



Summer Sundays

A cool concept

Summer is often a cooling off time in Australian churches. Church staff takes a break. Programs are on hold. Everyone seems to be looking for change, refreshment and time out.

Does this indicate that our churches

- wear out staff and volunteers in running year-long programs
- are not seen as places for refreshment
- make an all-out effort to connect with the community at Christmas time, and then virtually close down services for a month.

January is a time when many people go away on holidays. It's also a time when people who are not able to get away tend to be bored, dissatisfied and looking for something to do.

Summer Sundays is a way to enliven a church during January with a weekly intergenerational worship-learning-activity event.

Summer Sundays is organised by people other than the regular church worship-planning and children's ministry team — people who may be looking for a short term challenge rather than the week-in-week-out commitment of a year-round program (eg uni or older high school students on holidays, stay-at-home family groups, seniors).

Summer Sundays is an opportunity to engage people, both members and people who do not worship regularly, in a series of relational, enjoyable Christ-centred events.

Summer Sundays events can be held in addition to or instead of more traditional worship services.

Summer Sundays events can be organised by a single congregation or by a cluster of congregations (perhaps interdenominationally).

Summer Sundays events can be held in churches or homes or community venues.

Summer Sundays events are an excellent way for congregations in holiday-destination areas to minister to the people who visit their area.

Warm up to Summer Sundays

If what you have read so far resonates with you, and you are looking for a way of warming up your church life during January, read on.

- 1) Share the **Summer Sundays** concept with a few other people who may have the same vision as you.
- 2) Come up with a plan that you think could work in your situation.

Celebrate Jesus is one example of a fully-developed plan in. You'll find it on a separate document. Your **Summer Sundays** plan may be quite different.

- 3) Share your vision and plan with church leaders. Ask them to help you look at implementation of details that need to be considered.
- 4) Recruit a co-ordinator and a team of people who want to make **Summer Sundays** happen.
- 5) Work with the team to identify:
 - what you hope to accomplish with **Summer Sundays**
 - criteria for evaluating **Summer Sundays**
 - a general plan (including where the team goes for support and information)
 - a budget.
- 6) Then turn the co-ordinator and **Summer Sundays** team loose. Continue to pray for them and for the program, monitor their planning and support them as they request.

Summer Sundays Components

In a **Summer Sundays** event people of all ages participate in four component 'times' planned around a single, Christ-centred theme.

- 1) A learning time
- 2) A meal time
- 3) An activity time
- 4) A celebration/worship time

THEME

Your theme for the day will drive the way you approach each of the components. Keep the theme simple enough that both children and adults can engage with it.

Where do you go for your theme?

Good starting points include:

- the lectionary and learning/worship resources based on the lectionary, eg *Seasons of the Spirit*.
- a 5-part Holiday Bible adventure or any other short Sunday-school or Christian camping course
- the **Celebrate Jesus** resource.

The creativity (and time constraints) of your team will determine to some extent whether you will go to outside resources for a theme or for most of your program ideas and resources.

LEARNING TIME

Summer Sundays learning time (about 45 minutes) will include some whole-group time and some small-group (either family or age-specific group) time.

Generally you will

- begin together for a welcome and an introduction to the theme
- move into small group exploration of the theme, and
- regroup to report on your exploration.

Try to include in the learning time some activities that appeal to people with different styles of learning — verbal, visual, musical, kinaesthetic, relational — and challenge them (as well as your presentation team) to use their creativity.

CELEBRATION/WORSHIP TIME

Summer Sundays worship time will be fairly informal. Most of it will be pulled together at the last minute as a response to what has happened in the learning and/or activity time.

Format for a typical Summer Sunday worship

- Group singing — a simple, theme-related song that has actions or dance connected with it
- A worship leader announces that we are in God's presence, that God has invited us to worship him. That God has revealed himself today as [the day's theme].
- The theme is stated in song, action, reading or other creative way that will help people remember it.
- Various groups or individuals report on what they have discovered about the

theme: they may do this by showing pictures, telling stories, explaining other ways that they heard, explored and responded to the theme.

- After each report, the worship leader thanks the presenter and thanks God for what he has shown us.
- A time of prayer can be based on concerns given to the prayer leader by small group leaders from their observation, discussion, or specific requests of participants.
- The theme is restated in the same way or in a different way from earlier.
- Worshipers are given a blessing, individually or in groups.
- End with an active song, if possible, one that reflects the theme.

