



A RESOURCE FOR ALL-AGE WORSHIP

Mothers and shepherds are both in the caring business. They are responsible for the welfare of their charges, feeding them and leading them. It's fitting that in 2014 the day on which our society honours mothers is the day the church honours Jesus Christ as our Good Shepherd.

Notes

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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 of any size 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 for Mothers Day and other occasions 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.

All-Age Worship Notes

WHAT IS ALL-AGE WORSHIP?

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

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

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. Whenever children (as well as elderly and differently-abled people) are present in worship, everyone benefits.

- All worshipers have a special opportunity to practice Christian love.
- All worshipers grow through the acceptance and respect shown by others.

- All worshipers see a different — possibly truer — face of God than if they worshiped with a homogenised group.
- Worship leaders are forced to focus on the basics of theology and of worship in a way that is clear and creative. This benefits everyone.

Australians see Mothers Day 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.

The guests you invite to your church at for Mothers Day 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.

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.

Plan well and keep the logistics as simple as possible, so that there is a clear flow to the worship that all worship leaders understand. They will not be over- burdened or stressed at the last minute. And they will be able to cope with and embrace the unexpected.

As early as possible, begin working with the various individuals and existing teams who will plan and lead the service — particularly if they will be asked to do something different from their usual responsibilities. This may include:

- people who clean, set up and decorate the worship area
- your hospitality team
- your tech team (and/or people responsible for preparing electronic or printed materials) should be involved
- your musicians or music team
- your children's ministry and/or youth ministry leaders.

If needed, organise new teams for this particular service.

A PLANNING TEAM

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 ideas in this resource could help you make some elements of your regular service more experiential, more sensory or more accessible to people of all ages.

OR If you have had some experience with all-age worship: look at the resource and consider how the sample 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 out a preparation plan (to do list) making it clear who does what, when and how.
7. With worship leaders plan details of who does what, when and how – in the service.

AND

8. Practice!

REHEARSAL

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 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 worship for Mothers' Day.

Invitations to the worship service can go from mothers in your congregation to their families and from members of your congregation to their mothers.

You may also focus on inviting and welcoming mothers of children who are involved in any programs related to your congregation or any organisations using your premises.

You might create a printed invitation / Mothers Day card using the theme painting (see page 4 for detail) or the card suggestion (see page 11).

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 can be called on when first aid is required.
- 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 like to process information in worship and other parts of life visually. 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.

Sheep and shepherds is a theme with huge potential for visuals, This theme painting can be starting point.



The Good Shepherd by French artist Julien Dupre (1851-1910) can be thought-provoking at Mothers Day -- or any time -- providing a female image of the 'good shepherd'. The painting is in the Public Domain.

MUSIC

Some people who worship with you like to process information in worship and other parts of life through music and rhythm. Provide music that they can respond to and participate in.

Most worship music is 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 children's songs.

You'll find some song suggestions on page 7. You may also use music with or without words to enhance the mood of worship.

MOVEMENT

Some people who worship with you like to process information in worship and other parts of life through movement. Make sure that you provide something physical for worshipers to do.

In the sample service worshipers have the opportunity to move about the worship space and to handle flowers.

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 like to process information in worship and other parts of life in relationships — 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 opportunities to interact.

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 questions by themselves.

SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS

Some people who worship with you like to process information in worship and other parts of life through facts, lists, graphs, and patterns.

In the discussion Bible study of Psalm 23, people have an opportunity to find parallel concepts and organise them in chart form.

NATURE

Some people who worship with you like to process information in worship and other parts of life in a natural setting or in relationship with natural elements.

A main emphasis in the sample service is on an animal, a sheep or lamb, and our care for the animal. Consider having a live

lamb/sheep penned near the entrance to the worship area that people can interact with, as in a petting zoo.

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.

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

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.

WORSHIP LEADERS

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 what may be a larger-than-usual gathering. Your Mothers Day theme may inspire you to have a mother-child pair as worship leaders. Or you may decide to give all mothers who ordinarily serve as worship leaders the opportunity to worship in the pew with their families.

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.

To emphasise the Mothers Day aspects of the sample worship service it has two WORSHIP LEADERS, an adult or teen [LEADER] and their mother [LEADER MOTHER].

The sample worship service, may involve children as well as grownups as:

- hospitality team
- music team
- technology/projection/sound team
- Bible reader
- prayer leader (one or more).

