Amen.

(see <http://ati.iblp.org/ati/family/articles/family/prayerofblessing/>)

A BLESSING FOR FATHERS (1)

God our Father, in your wisdom and love you made all things. Bless these men, that they may be strengthened as Christian fathers. Let the example of their faith and love shine forth. Grant that we, their sons and daughters, may honour them always with a spirit of profound respect.

Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

A BLESSING FOR FATHERS (2)

God, bless all the fathers in the world. Father, we ask that you guide them to be good role models and loving to their children. We also ask that you help them to be a father like you are. Give them grace and patience to handle situations in loving ways.

Amen

A FATHER'S DAY PRAYER (1)

We give our thanks, Creator God, for the fathers in our lives.

Fatherhood does not come with a manual, and we know that some fathers excel while others struggle or fail.

We ask for your blessings for them all — and your forgiveness where it is needed.

This Fathers Day we remember the many sacrifices fathers make for their children and families, and the ways — both big and small — they lift children to achieve dreams thought beyond reach.

We remember all those who have helped fill the void when fathers are absent — grandfathers and uncles, brothers and cousins, teachers, pastors and coaches — and the women of our families.

For those who are fathers, we ask for wisdom and humility for the task of parenting. Give them the strength to do well by their children and by you.

In your holy name, O God, we pray. Amen.

A FATHERS DAY PRAYER (2)

Dear Heavenly Father, on Fathers Day we honour and thank you for our earthly fathers:

- fathers who strive to balance the demands of work, marriage, and children.
- fathers who, lacking a good model for a father, have work to become good fathers themselves
- fathers who by their own account were not always there for their children, but who continue to offer their grown children their love and support.
- fathers who have been wounded by the neglect and hostility of their children.
- fathers who, despite divorce, have remained in their children's lives.
- fathers whose children are adopted, and whose love and support has brought healing
- fathers who, as stepfathers, freely choose the obligation of fatherhood and earned their step children's love and respect.
- fathers who have lost a child to death, and continue to hold the child in their heart.
- men who have no children, but cherish the next generation as if they were their own.
- men who have 'fathered' us in their role as mentors and guides
- men who are about to become fathers; may they openly delight in their children.
- fathers who have died, but live on in our memory and whose love continues to nurture us.

In Jesus name, Amen.

A CHILD'S PRAYER FOR THEIR FATHER

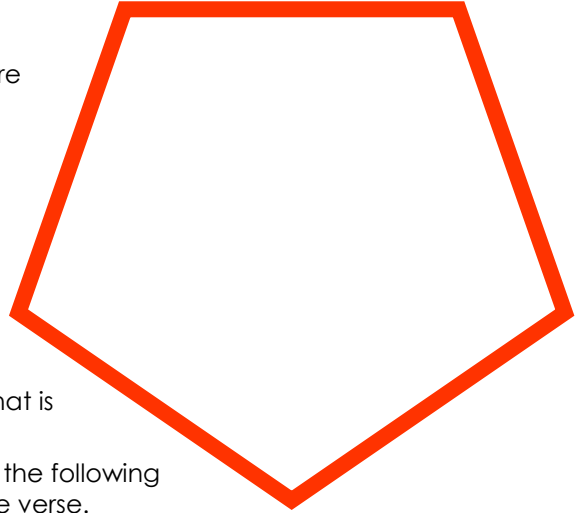
Thank you, Jesus,
for my father who loves me,
for my grandfather who cares for me,
and for God, your father and mine,
who made me and is always with me.
Amen.

(from *Friend Jesus: Prayers for Children* by Gaynell Bordes Cronin)

HEROES

A STUDY FOR TEENS AND ADULTS

1. **MY HEROES** Each person, individually write in the pentagon shape the names of five people who are heroes (or 'she'-roes) to you. You may or may not include your parents in this list.
Then share your list with a partner, or in groups of three, telling why you think of this person as a hero.
2. **WHAT MAKES A HERO** As a whole group, compile a list (on a whiteboard or butchers' paper) of the characteristics and actions you have identified as being related to your heroes. Place stars beside each characteristic or action that is mentioned more than once
3. **BLESSED IS THE ONE** As a whole group read aloud the following verses from Psalm 112. Each person may read one verse.



¹ Praise the LORD.

Blessed is the one who has respect for the LORD
He finds great delight when he obeys God's commands.

