



## AN ALL-AGE WORSHIP RESOURCE

*Just as Christ was raised from the dead, we too may live a new life.*  
(Romans 6:4b NIV)

**At Easter people of all ages celebrate new life — TOGETHER.**

These worship planning notes are prepared to coordinate with the Easter 2015 postcard campaign of the Uniting Church SA.

### CONTENTS

All-age worship notes .....	2
What is all-age worship?	
Why have all-age worship?	
Planning all-age worship	
A planning team	
Rehearsal	
Invitation and advertising	
Hospitality	
Worship space	
Visuals	
Music	
Movement	
Relationships	
Science and mathematic	
Nature	
Sermon	
Sacraments	
Something to take home	
Worship leaders	
Easter worship notes .....	6
Lectionary texts	
Easter songs	
Easter prayers	
Easter postcards .....	7
Mourning and joy .....	8
Easter and baptism .....	9
Togetherness .....	10
Easter Bible study .....	11
Sample worship service .....	12

### THE RESOURCE

The Uniting Young People Team of Mission Resourcing SA has prepared these notes to help congregations plan worship that involves people of all ages.

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.

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

For other all-age worship resources 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](mailto:children@sa.uca.org.au)

### UPSIZING & DOWNSIZING

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

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

# ALL-AGE WORSHIP NOTES

## WHAT IS ALL-AGE WORSHIP?

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 — 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 worshippers
- provides worshippers (young and old) with an experience they can remember and carry into their everyday lives
- encourages interaction and dialogue among people of the various generations and people with different personalities, experiences, lifestyles and interests
- takes seriously the understanding of the church as the multi-faceted body of Christ
- recognises and values children present in the worshipping congregation and 'the child within' each adult

## WHY HAVE ALL-AGE WORSHIP?

Our Easter theme 'Together in mourning and joy' almost demands that worship bring together people of all ages, ethnic backgrounds, abilities...

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 a body suffer when one part is cut off. All parts of a worshipping congregation suffer when one part is missing or 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 worshippers:

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

- see a different — possibly truer — face of God than if they worshipped with a homogenised group

There are also some practical aspects to all-age worship at Easter time.

Australians see Easter's long weekend 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 as well as people in the community who are drawn to attend church at Easter.

The guests coming to your church at Easter may be of any age. You want to plan a worship that includes everyone.

## 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. This will assist worship leaders in understanding the overall flow of the worship without being over-burdened or stressed at the last minute. It will also help them to cope with and embrace the unexpected.

As early as possible, begin working with the various individuals and existing teams who will present the service. If needed, organise new teams for this particular service.

People who decorate the worship area have a key role and should be involved in planning.

Your music team can also add their input to planning, ensuring that they are not asked to do anything that is beyond their capabilities.

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

Your tech team and/or people responsible for preparing electronic or printed materials should also be involved in planning.

## A PLANNING TEAM

The planning of worship can, itself, be an act of worship,

A special team consisting of one or 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 in planning worship for all ages.

Planning as an *intergenerational* team may not be easy at first, but it 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.

### Suggested planning steps:

- Begin with prayer, and trust God's Spirit to guide your planning.
- Identify the purpose, date and theme of the worship you are planning.
- Look through these notes to see how they can help your planning. You may find you want to pick up just one or two suggestions to incorporate into your regular worship format, or you may use large portions of the sample service or other resources.
- Develop a worship outline or flow chart.
- Flesh out details of the outline, considering your own people, traditions and facilities.
- Work out a preparation plan (a 'to do' list) making it clear who does what, when and how in preparation for worship.
- With worship leaders, plan details of who does what, when and how during the actual worship service.

## REHEARSAL

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

This will pinpoint any logistical problems, allow the worship leader/s to fine-tune instructions for the worshippers and ensure that the service itself runs smoothly. It will also help you assess the timing of the service.

Worship leaders can use rehearsal time to pray together and to remind one another that worship is not a talent show. Leaders are, themselves, worshipping God while they help others to listen and respond to God.

## INVITATION AND ADVERTISING

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

Uniting Church SA postcards (see page 7) can be used as invitations to your Easter worship, and you can use the matching posters to promote it in public places.

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

## 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** can be made up of people of different ages.

The team may have special responsibilities. They will be responsible for welcoming, assisting and ensuring the safety and comfort of all worshippers. They need to be particularly concerned for visitors, people who come alone, people who are very young or very old, people with physical challenges, and people who are unfamiliar with the language and practices used in your worship.

## WORSHIP SPACE

A clean, tidy and comfortable worship area can help guests and regular worshippers 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 rearrangement of furniture, or even in a hall rather than a sanctuary.

The sample service links Easter and baptism. Consider placing your baptismal font at the entrance to the worship area so people will pass it as they enter and leave the space.

## VISUALS

Some people who worship with you particularly enjoy and remember what they see. Make sure that you provide imagery that everyone, particularly the visual thinkers, can observe and learn through. Where possible, also give people opportunities to respond visually or with images during worship.

Ask your technology team (if you project images electronically) and people with artistic talent to create memorable visuals for all worshippers. Be sure that these visuals support the intended worship theme.

The postcard image can be the starting point for visuals in this year's Easter worship. It can fairly easily be made into an appliqué cloth banner or painted paper banner. Think 'large' for impact.

It can also be reduced in size to make badges for worship leaders and teams to wear, or to make magnets for people to take home. Consider asking worship leaders and teams to wear clothing in the earthy tones of the postcard background.

Use the postcard image on PowerPoint slides and/or worship bulletins and handouts.

The cross or crucifix, candles and flowers you have regularly in worship are all symbols of Easter. You may also have Easter decorations that you use annually.