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 chrysanthemum.

You might also give people the words of this song (a paraphrase of Psalm 23) for families to talk about during the week.

I Am Jesus; Little Lamb

by Henrietta L. von Hayn, 1724-1782

1. I am Jesus' little lamb,
Ever glad at heart I am;
For my Shepherd gently guides me,
Knows my need, and well provides me,
Loves me every day the same,
Even calls me by my name.

2. Day by day, at home, away,
Jesus is my Staff and Stay.
When I hunger, Jesus feeds me,
Into pleasant pastures leads me;
When I thirst, He bids me go
Where the quiet waters flow.

Mothers Day Worship Notes

LECTIONARY TEXTS

The Lectionary readings for Good Shepherd Sunday (Series A) are:

- Acts 2:42-47 (The believers share life together)
- Psalm 23 (The shepherd psalm)
- 1 Peter 2:19-25 (chosen to suffer)
- John 10:1-10 (The Shepherd and the Flock)
The portion of the story designated for Year A speaks more of bad (hired) shepherds and gates than about the Good Shepherd, so we broaden the reading to include verses 11-17.

MOTHERS DAY WORSHIP

Mothers Day is not an observance on the traditional church calendar. It is a secular observance that began less than 200 years ago in the USA. Since then it has become an important day in the life of many families around the world.

Mothers Day provides the church with an opportunity to relate to the real life of members, their extended family and the wider community.

We do not 'worship' mothers. We honour them. In fact we are commanded by God to do so, not just on one day, but always. By honouring mothers we honour, obey and worship God who gave us mothers.

While preparing a worship service for Mothers Day it is important to remember that the day that is a celebration for many can be a difficult time for others. Worship should provide comfort for those who need comfort. Jesus, our Good Shepherd, gives that comfort no matter what the situation may be with our earthly parents or children.

People who come to worship as families on Mothers Day are likely to want to leave quickly after the worship service.

Some people — singles, childless couples, empty-nesters, recently bereaved, people in difficult family situations — may feel very much at a loss on a family day like Mothers Day. You might consider providing

- a lunch (shepherd's pie?) for people who are alone on Mothers Day
- telephone service for the use of people who are estranged from parents or children
- prayer counselling for people with family issues.

SONG SUGGESTIONS

Mothers

- Faith of our Mothers (AB Patten, based on the hymn 'Faith of our Fathers' and using the same tune.)
- For the beauty of the earth (Pierpont)
- He's got the whole world in his hands (traditional)

The Good Shepherd

- I am carried, *Bullock*
- I am Jesus' little lamb, *von Hayn*
- In your hands (I'm so secure), *Morgan*
- My shepherd is the Lord, *Gelineau*
- Saviour, like a shepherd lead us. *Thrupp/Bradbury*
- The King of Love my Shepherd is, *Baker*
- The Lord is my shepherd, *Boniwell*
- The Lord's my shepherd, (anonymous)
- The Lord's my Shepherd, *Townsend*
- The power of your love, *Bullock*
- The steadfast love of the Lord, *McNeill*
- Your love keeps following me, *Fragar*

PRAYER IDEAS

A prayer to the Good Shepherd

Speak this prayer slowly, inhaling and exhaling as indicated.

[*inhale*] Good Shepherd,

[*exhale*] as you lead me beside still waters, help me to **inhale** your new life.

Let me **exhale** my frustrations — small as they are, big as they can seem.

And **inhale** your patience.

Let me **exhale** my loneliness

And **inhale** your presence, compassion and your community.

Let me **exhale** my brokenness

And **inhale** your forgiveness, truth and wholeness.

Let me **exhale** my boredom

And **inhale** the joy of simple pleasures.

Let me **exhale** my exhaustion, worry and fear

And **inhale** your peace and energy.

Let me **exhale** my anger about my own life and the inhumanity I see around me

And **inhale** wisdom to see your path, courage to choose it and strength to follow your path.

Let me **exhale** my lost-ness

And **inhale** the safety of being in your sheepfold forever. Amen.

(Based on a *Tonglen* written by DeLona Campos-Davis — www.beliefnet.com)

A prayer for all mothers

God our Creator, we pray —

- for new mothers, coming to terms with new responsibility;
- for expectant mothers, wondering and waiting;
- for those who are tired, stressed or depressed;
- for those who struggle to balance the tasks of work and family;
- for those who are unable to feed their children due to poverty;
- for those whose children have physical, mental or emotional disabilities;
- for those who have children they do not want;
- for those who raise children on their own;
- for those who have lost a child;
- for those who care for the children of others;
- for those whose children have left home;
- and for those whose desire to be a mother has not been fulfilled.