² His children will be powerful in the land.
Because he is honest, his children will be blessed.

³ His family will have wealth and riches.
He will always be blessed for doing what is right.

⁴ Even in the darkness light shines on honest people.
It shines on those who are kind and tender and godly.

⁵ Good things will come to those who are willing to lend freely.
Good things will come to those who are fair in everything they do.

⁶ They will always be secure.
Those who do what is right will be remembered forever.

⁷ They aren't afraid when bad news comes.
They stand firm because they trust in the LORD.

⁸ Their hearts are secure. They aren't afraid.
In the end they will see their enemies destroyed.

⁹ They have spread their gifts around to poor people.
Their good works continue forever.

They will be powerful and honoured.
Praise the LORD.

Then as individuals, underline the characteristics and actions of a hero that you find in the psalm. Draw lines from what you underline to the heroes in your pentagon who demonstrate these characteristics.

4. **ME, A HERO?** With your partner or groups of three, each person tells the other about 'heroic' characteristics or actions they have observed in the other person.
5. **A QUESTION TO DISCUSS** (if you have time)
Does God bless heroic people or does God make people heroic?
6. **WHAT I'VE LEARNED** (if you have time) As a whole group, give each person the opportunity to share one thing they have discovered or had reinforced through this study.
7. **PRAYER** As a whole group, pray, thanking God for the heroes in your lives. Pray also for those people who may consider each of you a hero.



Suggested wording for some sections is printed in *italics*.

1. ARRIVAL

HOSPITALITY TEAM greets people as they arrive.

- say 'Happy Fathers Day'
- help people find appropriate seats
- give them any materials they need for worship (including a pencil to write on their key) and generally help them get settled.

TECH TEAM: may show photos of fathers from your congregation with their children (all ages) and play a recording of the song the Superman theme or *Wind beneath my wings* ('you're my hero') OR the **MUSIC TEAM** may play the song.

2. WELCOME

WORSHIP LEADER/CHILD: *Welcome to Fathers Day worship at [name of church]. My name is [name] and this is my dad [name of father]. We'll be leading you in worship today.*

Some of us are here with our earthly fathers. All of us are here with our Heavenly Father, whom we worship along with Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

WORSHIP LEADER/FATHER: *Let's begin with a song. I invite you to pay attention to the words and whenever you hear yourself mentioned, raise your hand. For example, I'm part of this church family, so when I hear the words 'part of the family, I'll raise my hand. I may put it up some other times, too.*

3. OPENING SONG

TECH TEAM may display the words of the song

MUSIC TEAM leads the congregation in singing '*Part of the family*' and demonstrates the actions described above.

4. INTRODUCING 'HERO' THEME

WORSHIP LEADER/CHILD: Our worship today is about dads and heroes. *I'd like to tell you a bit about my dad. My dad is my hero because . . .* [a brief, honest statement about his father as a hero].

WORSHIP LEADER/FATHER: *I want to tell you that [name of child and co-leader] is my hero.*

WORSHIP LEADER/CHILD: *Really!?!*

WORSHIP LEADER/FATHER: *gives a brief, honest statement about his child as a hero.*

WORSHIP LEADER/CHILD: *So you don't have to be old and smart like you or strong like Superman to be a hero. What does it take to be a hero?*

5. GROUP DISCUSSION: WHAT IS A HERO?

WORSHIP LEADER/FATHER: *During this service you're going to be doing some things in small groups — your family or the people sitting close to you. You may invite others into your family. Look around you and see who will be in your 'family' this morning.*

Please take a few minutes to discuss that question in your groups: What does it take to be a hero? In other words: 'What is a hero?'

TECH TEAM may display the question.

Allow time for discussion. After (3) minutes the **MUSIC** or **TECH TEAM** plays a few bars of the Superman theme as a signal for people to return their attention to the worship leader.

6. BIBLE READINIG — GODLY HEROES

WORSHIP LEADER/FATHER: *Thank you.*

There are all kinds of heroes, aren't there? And we're sitting here in a room full of heroes. Isn't that amazing!

[Name of BIBLE PRESENTER], What does the Bible say about heroes?

Throughout the service the **BIBLE PRESENTER** speaks from a lectern or reading desk where a copy of the Bible can clearly be seen. Alternatively the **BIBLE PRESENTER** may stand to the side, holding a Bible.