MEAL TIME

Summer Sundays mealtime will generally be a shared meal, with all participants bringing something to share with others. Other possibilities include:

- a sausage or pancake sizzle (provided free or for a gold-coin donation)
- family picnics in which two families sit together and share
- a super Summer Sunday salad to which each family contributes salad vegetables which are cut up and tossed in a huge bowl. Team provides a variety of toppings/dressings and bread rolls.
- a super Summer Sunday sub. Start with longest French bread loaf/loaves. People bring their favourite sandwich stuffing (meat, cheese, salad, dressing). Pile these together into a super subway and cut into individual serving pieces.
- a super Summer Sunday sundae: ice cream with a variety of toppings.

Begin with a table grace.

Try to make meal time a time when people interact with others as well as just eat. You may give people a discussion question or mixer-type game to do while waiting for food or after they have finished eating.

ACTIVITY TIME

Summer Sundays activity time will, where possible, relate to the theme of the day. But this is not always possible.

Try to plan activities that can be engaged in by people of all ages and that they might not do (be able to do) on their own.

Some possibilities:

- a visit to a beach or bush area
- a cricket, softball match
- a video/movie with some related activity
- board games (or other indoor games)
- a service project, eg clean up a park area, take a performance to a hospital or nursing home
- a car/bicycle wash and detailing (be careful of water restrictions)

Summer Sunday Plans

Here are some ways you could schedule Summer Sunday Events

An early morning Breakfast plan

(for very hot Summer Sundays)

7:00am Gather for breakfast
 7:30am Learning time
 8:15am Celebration/worship time
 9:00am Activity/outing (no set finish time)

A Summer Sunday Lunch-time plan

10:00am Gather for learning time
 10:45am Activity
 12:00am Lunch
 12:45 Celebration worship

An afternoon plan

(for an air-conditioned site)

2:00pm Outing
 4:30pm Gather for debrief and learning
 5:15pm Worship/Celebration
 6:00pm Shared meal

A Summer Sunday Evening Plan

5:30pm Learning time
 6:15pm Shared meal
 7:00pm Worship/Celebration
 7:45pm Activity

Summer Sunday Invitations

Be sure to communicate your **Summer Sundays** plans to your regular worshipping congregation as early as possible. Help them to catch the vision of **Summer Sundays** — how it can warm up and invigorate members and draw in people from the community in what would otherwise be a cool time for the church.

Make use of any contacts you have with infrequent worshipers or contacts in the community during the Christmas season to invite them to **Summer Sundays**.

And invite participants in **Summer Sundays** to participate in your church's year-round programs and activities.

A sample invitation is attached.



In December we celebrate the birth of a baby.
Join us in January to celebrate the life of the man.

SUMMER SUNDAYS

at Summerville Uniting Church
corner of Bright Skies Highway and Holiday Road

Summer Sundays are for people of all ages.
Each event will include fun activities, DISCOVERY, PRAISE and a shared lunch.
Come by yourself*, with your family or with friends.

DATE AND TIME	GOOD NEWS THEME	LUNCH
Sunday, 2 January 10am – 1:30pm	Jesus is always powerful	Sausage sizzle
Sunday, 9 January 10am – 1:30pm	Jesus always loves us	Please bring a favourite vegetable for our Super Summer Sunday Salad
Sunday, 16 January 10am – 1:30pm	Jesus listens to us	Please bring a basket lunch to share with another group
Sunday, 23 January 10am – 1:30pm	Jesus always cares	Please bring a favourite sandwich filling for our Super Sunday Sub Sandwich
Sunday, 30 January 10am – 1:30pm	Jesus lives forever	Please bring a piece of fruit for our Super Sunday Ice-cream Sundae, and fish fry

Summer Sundays: do something special together, make new friends and celebrate Jesus.

For more information about Summer Sundays, ring the church at 7104 8285- or check www.svuc.com.au

Register by 29 December by ringing the church or turning in the registration form at the church office.

Cost: a gold coin for each person for each event.

*Children under age 12 must be accompanied by a parent or (recognised carer)
Please cater for your own special dietary requirements.

SUMMER SUNDAYS AT SUMMERVILLE UNITING CHURCH — REGISTRATION

Your name (adult)

Your address

Your contact phone number or email address

Names and ages of other people who will be coming with you

I/we intend to attend (tick)

- ☐ 2 January
☐ 9 January
☐ 16 January
☐ 23 January
☐ 30 January