Bless all mothers, that their love may be deep and tender, and that they may lead their children to know and do what is good, living not for themselves alone, but for God and for others.

Amen.

(from www.godweb.org/mothersdayprayer.htm)

Find more Mothers Day prayers at

- www.beliefnet.com/Love-Family/Holidays/Mothers-Day/Prayers-for-Mothers-Day.aspx?b=1&p=8
- <http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Mothers/>

What's in a Name?

Just 100 years ago, lyricist Howard Johnson wrote this popular, sentimental Mothers Day song:

M is for the million things she gave me,
O means only that she's growing old,
T is for the tears she shed to save me,
H is for her heart of purest gold;
E is for her eyes, with love-light shining,
R means right, and right she'll always be,
Put them all together, they spell **MOTHER**,
A word that means the world to me.

And the alternative chorus:

M is for the mercy she possesses
O means that I owe her all I own
T is for her tender, sweet caresses
H is for her hands that made a home
E means ev'rything she's done to help me
R means real and regular, you see
Put them all together they spell **MOTHER**,
a word that means the world to me.

The same person Johnson was picturing when he wrote the word Mother may well have been identified in different situations by other names: 'Mummy', 'Mum', 'Dear', 'Auntie', 'Sis', 'Virginia', 'Ginny'.

Much more recently Darlene Zschech wrote the Christian worship song: 'Jesus, what a beautiful name' which catalogues names and characteristics of Jesus.

Language is an amazing thing. A word can 'mean the world to you' a name can be 'beautiful'.

Somehow a name does more than simply identify a person. Their name somehow represents and stands for the myriad characteristics of the person.

The holiness of God rests not just in God's person, but also in God's name. God's Old Testament people were commanded: 'You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain'. God's New Testament people were invited to pray, 'Hallowed be your name'.

The name of God in human form – Jesus – is as much description as identification. Jesus (Jeshua) means 'Saviour' or 'The Lord Saves' (Matthew 1:21).

The man Jesus has many other descriptive names and titles, including

- Bread of Life (John 6:35)
- Brother (Romans 8:29)
- Deliverer and Redeemer (Romans 11:26, Isaiah 59:20)
- Immanuel (Matthew 1:23)
- King of the Jews (Matthew 2:1-2, 27:37)
- Lamb of God (John 1:29)
- Lord (2 Peter 1:11)
- Morning Star (2 Peter 1:19)
- Prince (Acts 5:31)
- Rabbi (John 1:38,49)
- Rising Sun (Malachi 4:2)
- Son and exact likeness of God (Hebrews 1:3)
- Son of Man (Luke 19:10)
- True light (John 1:3-9, John 8:12)
- Way, Truth, Life (John 14:6)
- Word of God (John 1:1,2)
- Priest (Hebrews 3:1)

And the name that most concerns us in this resource: **Shepherd**.

- Jehovah's Shepherd (Zechariah 13:7)
- The Shepherd of the Sheep (Hebrews 13:20)
- The Shepherd of Israel (Ezekiel 34:23)
- The Shepherd and Bishop (1 Peter 2:25)
- The Good Shepherd (John 10)
- The Great Shepherd (Hebrews 13:20)
- The Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4)

As a mother comforts her child,
I will comfort you.
You will find comfort in Jerusalem.
Isaiah 66:13

MOTHERS DAY BIBLE STUDY

The Lord is my shepherd.

(Psalm 23)

Even if you don't know much about sheep and shepherds, you can use this chart to help you think about what good mums do for their children and about what God does for all people.

In Column 1 you'll find a list of things from Psalm 23. Try filling in the blank parts of the table.

In Column 2 you can write a some specific, practical things a good mother does for their child that are similar to each of the things a good shepherd does for sheep.

In Column 3 you can write a similar list of things God does.

<i>a good shepherd</i>	<i>a good mum</i>	<i>God</i>
... gives sheep everything they need.		
... lets sheep lie down in fields of green grass.		
... leads sheep beside quiet waters.		
... gives sheep new strength.		
... guides sheep in the right paths for the honour of his name.		
Even though sheep walk through the darkest valley, they will not be afraid. ... is with them.		
... comforts them with his rod and staff.		