## MUSIC

Some people who worship with you particularly enjoy and remember what they hear as rhythm and music. Be sure to provide some music for everyone, especially those who are musical thinkers.

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 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. Recorded music can be used in addition to, or even instead of, live music. You may also use instrumental music without words to enhance the mood of worship.

Include traditional hymns (perhaps hymns that have significant memories and meaning for older worshippers) as well as more contemporary songs and children's songs. You'll find some song suggestions on page 6.

## MOVEMENT

Some people who worship with you particularly enjoy and remember their body movements. Make sure that you provide something physical for all worshippers to do, especially those who are kinaesthetic thinkers.

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 particularly enjoy and remember what they discover as they relate to other people.

Give all worshippers, especially the relational thinkers, a chance to interact with others.

Some worshippers may be uncomfortable when asked to talk to others in worship. 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.

The 'Together' theme of this worship service puts the emphasis on relationships.

## SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS

Some people who worship with you particularly enjoy and remember what comes to them in the form of logical facts, numbers, lists, graphs and patterns. Whenever possible, provide opportunities for all worshippers, particularly the logical/mathematical thinkers to use these skills.

Such thinkers may be intrigued by the almost mathematical parallels between Jesus' death and resurrection, and our own death and resurrection.

## NATURE

Some people who worship with you particularly enjoy and remember what comes to them in a natural setting or relating to natural elements and processes. Whenever possible, provide opportunities for all worshippers, especially the natural thinkers to use these skills.

## SERMON

Some people who worship with you particularly enjoy and remember messages presented to them by a knowledgeable, authoritative speaker.

Most worship services have a sermon, homily, address or message of some sort. But you may plan a service with no formal sermon, on occasions 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.

## SACRAMENTS

God, who created people with different ways of thinking and learning (different 'intelligences'), gave his Church the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion.

These sacraments touch people who are natural thinkers: they involve natural elements of water, wine and bread. For those who are kinaesthetic thinkers, the sacraments involve movement and physical sensations, eating, drinking and being washed. The elements can be seen by visual thinkers, and there are words attached to them for verbal thinkers.

Some churches have policies that limit participation in the sacraments to people who meet certain age or other criteria.

Give special consideration to how you use sacraments in a service to which you invite people who will not 'qualify' for the sacraments. Will you go ahead with a sacrament, explain why participation is limited and let visitors watch what you do? Will you forego sacraments if having them will cause division?

Baptism and Easter are closely linked in Christian thinking and in our sample worship service. The service includes a baptism, if one can be scheduled. Alternatively, it has a 'remembrance of baptism' or 're-affirmation of baptism' for baptised members. The wording around these observances is chosen carefully, using phrases like 'we believe that when Christians are baptised...' or 'when Jordan is baptised, God will...' rather than 'since we were baptised...' or 'because you are baptised...'

## 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.

## 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.

One person (or a pair of people) is the overall worship leader for the all-age service. Worshippers (particularly guests) will recognise this person as the host/compere who is responsible for helping them engage with what happens in worship.

Other people can lead separate elements of the service. When someone — young or old — is responsible for leading worship they will feel valued, and may be more engaged in the service they lead and in other worship services.

*Easter*

# EASTER WORSHIP NOTES

## LECTIONARY TEXTS

The Revised Common Lectionary readings and options for Easter Sunday (Series B) are:

- Acts 10:34-43  
or Jeremiah 31:1-6
- Psalm 118:1,2,14-24
- Colossians 3:1-4  
or Acts 10:34-43
- John 20:1-18  
or Matthew 28:1-10

## EASTER SONGS

Here are some song suggestions for Easter worship.

### Traditional hymns

Look in the 'Holy Week', 'Passion' or 'Easter' section of your church's hymnbook or choose from this list of favourites:

- *Christ the Lord is risen today* (Wesley)
- *Glory be to Jesus* (Caswell)
- *He is risen, he is risen* (Alexander)
- *I know that my Redeemer lives* (Medley)
- *Jesus Christ is risen today, Alleluia* (Arnold)
- *My song is love unknown* (Crossman)
- *We welcome Glad Easter* (author unknown; tune ST. DENIO)
- *Were you there?* (spiritual)
- *When I survey the wondrous cross* (Watts)
- *Yours (Thine) is the glory* (Budry)

### Contemporary Easter songs:

- *Alive in us* (Morgan)
- *Because he lives* (Gaither)
- *Deeper and deeper* (Bullock)
- *Find me at the cross* (O'Brien)
- *He is Lord, he is Lord* (Mann)
- *How deep the Father's love* (Townsend, Kingsway/Thankyou)
- *I know he rescued my soul / My redeemer lives* (Morgan)
- *I know it* (Zschech)
- *It's all about Jesus* (Seeley, Planet Shakers)
- *Lead me to the cross* (Kendrick & Thompson)
- *My Redeemer lives* (Morgan)
- *Resurrection Shout* (Mann)
- *So you would come* (Fagar)
- *The stone's been rolled away* (Bullock)
- *The victory dance* (Ylvisaker)
- *The wonder of the cross* (Beeching)

- *When his time was over* (Mann)
- *You rescued me* (Bullock)

### Easter songs for children:

- *Don't you know that Jesus died?*  
(sung to the tune Do-Re-Mi from 'The Sound of Music' — [perputualpreschool.com](http://perputualpreschool.com))
- *God's love (that he sent us his Son)*  
(unknown)
- *God's love* (Veggie Tales)
- *Jesus dying on the cross* (Simpson)
- *Jesus loves me this I know* (Warner - vv 1&2)
- *Jesus is alive today* (sung to the tune of 'Mary had a little lamb' — [perputualpreschool.com](http://perputualpreschool.com))
- *Turn our sadness upside down* (Newton)

## EASTER PRAYERS

- Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, it is truly right and for our lasting good that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to you,

But chiefly we praise you for the glorious resurrection of your Son, who was sacrificed and has taken away the sin of the world, who by his death has destroyed death and by his rising has restored life.