THE BIBLE PRESENTER may then give the Bible to the **BIBLE READERS**.

BIBLE PRESENTER: *Good question.*

First of all, there are a lot of people in the Bible who are heroes. One of them was David — the boy who fought against a giant and won.

WORSHIP LEADER/FATHER: *and Moses, who rescued his people when they were slaves.*

WORSHIP LEADER/CHILD: *And those three guys with funny names who got thrown into a fiery furnace for worshipping God.*

WORSHIP LEADER/FATHER invites people in the congregation to name some other Bible heroes and recognises each contribution.

BIBLE PRESENTER: *Like I said there are a lot of heroes in the Bible.*

The Bible also gives us a description of what a hero is and does. I'm going to ask [name of another father-child pair who will read the passage or the father may be accompanied by several children or grandchildren] to read from Psalm 112.

One person reads the text. The other person echoes the characteristic.

The **TECH TEAM** may display the key words when they are mentioned in the echo.

READER: Blessed is the one who has respect for the LORD

ECHO: A godly hero respects God.

READER: He (or she) finds great delight when he obeys God's commands.

ECHO: A godly hero obeys God.

READER: Because he is honest, his children will be blessed.

ECHO: A godly hero is honest.

READER: His family will have wealth and riches. He will always be blessed for doing what is right.

ECHO: A godly hero and his family are blessed because he does what is right.

READER: Even in the darkness light shines on honest people. It shines on those who are kind and tender and godly.

ECHO: A godly hero is honest, kind, and tender.

READER: Good things will come to those who are fair in everything they do.

ECHO: A godly hero is always fair.

READER: They have spread their gifts around to poor people.

ECHO: A godly hero is generous.

READER: Their good works continue forever. Those who do what is right will be remembered forever.

ECHO: We'll always remember our godly heroes.

READER: They aren't afraid when bad news comes. They stand firm because they trust in the LORD. Their hearts are secure. They aren't afraid.

ECHO: A godly hero is brave because they trust God.

WORSHIP LEADER/FATHER: *'A godly hero is brave because they trust God.' You know, I reckon that's the difference between a godly hero and an ordinary hero. Story-book heroes have to be strong and brave all by themselves. Godly heroes trust God.*

WORSHIP LEADER/CHILD: *Like you, Dad. You've always let us know that you trust God to help you and we can trust him too. That's another reason you're my hero.*

And you admit that you aren't all those things God wants you to be. You let us know that God forgives you and he forgives us too. That's another reason you're my hero.

Now we're going to sing one of your favourite hymns now.

7. FAITH SONG

TECH TEAM may display the words of the song

MUSIC TEAM leads the congregation in singing *God will take care of you (Martin)* or another 'dad's favourite' song about faith.

8. JESUS, SUPER HERO (SONG)

WORSHIP LEADER/CHILD: *We've looked at a whole bunch of Bible heroes and we've looked at some of the characteristics of Godly heroes.*

But, that list bothers me, a bit. If that's what a godly hero is like, I'll never be a godly hero.

WORSHIP LEADER/FATHER: *No one will. Remember 'a godly hero trusts God'. The only person who ever really had all the characteristics of a hero was Jesus Christ, our superhero.*

A group of children may present a superhero song, or the whole congregation may sing a superhero song, under the leadership of the **MUSIC TEAM** or some children.

TECH TEAM may display the words of *You're my superhero* (Hillsong) or *Mighty God* (Gerard Holmes) or *Super Saviour* ((Colin Buchanan)

WORSHIP LEADER/FATHER thanks the performers.

9. SERMON OR TEACHING SONG

BIBLE PRESENTER: *And that's where we need to turn back to the Bible. The Bible tells us that the God we trust loves us and sent his Son Jesus for us.*

OPTION 1: SERMON

BIBLE PRESENTER: *You've heard the phrase 'like father, like son'.*

WORSHIP LEADER/CHILD: *Of course (draw attention to some shared characteristic with their father).*

PREACHER *the Bible says Jesus is the exact likeness of God'*

Presents a short sermon based on Colossians 1:15-22, see notes on page 11.

OPTION 2: TEACHING SONG

BIBLE PRESENTER: *The Bible says that we — all of us who are led by God's Spirit to believe in Jesus — are God's children, like our superhero, Jesus.*

As God's children, we are his heirs.

WORSHIP LEADER/FATHER: *That means that we will get the good things that a father passes on to his children.*

There's a song about what that means for us.