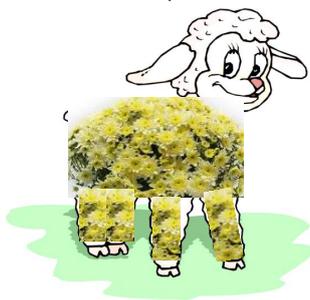
If you have extra time: Continue with the part of Psalm 23 about a king rather than a shepherd.

... prepares a feast for me right in front of my enemies.		
... pours oil on my head.		
... fills my cup to overflowing.		
I am sure that my king's goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life. And I will live in the palace of my good king forever.		

Turn the contents of any or all the boxes in your chart into thank-you prayers about what God does, what your mum does or what mums in general do.

Mothers & Shepherds Poster

To make a special 'Mothers and Shepherds' Mothers Day poster:



Plan how you are going to use the poster. This will help you decide on the size you will need and the material you will use and the way you will display it safely and securely.

- Use corflute, corrugated cardboard or board.
- Paint the design (see below) onto the board.
- Punch/drill holes in the woolly parts of the lamb picture -- more holes than you anticipate having worshippers (or just mums) at the worship service.
- Insert a small chrysanthemum (preferably, but not necessarily white) into each hole to make a woolly-looking lamb.

You may display the poster at the entrance to the worship area to announce the theme for the day. Hospitality team members can help each person (or each mum) to remove one of the chrysanthemums and pin it on to wear during the service.

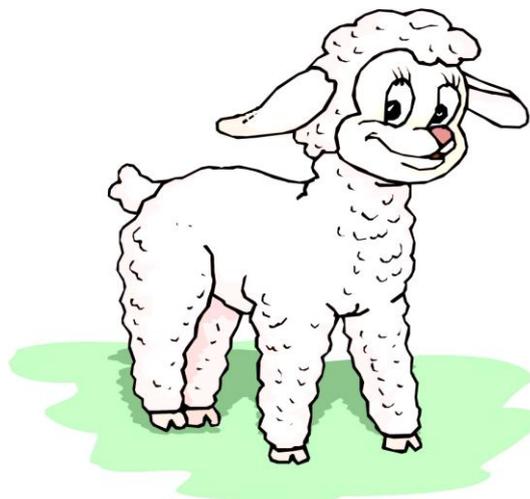
OR you may display the poster at the exit from the worship area and invite each person to take a chrysanthemum home with them after the service.

OR you may display the poster at the front of the worship area during the service. At prayer time, invite each person to come forward and take a flower to represent their prayers.

OR use the design to make a card to give each mum during or after the service. Use A-4 copy paper and print the design on the lower right-hand corner. This becomes the front of the card when it is folded. Write a personal message inside. Re-open the card. Punch a small hole in the centre of the lamb picture and slip in a chrysanthemum through the hole. Tape the stem inside before re-folding the card.

Cards can be prepared by volunteers before the worship service, or card-making can be incorporated into the service.

**LAMBS AND CHILDREN
NEED SOMEONE
TO LOOK AFTER THEM**



**WE THANK GOD FOR MOTHERS
AND MOTHERS, WE THANK YOU**



SAMPLE WORSHIP PLAN

Mothers & Shepherds

Two people (an adult or teen and their mother) share the role of WORSHIP LEADER.

Their interaction should be as informal, relaxed and normal as possible.

Rather than having the WORSHIP LEADERS bobbing back and forth from seats in the congregation to the presentation area, consider having chairs for them at the front.

You may go even further and have them dress in grazier outfits and sit on a rustic fence.

A shepherd -- MARY -- also plays a specific role in leading worship. She will need a shepherd's staff and a sheep bell, and should (after her arrival) stay with the lamb poster that features in the service.

You may also have other people as Bible reader, prayer leader and preacher.

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

1. ARRIVAL, BEFORE WORSHIP

HOSPITALITY TEAM greet each worshiper.
Welcome mothers with: *God bless you on this special day or Welcome, I hope this will be a special time for you.*

Make sure visitors are settled comfortably in the worship area.

TECH TEAM may display photos of mums from your congregation and community. Play the song 'Mother's Day' by Tom Chapin (from his *Moonboat* album).

You can find a sample collage to go with the song on YouTube:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jrgyhatq-78, but you will want to do a simpler display with recognisable local people.