Therefore, with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven, we adore and magnify your glorious name, ever more praising you and saying: Hosanna in the highest. Amen.

*(An ancient prayer of praise)*

- Lord,  
the resurrection of Your Son  
has given us new life and renewed hope.  
Help us to live as new people  
in pursuit of the Christian ideal.  
Grant us wisdom to know what we must do,  
the will to want to do it,  
the courage to undertake it,  
the perseverance to continue to do it,  
and the strength to complete it.  
*(From New Saint Joseph People's Prayer Book)*

You can find more Easter prayers at web sites such as:

- [faithandworship.com/prayers\\_Easter.htm#ixzz3PS5gJXzo](http://faithandworship.com/prayers_Easter.htm#ixzz3PS5gJXzo)
- [lords-prayer-words.com/times/easter\\_prayers.html#ixzz3PS7UhEJz](http://lords-prayer-words.com/times/easter_prayers.html#ixzz3PS7UhEJz)
- [methodist.org.uk/prayer-and-worship/lent-and-easter/prayers-for-lent-and-easter](http://methodist.org.uk/prayer-and-worship/lent-and-easter/prayers-for-lent-and-easter)



# EASTER POSTCARDS

From the Uniting Church SA Communications Team

## Connecting with community over Easter

For Christians across the world, Easter is a time of both mourning and joy. We grieve as we remember how Jesus died upon the cross, and rejoice over his resurrection — the act that has brought us from death to life. As we engage in Christian community over Easter, we are reminded of the strength we can find through God and each other in tough and joyful times.

This year's Easter postcard draws on these ideas while providing Uniting Church members an opportunity to invite those outside the church community to come and hear the Easter message. Each postcard provides space for a custom message, and the dates and times of your Easter services.

**Back cover verse:** *Just as Christ was raised from the dead, we too may live a new life.*  
(Romans 6:4b NIV)

**Postcards:** \$75 per 1,000 (minimum of 1,000)

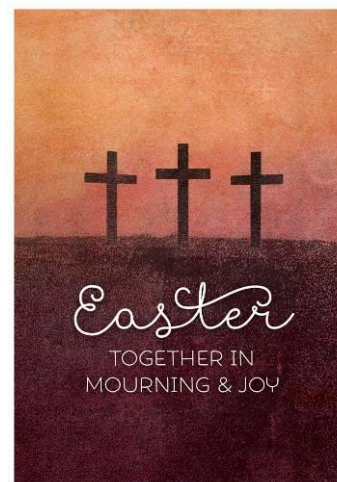
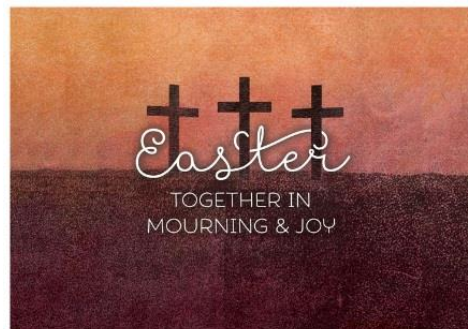
**Posters:** \$10 for 10 A3 posters (minimum of 10)

**Orders close: Wednesday 25 February**

The postcards and posters will be available for pick-up from the Uniting Church SA Synod Office (Level 2, 212 Pirie Street, Adelaide) from Thursday 5 March. Registered post can also be invoiced if you would like the items to be sent once they have been printed.

For further information, please visit

[sa.uca.org.au/postcards](http://sa.uca.org.au/postcards) or contact the Communications team on 8236 4230 or [communications@sa.uca.org.au](mailto:communications@sa.uca.org.au)



Easter

# MOURNING AND JOY

**Mourning** is a specific form of sadness: grief over the death of someone. Mourning also refers to the behaviours of grieving people, often prescribed by their culture.

**Related terms:** grief, bereavement, sorrow, sadness, also remembrance and respect.

The term 'mourning' may not be familiar to children (and some adults). It sounds like 'morning'. Whenever a worship leader uses the term 'mourning', a significant number of people will misunderstand what they are saying. Define the term early in the service and re-state the definition occasionally (e.g. 'mourning — being sad that someone has died'). Alternatively, although it will miss some of the richness of the term, you might replace 'mourning' throughout the worship service and speak only of 'sadness'.

Mourning and joy are opposites. But they are also complementary. Joy can often be empty or incomplete if it is not contrasted with sadness or mourning. Mourning is deepest when it contrasts with joy. Mourning is most bearable when there is memory of joy and/or anticipation of future joy.



## EASTER & PENTECOST

Jesus' followers mourned his death. Debilitating sadness turned to joy when they recognised that he had truly come back to life. It turned to powerful motivating faith when they were filled with the Holy Spirit.

## IN SCRIPTURE

In John 11 we learn that Jesus mourned along with his friends Mary and Martha when their brother Lazarus died. That mourning turned to joy when Jesus brought Lazarus back to life.

In verses 25 and 26, Jesus provides the Christian's claim to joy even in times of mourning:

'I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even if they die. And whoever lives by believing in me will never die.'

Scripture is dotted with other references to sorrow turning to joy.