Explain how the song will be sung.

If possible the **TECH** and **MUSIC TEAMS** work together.

TECH TEAM displays the words of one verse at a time.

The **MUSIC TEAM** leads the singing, with a syncopation that allows a pause where the ✓ shows in the text below.

TECH TEAM inserts the ✓ in the text when you get to it in the singing.

Congregation is encouraged to clap as each ✓ is inserted.

We Are Heirs (Jimmy & Carol Owens)

We are ✓ heirs of the Father
We are ✓ joint-heirs with the Son
We are ✓ people of his Kingdom
We are ✓ family, we are one

We are ✓ washed
We are ✓ sanctified
We are ✓ cleansed by his blood

We are ✓ born of the Spirit
We are ✓ children of the Lord
We are ✓ members of his body
We are ✓ objects of his love
We're ✓ partakers of his holiness
We are ✓ citizens of heaven above

We're ✓ partakers of his suffering
We're ✓ partakers of his grace
We ✓ shall meet him to be like him
when we see him face to face

We shall ✓ reign with him forever
Men and angels shout and sing
For dominion has been given
To the family of the King. ✓ ✓ ✓

10. SMALL GROUP DEBRIEFING

OPTION 1: FOLLOWING THE SERMON

TECH TEAM displays three questions from the sermon:

- What do you think makes Jesus a hero?
- Do you want Jesus to be your hero? Why?

WORSHIP LEADER/CHILD: *Please take a few minutes to discuss these questions in your small groups.*

OPTION 2: FOLLOWING THE TEACHING SONG

TECH TEAM displays some key concepts/words from the song: heir, family, cleansed, Jesus' body, loved, suffering, grace, waiting.

WORSHIP LEADER/FATHER: *Please take a few minutes to discuss these words in your small groups:*

- What does each word mean to you?
- Which ones do you think are the most important? Why?

Allow time for discussion. After (3) minutes the **MUSIC** or **TECH TEAM** can play a few bars of the Superman theme as a signal for people to return their attention to the worship leader.

WORSHIP LEADER/FATHER: Thank you for being part of that conversation.

11. PRAYER FOR FATHERS

WORSHIP LEADER/CHILD: It's Fathers Day and we're going to have a prayer now for the fathers who are here with us.

I'd like everyone to go to your own father or to someone who is in some way like a father to you.

Let the dads stay seated and the rest of us can gather around them and put a hand on their shoulder.

Allow time for people to regroup.

WORSHIP LEADER/CHILD: Do you have your hands on a dad's shoulder? Good. Now as you pray along with (names of prayer leader/s), you

may want to pat or squeeze the shoulder when we pray something that has special meaning for you.

PRAYER LEADER/S read one of the prayers from page 15. They may adapt the prayer or write their own.

WORSHIP LEADER/CHILD: Thank you for participating in that prayer. You may return to your seats.

12. OFFERING

WORSHIP LEADER/FATHER (or a congregational leader) explains briefly how the offerings are used to help people. If there is a special cause supported through a Fathers Day offering, explain it.

You have an opportunity to give an offering now, if you wish to do so.

The offering is collected in your usual manner.

As the offering is collected the **MUSIC TEAM** may perform a musical item of their choice OR the **TECH TEAM** may play a recording of the Superman theme music.

13. GENERAL PRAYERS

PRAYER LEADER/s lead worshipers in general prayers for themselves and others and/or The Lord's Prayer.

TECH TEAM displays words of any prayers people are to join in.

14. SENDING AND BLESSING

WORSHIP LEADER/SON may give any brief announcements as required. Be sure to invite people to anything you have planned for after the service. Explain what will happen and where people are to go.

Today we thank God for the heroes in our midst, especially those who are our fathers.

Now, may the love of God our heavenly Father, the grace of Jesus Christ our super hero and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you this Fathers Day and always. Amen.

15. CLOSING SONG

TECH TEAM displays the words of the song, while

MUSIC TEAM leads the congregation in singing *Pass my love around* (Yantis and Sgarlata) or a 'dads' choice' closing song.

TECH TEAM may play the Superman theme as people are leaving.

16. AFTER WORSHIP

Worshipers are invited to the space where tea, coffee and fruit cordial are available along with other Fathers Day treats (possibly made by children or teens).

Consider some other Fathers Day options on page 6.