2. WELCOME

WORSHIP LEADER: *It's Mothers Day. I wonder what that means in your household. Is it anything like that song?*

Welcome to worship at [name of church]. We are glad you chose to worship God — who creates and takes care of mothers — as part of your celebration of Mothers Day.

My name is [name]. I'll be leading worship today. And this is my mum [name]. As always, she'll be supporting me. Thanks, Mum.

WORSHIP LEADER MUM: *That's what mums are for. Let's begin with a song.*

3. OPENING SONG

[MARY is dressed as a shepherd — either modern, or nursery rhyme style, or similar to the woman in the painting.]

MARY brings in the poster (see page 11) and places prominently at the front of the church.

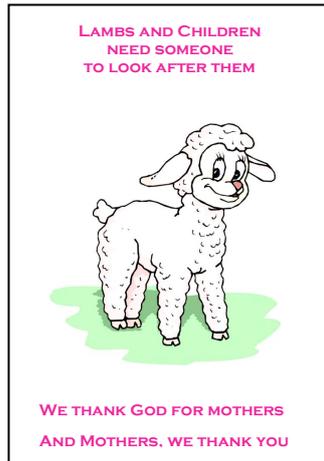
MUSIC TEAM begins singing:

Mary had a little lamb, little lamb, little lamb

Mary had a little lamb, its fleece was white as —
[spoken] Mums!?

It followed her to church one day, church one day, church one day.

It followed her to church one day which —
[spoken] wasn't what we expected at all.



4. THEME INTRODUCTION

WORSHIP LEADER: [reading from poster] 'Children and lambs need someone to take care of them.' How true!

WORSHIP LEADER MUM: We're all children, no matter how old we might be. And the Bible says that we are all like lambs – lambs who tend to stray and get in trouble, lambs who need a shepherd to take care of them.

BIBLE READER holds an open Bible while reading portions of John 10:1-17

Jesus said:

'The true shepherd calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought all of his own sheep out, he goes on ahead of them. His sheep follow him because they know his voice.

I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep, and my sheep know me. They know me just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I give my life for the sheep.

I have come so they can have life. I want them to have it in the fullest possible way.'

WORSHIP LEADER: Let's listen to that again. Since we're all lambs (or sheep), like Mum said, whenever we hear the word 'sheep', we can make a soft, safe lamb-y 'baa' sound. Is that OK, Mum.?

WORSHIP LEADER MUM: Great idea. Let's practice: 'baaaa'. Remember keep it soft and contented and just when we hear the word sheep.

BIBLE READER holds an open Bible while repeating:

Jesus said:

'The true shepherd calls his own **sheep** by name and leads them out. When he has brought all of his own **sheep** out, he goes on ahead of them. His **sheep** follow him because they know his voice.

I am the good shepherd. I know my **sheep**, and my **sheep** know me. They know me just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I give my life for the **sheep**.

I have come so they can have life. I want them to have it in the fullest possible way.'

5. SONG

WORSHIP LEADER: There's an old song Mum taught me when I was little — about being one of Jesus' sheep. You may know it too. Let's sing it.

TECH TEAM may show a slide with the words of the song, while

MUSIC TEAM leads the congregation in singing: *I am Jesus' little lamb*, H.L. von Hayn (translated W.F. Stevenson). See hymn web sites such as: www.hymnary.org/text/i_am_jesus_little_lamb_ever_glad_at_heart

I am Jesus' little lamb,
Ever glad at heart I am;
For my Shepherd gently guides me,
Knows my need, and well provides me,
Loves me every day the same,
Even calls me by my name.

Day by day, at home, away,
Jesus is my Staff and Stay.
When I hunger, Jesus feeds me,
Into pleasant pastures leads me;
When I thirst, He bids me go
Where the quiet waters flow.

6. GOOD SHEPHERD PAINTING

TECH TEAM shows a slide of Julien Dupre's painting 'The Good Shepherd' or another illustration of Jesus as a Shepherd with his sheep.

WORSHIP LEADER: I wonder what you see when you look at this picture. Please take a few minutes to talk about the picture with someone sitting near you.

MARY: Excuse me. I keep track of where my sheep is because I tie a bell around his neck. It sounds like this [ring a sheep bell]. Is it OK if I ring the bell to let people know when it's time to stop talking.

WORSHIP LEADER: *Great idea, Mary. Now 'What do you see when you look at the picture?'*

Allow time (about 2 minutes) then ring sheep bell.