- You have turned for me my mourning into dancing. You have loosed my sackcloth and girded me with gladness. (Psalms 30:11)
- Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning. (Psalm 30:5)
- The Spirit of the LORD and King is on me. The LORD has anointed me to announce good news to poor people. He has sent me to comfort those whose hearts have been broken... Our God has sent me to comfort all those who are sad. He wants me to help those in Zion who are filled with sorrow. I will put beautiful crowns on their heads in place of ashes. I will anoint them with olive oil to give them joy instead of sorrow. I will give them a spirit of praise in place of a spirit of sadness. (portions of Isaiah 61)
- Then young women will dance and be glad. And so will the men, young and old alike. I will turn their mourning into gladness. I will comfort them. And I will give them joy instead of sorrow. (Jeremiah 31:12)
- Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. (Matthew 5:4)
- You will be sad, but your sadness will turn into joy. (John 16:20)
- He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away. (Revelation 21:4)

Easter



# EASTER AND BAPTISM

The Uniting Church acknowledges that Christ incorporates people into his body by Baptism. In this way Christ enables them to participate in his own baptism, which was accomplished once on behalf of all in his death and burial, and which was made available to all when, risen and ascended, he poured out the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

(Section 7 of **The Basis of Union** of the Uniting Church in Australia)

## HISTORY

Baptism on Easter Sunday is an old tradition.

In its early years, Christianity was something of an underground movement. To insure that adherents were sincere, a system of three stages developed for becoming a Christian:

1. an initial assent to the faith — what we would call 'accepting Christ as your personal Saviour'
2. a probationary period of three years, during which the new believer received training and was expected to show the sincerity of their new faith by a real change in life patterns
3. the baptismal period with several days of fasting and prayer followed by Baptism on Easter morning

In 313 AD Emperor Constantine established the first official Christian church.

With many new converts to Christianity, the probationary period was shortened to 40 days of intense preparation and training. That is the 40 days we now observe as Lent.

Since then two major changes have occurred:

- The Sacrament came to be viewed as God's saving act in itself, not dependent on the individual's training or performance. Baptism of infants and young children was encouraged. Since with infants there was no instruction, there was no need to delay baptism to a particular date.
- The Lenten observance lost its significance as preparation for baptism and became a time in which the entire church focused on the Lord's suffering, death, and resurrection.

The practice of baptism on Easter Sunday can deepen our understanding of baptism and add to the joy of our Easter worship. It remains in many countries and churches.

## THEOLOGY

The only times in the gospels when Jesus is recorded as speaking of his own baptism, he is referring to his coming death and resurrection (Luke 12:50; Mark 10:38).

St Paul paints this very clear picture of the relationship between our baptism and Easter in his letter to the Romans:

All of us were baptised into Christ Jesus. Don't you know that we were baptised into his death? By being baptised, we were buried with Christ into his death. Christ has been raised from the dead by the Father's glory. And like Christ we also can live a new life.

By being baptised, we have been joined with him in a death like his. So we will certainly also be joined with him in a resurrection like his. (Romans 6:3-5)

The Bible teaches us that the payment for sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life! In baptism we are united with Jesus, so that his death counts as ours. And just as his death is ours, his resurrection is also ours!

Like resurrection, baptism is the start of new life after death. An old life is left behind and a new life is begun.

Whether we are baptised as adults on confession of faith or as infants within the household of faith, we share in the new everlasting, sin-free life which Christ began through his death and resurrection.

Christian baptism — through water and God's word — joins people with Jesus' death and resurrection. Baptism makes Easter a forever-and-ever way of living, not an isolated historic event.

Easter

# TOGETHERNESS

Baptism into Christ's body initiates people into Christ's life and mission in the world,  
so that they are united in one fellowship of love, service, suffering and joy,  
in one family of the Father of all in heaven and earth,  
and in the power of the one Spirit.

The Uniting Church will baptize those who confess the Christian faith,  
and children who are presented for Baptism and for whose instruction and nourishment in the  
faith the Church takes responsibility.

*(Section 7 of **The Basis of Union** of the Uniting Church in Australia)*

## TOGETHER WITH CHRIST

By the power of the Holy Spirit, in baptism  
we are joined to Christ — his death and his  
resurrection.

## TOGETHER IN THE CHURCH

By the power of the Holy Spirit, in baptism  
we become members of 'the body of  
Christ' which is the universal Church,  
called to his mission in the world.

That mission includes: announcing the  
good news and freedom, comforting the  
broken-hearted, working for peace and  
justice, and thereby showing how glorious  
God is.

## TOGETHER WITH ONE ANOTHER

The old saying goes: 'a burden shared is a  
burden halved; a joy shared is a joy  
doubled.'

Our own lives — the mourning, the joys  
and the ordinary times — are blessed  
when they are shared with community,  
friends, family and church family.

Part of our mission is to walk beside  
people, sharing the mourning, joys and  
ordinary lives of others — particularly  
people who are struggling and  
marginalised.

Jesus died once and for all. Through Jesus'  
death we are bound together with all  
people.

## ALL AGES TOGETHER

Alan G. Harkness highlights three key aspects  
of generations living and worshipping,  
experiencing joy and sorrow together:

1. Intergenerationality is an expression of  
who God is.
2. Intergenerationality is the essence of the  
church.
3. Intergenerational processes are integral  
to personal faith development.

*(Religious Education, Vol 93, No. 4, 1998)*

## BAPTISM & EASTER TOGETHER

The link between baptism and Easter is  
discussed on page 9.

## EASTER & GOOD FRIDAY TOGETHER

Without Good Friday, there would be no  
Easter. Without Easter, Good Friday would  
be simply an unfortunate execution.

