



Easter is about Love.
Easter is about Life.
Let's celebrate that
Love lives at Easter!

ALL AGE WORSHIP CELEBRATION IDEAS

BIBLE BASIS

Easter 2007 readings from the Revised Common Lectionary:

Psalm 118: 1-4, 23,24

1 Corinthians 15:19-26

Luke 24:1-12

NOTES

INTERGENERATIONAL WORSHIP

Intergenerational (or all-age) worship takes seriously the idea that people of all ages can worship together in the body of Christ. Worshippers, young, old and in-between can also be involved in planning worship, inviting people to worship, and leading worship.

This packet contains an assortment of **Love Lives!** elements that you can incorporate into your regular service order or a special celebration format.

PERMISSION

These notes have been prepared by the Resource Centre for Children's and Family Ministry of the Uniting Church (SA) to help congregations plan worship involving children and families.

You may make as many copies of the notes as needed for your worship planners.

You may print text from these notes in a worship booklet or on OHTs or Powerpoint for use in conducting a **Love Lives!** celebration.

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PROMOTION

Easter is a time when many Australians are travelling. Your members may be elsewhere for Easter. Consider giving them a **Love Lives!** card with some suggestions for on-the-road celebration and/or encourage them to worship in a local church wherever they are.

Some holiday travellers may be near you at Easter. Promote your service with a banner at the church and/or leaflets at a nearby caravan park or other holiday destination. Encourage your members to invite visiting friends and relatives to worship with you on Easter Sunday.

Make a banner with the **Love Lives!** balloon logo.

Consider having the service in a venue that is more accessible to visitors than your church building.

DECORATION

'Love hearts' are the a familiar symbol for love in the secular world. The love heart is the key symbol for this service.

Decorate your church with heart-shaped balloons or hearts cut from paper.

You can write 'Love Lives!' on balloons before they are inflated with permanent texta. (Try one or two to see how they inflate before you do many.)

TAKE HOME

It's a good idea with an intergenerational service to give families something to take home that can serve as a reminder of the service and a starting point for caring conversation.

In this service you may want to give out **Love Lives!** balloons or baskets.

MUSIC

Many traditional Easter hymns have stirring music that can help people of all ages celebrate that **Love Lives!** Include one or more in your Easter celebration as a way of passing on Christian heritage to the children.

If you do not have a choir (or even if you do have an adult choir) this may be a good time to bring together an

intergenerational group of singers to learn and perform an Easter hymn/song.

Small congregations, or congregations that do not have strong musical leadership, may choose to have the congregation sing with CDs or other electronic music.

Some hymns to consider are:

- He lives, he lives, Christ Jesus lives today. . .
- Down in the grave he lay, Jesus my Saviour. . . (This song is in old hymnals. Its two contrasting moods make it an ideal song for a group liturgical dance, possibly using ribbons or flags.)
- The day of Resurrection! TAHB 277
- Come, you faithful, raise the strain TAHB 278
- Jesus Christ is risen today alleluia (TAHB 280)
- The strife is o'er, the battle done . . . Alleluia TAHB 287
- Christ the Lord is risen today: Halleluia TAHB 290
- I know that my Redeemer lives TAHB 299
- Thine be the glory TAHB 303 (or 'Yours is the glory')

TAHB = *The Australian Hymn Book*

More contemporary possibilities:

- A heart of love (Bullock, 1 AWC2)
- Because he lives (Gaither; download midi <http://www.redsal.com/church13.htm>)
- I know he rescued my soul (My Redeemer lives, Morgan, 34 AWC2)
- I've been forgiven (The stone's been rolled away, Bullock, AWC 46)
- I will sing of your faithfulness (This is the day; Poole, 52 AWC2)
- Morning has broken (Farjeon [popularised by Cat Stephens] in many hymn books)
- The love of God (Unfailing love, Bullock, AWC 101)
- Your love is higher than the mountains (Bullock, AWC 140)

AWC = Australian Worship Collection

See also CHILDREN'S SONG PROJECT, page 9.