(If possible, WORSHIP LEADERS circulate during the discussion times and listen to what is being said, so that they can make honest follow-up comments.)

WORSHIP LEADER: *I wonder if you see anything about God in the picture. Take a couple minutes to continue your conversation.*

Allow time (about 2 minutes) then ring sheep bell.

WORSHIP LEADER MUM: *And because today is Mothers Day, I wonder if you see anything about mothers in the picture. You can talk about that for a couple minutes.*

Allow time (about 2 minutes) then ring sheep bell.

WORSHIP LEADER: *Wow! These folks thought of a lot of things I hadn't thought of.*

WORSHIP LEADER MUM: *Yes, they saw things I hadn't noticed before. They may even have seen things the artist didn't know he was putting in his painting.*

7. MOTHERS

WORSHIP LEADER: [reading from poster] *'Children and lambs need someone to take care of them.*

There's an old saying: 'God couldn't be everywhere, so he made mothers to take care of us.'

WORSHIP LEADER MUM: *Which is totally UNTRUE, because God can be anywhere God wants to be and do anything God wants to do. God has no limitations like we do.*

WORSHIP LEADER: *Yes, Mum. But it is partly TRUE. God does give children mothers to take care of them. Mums are one of the ways God takes care of children.*

WORSHIP LEADER MUM: *OK. I have to agree with that. But where God has no limitations, we Mums do run out of time and strength and patience and imagination sometimes. We need someone taking care of us.*

WOESHIP LEADER: *It's Jesus the Good Shepherd who does that.*

WORSHIP LEADER MUM: *My very favourite part of the Bible reminds me of that. Psalm 23. I like to read it when I'm feeling stretched, or guilty or uncertain. I like to sing it, too.*

8. PSALM 23 SONG

TECH TEAM may show a slide with the words of the song, while

MUSIC TEAM leads the congregation in singing *The Lord's my Shepherd* or another musical version of Psalm 23 that is familiar to most of the worshipers.

9. PSALM 23 STUDY

Choose one of the following ways for worshipers to explore Psalm 23:1-4. Or give worshipers several options to choose from.

WORSHIP LEADERS will need to give clear explanation of what is to happen.

MARY: *Excuse me. Before you start, I wonder if everybody knows what a 'rod-and-staff' is. [Show a walking stick, similar to the one in the painting, or better still a rough stick with a bent end.] This is my shepherd's staff. You can probably guess how we shepherds can use a stick like this.*

OPTIONS

- A sermon or address.
- A Bible study (see page 10) in which people – in small groups or the whole congregation – work at finding parallels between what the shepherd of the psalm does; what mothers do and what God does. One group could work on the 'mother' column and another group on the 'God' column. Or work on both together. Complete as much of the chart as possible or just have a conversation about it.
- Create freeze-frame photographs of the seven things the shepherd does for their sheep: use actors with costumes or play dough claymation or puppets.
- Create freeze frame photos (as above) but do it in terms of a mother and child rather than a shepherd and sheep.
- Write an acrostic poem about Jesus using g-o-o-d s-h-e-p-h-e-r-d as starting letters.
- Write an acrostic poem about mothers using the song on page 9 as a model.
- Play in your own way with toy sheep and shepherd figures with fences and perhaps trees, green ground cloth for 'green pastures' and light blue fabric for 'still waters'.

Allow time: about 15 minutes with a 5-minute and a 2-minute warning jingle of the sheep bell.

If possible allow an opportunity for groups who work separately to share with others what they have done.

10. PRAYER FOR MUMS

WORSHIP LEADER MUM: *It's awesome and humbling to realise that what we mums do in our own families is a bit like what God does for everyone.*

WORSHIP LEADER: *That's a good reason for celebrating Mothers Day: to honour and thank you mums for what you do — every day in your own families — and to thank God for putting you in our lives.*

We're going to pray for our mothers now. But there's a special way to do it.

Mary, will you and your little lamb help us.

MARY: *OK, I think.*

WORSHIP LEADER: *We're going to shear your lamb.*

MARY: *Um, [looks at the congregation] are you sure they know what they're doing?*

WORSHIP LEADER: *They will in a minute.*

You may have noticed that Mary's little lamb does not have wool. It has mums.