By entwining the word 'Easter' with the  
drawings of crosses, this year's Easter logo  
reminds us that Christ's death and  
resurrection, together, are the way God  
has rescued us — taken away the guilt of  
our sin (our old self) and replaced it with  
the purity of Jesus.

## MOURNING & JOY TOGETHER

The relationship between mourning and  
joy is discussed on page 8.

Easter

# AN EASTER & BAPTISM BIBLE STUDY

FOR SMALL GROUPS OF YOUTH AND ADULTS

All of us were baptised into Christ Jesus.  
Don't you know that we were baptised into his death?  
By being baptised, we were buried with Christ  
into his death.  
Christ has been raised from the dead  
by the Father's glory.  
And like Christ we also can live a new life.  
By being baptised, we have been joined with him  
in a death like his.  
So we will certainly also be joined with him  
in a resurrection like his.  
We know that what we used to be  
was nailed to the cross with him.  
That happened so our bodies that were ruled by sin  
would lose their power.  
So we are no longer slaves of sin.  
That's because those who have died  
have been set free from sin.  
We died with Christ.  
So we believe that we will also live with him.  
We know that Christ was raised from the dead  
and will never die again.  
Death doesn't control him anymore.  
When he died, he died once and for all time.  
He did this to break the power of sin.  
Now that he lives, he lives in the power of God.  
In the same way, consider yourselves to be dead  
as far as sin is concerned.  
Now you believe in Christ Jesus.  
So consider yourselves to be alive  
as far as God is concerned...  
You have been brought from death to life.  
So give every part of yourself to God to do what is right.  
Sin will no longer control you like a master.  
That's because the law does not rule you.  
God's grace has set you free.

## Romans 6:3-14

← This passage is from Paul's letter to Christians at Rome.

1. **Read** it aloud, imagining that Paul is writing directly to you and your group.  
As you read, circle the words 'we' and 'us' that bring you into the message along with Paul himself.
2. **Share** your initial impression: What do you think is Paul's main point for you?
3. **Choose** one word that you think is significant in the passage. Each person choose a different word.
4. **Underline** your word each time it occurs in the passage. Count how many times it is used.
5. **Discuss:** Why do you think Paul repeats so many words and phrases?
6. **Find** a partner. With your partner, see if you can make a sentence that describes the relationship of the words you have both chosen. If you wish, you can draw lines connecting your words in the text.
7. **Check** your sentence with the passage to make sure it agrees with Paul's teaching.
8. **Share** your sentence with the whole group.
9. Find another partner and **repeat** steps 6-8. If you draw lines, use a different colour.
10. This is an 'Easter' study'. This time, each individual **use** your own word and match it with the word 'Easter'. Make a statement about what your word has to do with Easter and share it with the group.
11. **Turn** your sentence into a prayer that begins: 'Thank you, God, that because of Easter...
12. **Pray** your prayers of thanks.



## A SAMPLE ALL-AGE WORSHIP SERVICE

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

### LEADERSHIP

Leadership of this service is shared among:

- Two WORSHIP LEADERS — adults or teens or an intergenerational team. They may alternate 'speeches' as written or one person can lead each segment.
- A BIBLE READER — adult or teen.
- A WORD EXPERT — adult or teen.

*If the BIBLE READER and WORD EXPERT are adults, they may invite individual children to come forward and 'help them read' some segments.*

- Three PRAYER LEADERS — family groups
- MUSIC TEAM and SONG LEADER
- HOSPITALITY TEAM
- A MINISTER preaches and/or administers the sacrament of baptism, and may take any of the other leadership roles.

In a large congregation, all worshippers will be able to relate to someone in the leadership group of their own age, gender, or ethnicity. In a small congregation almost everyone has a leadership role, and that can be very good.

### SET UP

If possible, arrange the front of the church so that there is a table or music stand at either side — one for the **BIBLE READER** with a large Bible or a laptop computer, and the other with a large dictionary or laptop for the **WORD EXPERT**.

Have your baptismal font clearly visible, either front and centre or at the entrance to the worship space so people will pass it as they enter and leave.

### 1. AS PEOPLE ARRIVE OUTSIDE THE CHURCH

The word 'Easter' in the postcard and banner may remind us of the word 'Eternity' that was chalked on the sidewalks of Sydney in the middle of the last century by Arthur Malcolm Stace.

If you have a paved area outside the entrance to your church, prepare for this welcoming activity by having someone draw on the cement, bitumen or bricks a large copy of word 'Easter' and the crosses from the postcard.

The **HOSPITALITY TEAM** greets each person, gives them a piece of chalk and invites them to use the chalk to write their name on the paving near the banner replica. Those who cannot actually write or bend down can observe and encourage others.

### 2. AS PEOPLE MOVE INTO THE CHURCH

Prepare envelopes with the Easter logo on the outside. Consider printing the logo in colour on the envelope, or printing the logo on paper and gluing it to the envelope. Alternatively, simply write the word 'Easter' in cursive writing as close to the style of the logo as possible.

Place a length of string or twine (30-40cm) in each envelope. Seal the envelopes.

The **HOSPITALITY TEAM** gives each person an envelope and tells them not to open the envelope until they are instructed to do so.

The **HOSPITALITY TEAM** helps people find and move to suitable seats. They may introduce visitors to someone sitting near them.

The **MUSIC TEAM** plays a prelude or instrumental versions of songs that will be sung in the worship service.

The **TECH TEAM** may display the Easter logo or Easter story illustrations that will be used later in the service.