ARRIVAL

As people arrive musicians can play music that will be used during the service or play a recording of Easter music.

For a more interesting start, consider

THEME SETTING QUESTION: On screen have the words 'Love is . . .'. Encourage people to think (or discuss as a family) ways they could complete the sentence.

FELLOWSHIP ACTIVITY: Any of the activities designated as 'CHILDREN'S PROJECTS' could be used as an activity for all ages to engage in prior to the service.

PROCESSION: People could assemble outdoors or in a hall. Give each person a balloon and a stick. They inflate their own balloons and tie them onto sticks. Everyone can process around and then into the church carrying their balloons. Consider a brass band (or a boom box with a recording) playing an Easter hymn to lead the procession.

Provide large pots at the end of aisles where people can deposit their balloons. Move the pots to the front of the church instead of flowers for the day.

WELCOME & INVOCATION

(Based very loosely on Psalm 118)

WORSHIP LEADER: Happy Easter. Easter is about love. Easter is about life. Let's celebrate that **Love Lives!**

WL: Let the choir *(or band, or any other group who will set the example of shouting the response)* shout: Love lives!

Choir: Love lives!

WL: Let the men *(or 'everyone on my right' or another designation)* shout: Love Lives!

Men: Love lives!

WL: Let the children shout: Love lives!

Children: Love lives!

WL: Let everyone here shout: Love lives!

Everyone: Love lives!

WL: God is always loving. God is alive. This day belongs to God. Let's celebrate and be glad today.

You may follow with the song 'This is the day that the Lord has made!'

GOSPEL READING

Luke 24:1-12

INTRODUCTION: The Bible tells us what happened on the very first Easter Sunday. Listen to the story:

READER 1 & 2: *read from the Contemporary English Version or the Bible version commonly used in your church. Reader 1 reads the narrative. Reader 2 reads Jesus' words.*

Alternatively show a video of Luke 12 or another Gospel account of the resurrection. Be sure it sticks closely to the Gospel story.

CLOWN SKIT

A reader and mime perform a clown skit which presents the basic Gospel message in an unusual way. (See page 5)

CHILDREN'S PROJECT

If it is your practice to have children go out during an 'adult' sermon, they can do a special project preparing for the last part of worship. (See pages 7,8,9).

EPISTLE READING

1 Corinthians 15:19-26

INTRODUCTION: The Easter story is full of amazing things. One of them is that Jesus came back to life and lives forever. An even more amazing thing is that because of what Jesus did, we, too, can live forever with him.

If you use Powerpoint or OHT's, put the reading on slides so everyone can follow along with the reading. Consider inserting an interpretation in chart form, eg

ADAM	JESUS
SIN	LOVE/FORGIVENESS
DEATH	LIFE

CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION

(Based loosely on the epistle reading.)

WORSHIP LEADER (MINISTER): Let's confess our weakness and doubt to God.

CONGREGATION: (reads from screen or worship booklet or echoes phrase by phrase)

Father,
we confess to you that too often
our hope and thoughts
are focused on this life only.

We forget
or ignore
or are not certain of
Jesus' victory over sin and death.

We deserve the death that comes through
our sin.

WL: Believe the promise of our loving
heavenly Father. Jesus has taken the
punishment you deserve. Because Jesus
died, you are forgiven — freed from the
punishment you deserve. Because Jesus
has been raised to life, you will also live
with him forever.

SERMON

Use 1 Corinthians 15:19–26 as text.

PRAYERS

Several different prayer leaders can each
lead a prayer about a different topic.

See page 8 for ideas about using colours
to focus these prayers.

AFTER SERVICE

Continue your celebration with a
fellowship meal or snack (sausage sizzle or
morning tea).

Consider organising some games. Think
about the old 'church picnic' relays, etc
that involve people of all ages.