WORSHIP LEADER MUM: *I was wondering about that.*

WORSHIP LEADER: *I invite each of you to come up and take a flower from Mary's lamb. Think of it as representing your mum (or someone who takes care of you like a mum).*

Take the flower back to your seat. Hold your flower and notice that it has lots of petals.

Each of those petals can remind you of something connected with your mum (or the person you are thinking of) that you want to thank God for.

Let me demonstrate.

[Take a flower from the lamb poster.]

This flower makes me think of Mum [Goes to her.]

[Examine one petal at a time.]

- *Thank you God for giving me a Mum who loves me,*
- *Thank you, God, that she taught me to sing 'I am Jesus little lamb'.*
- *Thank you, God, that Mum made me eat vegetables when I was little,*
- *Thank you, God, that she drove me to footy practice (and watched our matches even in the rain.)*

I think you get the idea.

The hospitality team will direct you.

MARY (with other shepherds, if you have a large congregation) stands beside the lamb poster and helps people select and remove flowers.

Allow a minute after the last person has returned to their seat; then ring the sheep bell.

WORSHIP LEADER MUM: Thank you, Mary for letting us shear your lamb. Thanks to all of you for joining in this huge thank-you prayer for mums.

11. ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORSHIP LEADER makes any necessary brief announcements. Include

- invitation to after-service activities or refreshments
- invitation to other activities and services of the congregation
- encouragement to take home their flowers as a reminder of the prayers they have said. (Hospitality team members could circulate with safety pins so people can pin on their flowers.)
- explanation of the way the offering will be collected and used.

12. OFFERING

The offering is collected in your usual manner.

During or after the offering, the **MUSIC TEAM** may perform music of their choice. This music is part of their offering and worship.

13. GENERAL PRAYERS

PRAYER LEADER/s (or WORSHIP LEADERS) lead worshippers 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. BLESSING

WORSHIP LEADER: *Mum, will you show them how you used to bless me each night at bedtime.*

[*WORSHIP LEADERS may demonstrate a blessing ritual that they have actually used, or they may use the following.*]

WORSHIP LEADER MUM: *You're a bit big for this now, but here goes. At bed time, we'd have a story or a chat. Then, just before I turned out the light. . . .*

WORSHIP LEADER: *I just remembered something. My bedside lamp had a lamb on it.*

WORSHIP LEADER MUM: *And I just remembered that you always used to interrupt with something else to chat about when you were supposed to go to sleep.*

Anyway. I'd give you a hug. [Do it.] Then I'd say: 'God bless you and keep you safe and happy. Amen.'

WORSHIP LEADER: *I'm going to give that blessing back to Mum right now. [Do it.]*

Perhaps you'd all like to exchange blessings with your mum, or your kids, or a friend sitting near you in the same way now. You could give a hug or a handshake or a high five.

TECH TEAM shows a slide with the words of the blessing.

[**WORSHIP LEADERS, MARY AND HOSPITALITY TEAM** look for anyone who does not seem to be giving or receiving the blessing. Go to them, ask if they are happy for you to give them a blessing, and do so.]

After a minute or so, give the sheep bell signal.

WORSHIP LEADER MUM: *Now as we leave this place, remember that Jesus, your Shepherd is always with you.*

He gives you everything you need, food and refreshment, strength, guidance, forgiveness and comfort.

WORSHIP LEADER: *Sort of like a good mum.*

WORSHIP LEADER MUM. *Amen.*

WORSHIP LEADER: *Let's go out with a song.*

15. CLOSING SONG

TECH TEAM may display a slide with the words of the song. Consider showing a picture of Jesus as the Good Shepherd holding a lamb in his arms in the slide with the words.

MUSIC TEAM leads the congregation in singing *I am carried* (Geoff Bullock).

16. AFTER WORSHIP

You may have a cuppa and snack for everyone after the worship service. Consider asking youth to do the catering rather than asking mums or grandmothers to do this service on Mothers Day.

You might serve some sheep-themed snacks (but resist the temptation to barbecue lamb chops on this occasion), eg

- Marshmallow sheep biscuits: Ice an oval-shaped bought biscuit. Cover with mini marshmallows, add a raisin (or craisin) eye and ear
- Sheep shape sandwiches: Put two slices together with your choice of filling. Use a sheep-shaped biscuit cutter to cut out the sandwiches.
- Cereal- (or popcorn-) ball sheep: see www.cherylstyle.com/showcase/how-to-make-cheerios-sheep-snacks-for-your-next-party/