### 3. WELCOME

**WORSHIP LEADER A:** *Good morning everyone. This is a very, very, especially good morning. It's Easter! Easter is the celebration of life — the new life that Jesus gives us.*

**WORSHIP LEADER B:** *When you came in you were given an envelope with the word Easter on it. Keep it handy, but don't open it until we tell you to.*

**WORSHIP LEADER A:** *Sometimes when our heads and hearts are busy in worship, we need something for our hands to do. If your hands need something to do, I invite you to trace over that beautiful word Easter on your envelope.*

**WORSHIP LEADER B:** *Welcome to this Easter worship celebration at [name of church]. My name is [name].*

**WORSHIP LEADER A:** *And I'm [name].*

*[Name] is our WORD EXPERT. We need him/her because sometimes we use words that need explaining.*

*[Name] is our BIBLE READER, because . . . Well, because the Bible is God's special book. It's where we look to find out what God has to say to us.*

**WORSHIP LEADER B:** *The four of us, along with the band, will be leading you in worship — TOGETHER.*

**WORD EXPERT** (reading): *TOGETHER: two or more people gathered in a single place or into a single group for a single purpose.*

**BIBLE READER** (reading): *Jesus said: 'Where two or three people gather together in my name, I am there with them.'* (Matthew 18:20)

**WORSHIP LEADER A:** *The risen Jesus is here with us as we gather together in his name to worship him.*

**WORSHIP LEADER B:** *That's awesome. That's something to celebrate, to shout and sing about. Let's 'raise our glad voices' and sing the story of Easter.*

### 4. SONG

**TECH TEAM** may display the song words as...

**MUSIC TEAM** leads the congregation in singing 'We welcome glad Easter'.

### 5. UNPACK THE SONG: THE WOMEN

**WORSHIP LEADER A** (may sing or speak the words of the song): *We just sang, 'tell how the women came early that day'. Let's think about that story.*

**TECH TEAM** may display an illustration of the crucifixion.

**WORSHIP LEADER B:** *On a Friday —we now call it 'Good Friday' — Jesus had been crucified. That meant that he was nailed to a cross like the ones in your envelopes [or indicate a cross ornamentation in your worship area].*

*On that Friday, Jesus died and his friends buried him.*

*The next day was the Jewish day of worship when no one was to do any work.*

*And then...*

**TECH TEAM** may display an illustration of the women at the tomb.

**BIBLE READER** (reading): *The Bible says: The Sabbath day was now over.*

*It was dawn on the first day of the week. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. (Matthew 28:28)*

**WORSHIP LEADER A:** *I wonder how the women were feeling that morning when they went to the tomb of Jesus, their friend who had been killed. What do you imagine?*

*(Allow about 30 seconds silence for people to wonder.)*

**TECH TEAM** may display the phrase 'MOURNING in the morning', by itself or with the illustration.

**WORD EXPERT** (reading): *MOURNING is about the sadness we **feel** when someone who is close to us dies.*

**WORSHIP LEADER B:** *That morning the women were mourning. I imagine they were feeling sadness, and maybe*

*. . . disappointment*

*. . . loneliness*

*. . . guilt*

*. . . anger ...*

*Did you have other feeling words? (Invite people to add their words.)*



**WORD EXPERT** (reading): *MOURNING* is also what we **do** when someone who is close to us dies.

**BIBLE READER** (reading): *The Bible says 'The women took the spices they had prepared.'* Luke 24:1.

**WORSHIP LEADER B:** The women were going to the tomb to take loving care of Jesus' dead body.

*What do we do in Australia today when someone we love dies?*

*Take a couple minutes to talk about this with people sitting near you or, if you prefer, just think about it yourself.*

(Allow about three minutes for discussion.)

## 6. UNPACK THE SONG: THE ANGEL

**WORSHIP LEADER A** (may sing or speak the words of the song): *In our Easter song we said 'Sing of the angel.' Let's look at the angel's part in the story.*

**TECH TEAM** may display an illustration of the angel at the empty tomb.

**BIBLE READER** (reading as expressively as possible): *The Bible says*

*There was a powerful earthquake.*

*An angel of the Lord came down from heaven. The angel went to the tomb.*

*He rolled back the stone and sat on it.*

*His body shone like lightning.*

*His clothes were as white as snow. . .*

*The angel said to the women,*

*"Don't be afraid.*

*I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified.*

*He is not here!*

*He has risen — just as he said he would!*

*Come and see the place where he was lying.* (Matthew 28:2-6)

**WORSHIP LEADER A:** *I wonder how the women were feeling after the angel spoke to them and they saw that the tomb was empty.*

*Perhaps their MOURNING changed to something else. What do you imagine?*

(Allow about 30 seconds silence for people to wonder.)

**TECH TEAM** may display the phrase 'JOY in the morning' either by itself or over the illustration.

**WORSHIP LEADER B:** Perhaps they were feeling joy, or maybe it was

*. . . wonder*

*. . . confusion*

*. . . fear...*

*Did you have other words? (Invite people to add their words.)*

## 8. UNPACK THE SONG: THE PROMISE

**WORSHIP LEADER A** (may sing or speak the words of the song): *In the song we said 'think of the promise which Jesus did give'.*

*Let's look at Jesus' promise.*

**WORD EXPERT** (reading): *PROMISE: a commitment and solemn statement or pledge that you will do something.*

**WORSHIP LEADER B:** Jesus made a solemn statement when his friend Lazarus died and Jesus brought Lazarus back to life.

**BIBLE READER** (reading): *Jesus said:*

*'I am the resurrection and the life.*

*Anyone who believes in me will live, even if they die.*

*And whoever lives by believing in me will never die.'* (John 11:25-26)

**WORSHIP LEADER A:** *That's an amazing promise!*

**WORSHIP LEADER B:** *Just before he died, Jesus had a meal with his followers and made a lot of 'solemn statements' about what was going to happen.*