LOVE LIVES! CLOWN SKIT

Two people are involved in this skit: a narrator and a clown.

Practice together to get the timing as smooth as possible.

Clown wears very plain, black or single coloured trousers and shirt so as not to detract from the view of the balloon. Clown may have painted face to emphasise expression.

Throughout the skit, the clown works with a heart-shaped balloon that represents God's love.

NARRATOR'S SCRIPT	CLOWN/MIME'S ACTIONS
God loves you.	Clown stands at the front of the church with hands on heart.
God loved you forever.	Hands reaching out toward people.
Forever is a long, long time. Longer than you can count; longer than you can imagine.	Hands outstretched, really pushing out further and further.
Love is something you can feel sometimes.	Hugs own shoulders.
But love isn't something you can see.	Hands over eyes.
God wanted you to be able to see his love.	Hands reaching out toward people again.
And he found a way.	Take balloon from pocket, and shows.
God sent his love at Christmas as a little baby.	Blow up the balloon a little bit.
People could see God's love in Baby Jesus.	Hold up the small balloon for everyone to see.
Jesus grew bigger and bigger.	Blow the balloon a bit more.
Jesus grew, showing more and more of God's love.	Blow the balloon a bit more.
Jesus grew to be a man full of God's love.	Blow the balloon up fully. <i>(Twist the end, and hold it securely, but do not tie it off).</i>
The man Jesus went around and told people that God loves them. <i>(Pause to let clown get half-way around)</i>	Walk around the congregation. Tap people on their heads with the hand holding the balloon.
Jesus showed people that God loves them by the way he treated them and helped them. <i>(Pause to let clown get back to front.)</i>	Continue as above.
Jesus showed people that God loved them	Hold balloon overhead with both hands.
. . . but the only way for Jesus to really show how <i>very</i> much God loved people was to die for them. <i>(Pause. Let clown lower the balloon half way.)</i>	Slowly let out air from the balloon and lower it.

Nobody can love another person more than that.	Continue.
Jesus' death was a strange sad/glad time.	Kneel, head bowed, balloon 'buried' under your body.
But God's love is bigger and stronger than we can measure,	Lift head, begin reinflating balloon.
God's love is bigger and stronger than we can imagine.	Start to raise, continue reinflating balloon.
God's love is bigger and stronger than death.	Continue. <i>(Twist and tie-off fully inflated balloon.)</i>
God's love brought Jesus back to life again!	Stand and hold balloon overhead with both hands fully extended.
Jesus still lives to help you, and help you see how much God loves you.	Wave balloon back and forth overhead.
(Pause)	
Jesus invites you to be really alive like he is:	Toss the balloon up in the air
. . . to know that God loves you	Bat the balloon up again.
. . . to tell people that God loves them, too.	Bat the balloon up again.
. . . to show God's love to other people.	Catch the balloon and carry it overhead up the aisle and out of the church.

Have someone standing by, unseen, with a supply of extra balloons — just in case of breakage.

Making heart baskets can be a CHILDREN'S PROJECT, a multi-generational start-of-worship activity, or a project for a craft-team (adults, teens, older children) in preparation for use in the Easter worship

HEART BASKETS

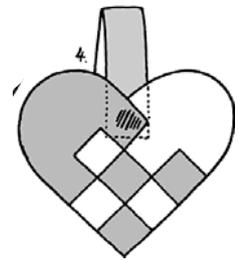
There are lots of ways to make the basket. Choose the method that suits the creative group, your resources and the amount of time you have. You may want to organise a production line that allows each person to use their particular strengths and abilities to contribute to the whole 'manufacturing' process.

Some ways to make a heart basket

Sewn basket: Cut two heart shapes from stiff fabric or felt. Stitch the hearts together at the v-shaped bottom of the hearts, leaving the top (rounded parts) as the opening. You may anchor a ribbon hangar at with back stitching at the top of each side of the V. Use Fabric marking pen to write '**Love Lives!**' on one side of the basket.