**BIBLE READER** (speaking): *Here's one of them.*

(reading): *Jesus said:*

*Before long,*

*the world will not see me anymore.*

*But you will see me.*

*Because I live, you will live also...*

**WORSHIP LEADER A:** *It's that amazing promise again! Almost too amazing to believe.*

**BIBLE READER** (speaking): *It's almost as if Jesus expected that kind of reaction. Listen to Jesus' next promise.*

(reading): *The Father will send the Friend in my name to help you.*

*The Friend is the Holy Spirit.*

*He will teach you all things.*

*He will remind you*

*of everything I have said to you.*

(selected verses from John 14)

**WORSHIP LEADER B:** *Part of Jesus' promise is that God's Holy Spirit will help us believe Jesus' promises that are 'almost too amazing to believe'.*

## 9. RESPONSE TO THE STORY AND PROMISE

**WORD EXPERT** (reading): *BELIEVE*: to have confidence or faith in the truth of something or someone, even without absolute proof.

**WORSHIP LEADER A**: *With the help of God's Spirit we can believe Jesus' 'almost unbelievable' promises.*

**WORSHIP LEADER B** introduces one of the following options and the **TECH TEAM** displays the words.

OPTION 1: Sing a song based on the Apostles' Creed, eg

- We believe (News Boys)
- This I believe (Hillsong)

OPTION 2: Read/say the Apostles' Creed together.

OPTION 3: **BIBLE READER** reads Paul's summary of Jesus' life in 1 Corinthians 15:1-8.

## 10. BAPTISM

**WORSHIP LEADERS** move to the baptismal font.

**WORSHIP LEADER B**: *Baptism is a very special part of our life as Christians.*

**WORD EXPERT** (reading): *BAPTISM*: a Christian religious rite or ceremony consisting of immersion in or sprinkling with water as a sign that a person is washed clean from sin and becomes a member of the Church.

**WORSHIP LEADER A**: *We believe that in baptism God does some amazing — there's that word again, 'amazing' — things for us. Baptism links us together with Jesus, together with the whole Easter story and together with one another.*

**BIBLE READER** (reading):

*The apostle Paul wrote:*

*By being baptised,*

*we were buried with Christ into his death.*

*Christ has been raised from the dead*

*by the Father's glory.*

*And like Christ we also can live a new life.*

*By being baptised,*

*we have been joined with him*

*in a death like his.*

*So we will certainly also be joined with him in a resurrection like his. (Romans 6:4,5)*

**The Sacrament of Baptism** is central to this Easter worship experience.

The **MINISTER** will either administer an actual baptism, or lead the congregation in re-affirmation of baptism.

Use your regular liturgy, possibly adapting it to reflect more clearly the 'Easter — together in mourning and joy' theme.

As you speak, be sure to include any people among you who are not baptised. God's love and forgiveness are not the exclusive treasure of baptised Christians.

## 11. SONG

**WORSHIP LEADER A**: *There's an old spiritual song that asks the question: 'Were you there? — when all the events of Easter happened.*

**WORSHIP LEADER B**: *It's like someone is thinking about Jesus being hung on the cross, and buried and rising. They know how the story makes them feel. They tremble.*

**WORD EXPERT (reading)**: *TREMBLE*: to shake without trying to, with quick, short movements, from fear, excitement, weakness, or from cold.

**WORSHIP LEADER B**: *It seems like the singer is also looking for someone who was actually there, who can tell more about it.*

**WORSHIP LEADER A**: *I don't know about that. But I do know that through baptism, Christians were there; together with Jesus in the mourning and the joy.*

**WORSHIP LEADER B**: *So... when you sing this song, if you want to, you can change the words from 'were you there?' to 'I was there'.*

**WORSHIP LEADER A**: *And it wouldn't hurt to give a little shake when you sing 'tremble, tremble, tremble'.*

**TECH TEAM** may display the song words and related illustrations as . . .

**MUSIC TEAM** leads the congregation in singing 'Were you there?'

## 11. SERMON

The **MINISTER** may give a brief message on the theme 'Easter — together in mourning and joy'.

See page 10 for some possible approaches.

## 12. ATTACHMENTS

**WORSHIP LEADER A:** *One of the things that intrigues me about the Easter story was how the tomb that was sealed up tight one day, and was wide open a couple days later. Somehow God's angel opened it.*

**WORSHIP LEADER B:** *More important, God's Son Jesus was alive again and, as a living person, came out of the tomb.*

**WORSHIP LEADER A:** *When people looked into the tomb, on Easter morning, all they found was the cloths that Jesus' body had been wrapped in.*

**WORSHIP LEADER B:** *Amazing!*

**WORSHIP LEADER A:** *This is going to be a bit less amazing.*

*Can you all find the envelope you were given when you arrived today? It was sealed up tight — a bit like the tomb.*

*Now is the time for you to break the seal, open the envelope and see what's inside.*

**WORSHIP LEADERS A & B** open their own envelopes.

**WORSHIP HOSTS** make sure all worshippers have envelopes to open.

**WORSHIP LEADER B:** *All I found is a piece of string.*

**WORSHIP LEADER A:** *Me too. And I guess all of you as well?*

**WORSHIP LEADER B:** *Why string?*

**WORD EXPERT (reading):** *STRING: a slender cord or thick thread used for binding or tying things together.*

**WORSHIP LEADER A:** *What we're going to do now, folks, is use the string to make a symbol of the togetherness of Easter and baptism.*

**WORSHIP LEADER B:** *To show that we are tied together with one another, please tie one end of your string to the end of someone else's string.*

**WORSHIP LEADERS A & B** demonstrate by tying their strings together.

**WORSHIP LEADER A:** *Easter doesn't just tie us together with one person, it ties us together with everyone.*

**WORSHIP LEADER B:** *That's the challenge. Can we tie all the strings together into one long rope?*

As people work, **MUSIC TEAM** may play the tune of 'Were you there?' and the

**HOSPITALITY TEAM** circulate and help people as needed.

When it appears that the task is nearly completed:

**WORSHIP LEADER A:** *If you're holding a loose end, please hold it up. What we are aiming for is one single rope with just two ends.*

People continue working until this task is completed.