Paper basket: www.red-castle.com/software/fw/heart3.htm gives you a pattern and some instructions for making a three-sided paper basket.

You can use the pattern to make a simple cone rather than a basket and attach a handle.



Woven paper basket: This traditional craft requires some finessing until you get the gist of it, but the basket created is worth the effort. See www.creativekidsathome.com/activities/activity_83.shtml

Heart shaped box: Instructions for a rather difficult box available at www.beadjewelrymaking.com/Kid_Art_Project/kid_art_project_february_2006.html

Origami paper cup: Make a simple origami cup (see www.wicked4kids.com/table.po?page=cup) and draw the **Love Lives!** heart logo on it.

Make your basket large enough to hold what you plan to put in it, eg

1. An Easter egg
2. A **Love Lives!** balloon
3. Jelly beans — see the prayer suggestion

Preparation of Jelly Bean or Balloon prayers can be a CHILDREN'S PROJECT, a multi-generational start-of-worship activity, or a project for your intergenerational worship planning team.

PRAYERS

Children can prepare the props and/or write the prayers.

Use colours to focus prayers for the **Love Lives!** celebration.

You may give each person an Easter basket (see Heart Basket page) or a lolly bag with the appropriate coloured jelly beans. People find and look at (or eat) the appropriate coloured jelly bean during each petition.

OR prayer leaders could hold balloons of the appropriate colour

OR you could project a Powerpoint slide with the colour background and the topic of each prayer.

Possible prayer starting points:

Green (Jelly Bean / Balloon) reminds me of the natural world we live in. Let's thank God for the world and ask him to guide us in caring for it.

Multi coloured (speckled or spotted Jelly Bean / balloon) reminds me of the people of the world, each one unique, each one with their own abilities, dreams, problems, fears . . . Let's pray for the people of the world that; each one will know that Love Lives! that God is for them and with them.

Yellow (Jelly Bean / Balloon) reminds me of the church, united by the light of the Good News. Let's thank God for the church and ask him to guide the church.

Red (Jelly Bean / Balloon) reminds me of hearts and hearts remind me of love. Let's thank God for his perfect love and ask him to help us love other people.

White (Jelly Bean / Balloon) reminds me of Jesus. Let's thank God for all that Jesus has done for us and for the promise that we will live with him forever.

Writing an Easter song can be a special CHILDREN'S PROJECT or a project of an intergenerational group of musicians.

EASTER SONG

This project is suitable for a group of children (or an intergenerational group of people) who enjoy music and singing. It requires a leader who can pull out people's creativity.

There are a number of ways to approach the project, eg.

- A) Simply challenge them to write a song about Easter.
- B) Begin with the Bible story, eg read together Luke 24:1-12. Talk about the story. Writers might
 - a. create background music, humming or using instruments, that reflects the mood of the story as it is read
 - b. turn the angels words (or just Jesus' words) into a song
 - c. write a song expressing Peter's amazement; his report to others.
- C) Begin with an 'Easter' Bible verse, eg read a portion 1 Corinthians 15:19-26. Writers might
 - a. Select one sentence or phrase and turn it into a song
 - b. Use their own words to express an idea from the reading.
- D) Begin with a known song (either a Christian song or a secular song with no distracting connotations). Writers can write all new words or adapt the existing words to give it an Easter message. Following is an example of an adaptation of the Christmas song 'Love came down at Christmas' by Christian Rosetti. (Online Christmas Songbook <http://christmassongbook.net/s6222.asp>)
 - 1. Love came back at Easter;
Love all lovely, Love divine.
Love rose up at Easter
Tomb and angels were the sign.
 - 2. Love lives for-e-e-ver
Love unending. Love divine.
Worship now Christ Jesus
this new life is yours and mine.

If children write the words in a time-out during the service, you will need to transfer the words very quickly to an overhead transparency or Powerpoint so the congregation can sing it with the children at the end of the service.