**WORSHIP LEADER B:** *Well done. The joined-together rope is a symbol that because of Easter we are all joined together with one another.*

**WORSHIP LEADER A:** *But that's not all. Remember what St Paul wrote about Easter.*

**BIBLE READER (reading):**

*By being baptised, we were buried with Christ into his death.*

*Christ has been raised from the dead by the Father's glory.*

*And like Christ we also can live a new life.*

**WORSHIP LEADER B:** *Will the two people with loose ends of rope hold them up.*

*[Name of person holding one end], please tie your rope end to the cross as a symbol that we are joined together with Jesus' death and life, in mourning and joy.*

**WORSHIP LEADER A:** *[Name of person holding the other end], please tie your rope end to the baptismal font as a symbol that, through baptism, we are joined together with Jesus' death and life, in mourning and joy.*

**WORSHIP LEADER B:** *Well done, everybody. Give yourself a clap.*

**WORSHIP LEADER A:** *Easter is all about what God does, and our togetherness is God's work, so let's give God an even bigger clap.*

Demonstrate looking upward and clapping above your head.

## 12. PRAYERS

**WORSHIP LEADER B:** *That clap was a way of praying: 'Thank you, God. You are amazing.'*

**WORSHIP LEADER A:** *We're going to have some other prayers now.*

Prayer-leading families may compose their own prayers on their topic, or they may work with worship planners or the minister to write prayers, or worship planners can give them prayers to read.

Working together as a family to compose prayers that include praise, thanks and requests can be a faith-nurturing experience for a family.

**FAMILY 1:** *Let's pray about being together with one another...*

**FAMILY 2:** *Let's pray about being together with Jesus...*

**FAMILY 3:** *Let's pray about being together in mourning and joy...*

### 13. ANNOUNCEMENTS

**WORSHIP LEADER B OR CONGREGATIONAL LEADER** makes any needed short announcements.

- Invite people to any upcoming activities of the congregation.
- Explain how the offering will be collected, and how the offering will be used.
- Introduce the after-church activity:

#### AFTER CHURCH ACTIVITY

As people leave they can take home a piece of chalk like the chalk they used before the service. They can use the chalk to write the word 'Easter' on the road or sidewalk near their home.

This 'good graffiti' may get some people talking about Easter.

Chalk will wash off with the first rain or be rubbed off by traffic.

### 14. OFFERING

The offering is collected in the usual way.

The **MUSIC TEAM** may perform a musical item, either vocal or instrumental.

### 15. EASTER CHANT

**WORSHIP LEADER A:** *Easter is the celebration of life. Three days after his death, Jesus rose to new life.*

**WORSHIP LEADER B:** *There's a joyful Easter cheer that Christians have used for hundreds of years. Someone says: 'Christ is risen!'*

**WORSHIP LEADER A:** *Someone else replies: 'He is risen indeed!'*

**WORSHIP LEADER B:** *This time, will you all please say the response: 'Christ is risen!'*

**WORSHIP LEADER A and CONGREGATION:** *'He is risen indeed!'*

**WORSHIP LEADER B:** *Let's do that again. This time, please stand up.*

**CONGREGATION STANDS.**

**WORSHIP LEADER B:** *Let's see if we can make it sound louder, more positive and more joyful. 'Christ is risen!'*

**WORSHIP LEADER A and CONGREGATION:** *'He is risen indeed!'*

**WORSHIP LEADER B:** *Well done! Let's do the Easter cheer with one another. Turn to someone near you. One of you, say the first sentence, the other one say the response. Then change around.*

**WORSHIP LEADER A:** *If you feel like it, you may give one another a high five when you do it.*

**WORSHIP LEADER B** (giving a high five to A): *Like this: 'Christ is risen!'*

**WORSHIP LEADER A** (joining a high five with B): *'He is risen indeed!'*

**WORSHIP LEADER B:** *See if you can do the Easter cheer with at least five different people in the next few minutes.*

**WORSHIP LEADERS A & B and HOSPITALITY TEAM** move around the congregation setting an example and making sure anyone standing on their own is included.

As this is happening, the **MUSIC TEAM** instrumentalist/s plays the closing song. Start softly. Gradually increase volume so that when the **LEADERS** are ready to resume, the music calls people to attention.

### 16. CLOSING SONG

**WORSHIP LEADER A:** *Let's keep that high-five energy going as we sing our final song. You might like to punch up in the air when we sing 'Yours is the glory!'*

**TECH TEAM** may display the song words as...

**MUSIC TEAM** leads the congregation in singing 'Yours (Thine) is the glory' (Budry) or another favourite Easter praise song.

### 17. BLESSING

**WORSHIP LEADER B:** *By his dying, Jesus destroyed death and by his rising he has restored life.*

**WORSHIP LEADER A:** *Go and celebrate the life Jesus gives you — in times of mourning, times of joy, and in ordinary times. Amen.*

### 18. LEAVING

The **HOSPITALITY TEAM** offers each person or family group a piece of chalk.

If the 'togetherness' rope is not a tripping hazard, leave it in place for people to examine as they leave.