

Worship Resources for *Evangelism and Church Planting Sunday*

April 27, 2003

Introduction

These worship resources are designed to assist you in your planning for worship on Evangelism and Church Planting Sunday, April 27, 2003. If you are unable to use these ideas on that specific Sunday, please choose another date to emphasize evangelism and church planting.

Primary scriptures for April 27 are: Acts 4:32-35; Psalm 133; 1 John 1:1-2:2, and John 20:19-31. The suggested theme is "Peace be with you," John 20:19. In the following pages you will find suggestions for the call to worship, invocation, hymns, praise songs, a children's story, thoughts for the sermon, illustrations, a benediction, and additional resources.

You are strongly encouraged to work into your schedule of worship services this focus on the important tasks of evangelism and church planting.



Call to Worship

Option A

LEADER: We are gathered in the presence of the risen Christ who remains with us forever.

PEOPLE: When we abide in the love of Christ, love, joy and peace grow.

LEADER: We are rooted in Christ's love, that we may bear these fruits together with all God's people.

ALL: With the faithful of every race, tribe, people, and nation we sing: blessing, glory, wisdom, thanks, honor and might be to God forever and ever.
Amen

Option B

LEADER: Jesus commanded: Love one another.

PEOPLE: We come to worship the God who is love, that we may learn to love one another.

LEADER: Jesus said: No longer do I call you servants; now I call you my friends.

PEOPLE: We come to worship the God whose friends we are through Christ.

LEADER: Let us sing praise to God and live in love and friendship toward the human family. Through Jesus Christ.
Amen

Option C

LEADER: The Spirit descends like a dove, bringing peace to unite the world in a transformed and caring community. The outcast and the lost are set free and God's presence brings hope to broken spirits.

PEOPLE: The Spirit of God comes like a breath bringing life to renew the people of God.

LEADER: The Spirit spreads like fire, bringing energy for witnessing to the love of God.

ALL: Spirit of the living God, come to us and transform our lives for living into the lives of others.

Invocations

Option A

Blessed are you, O God, for you have visited and redeemed your people, coming to us in Jesus, delivering us from all enemies, remembering your holy covenant, the oath you swore to our ancestors in the faith. You have come to set us free that we may serve you without fear all the days of our lives.

In Christ you have given us knowledge of salvation and forgiveness of sin. You have come to us to give light to those who sit in darkness

and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet in the way of peace.
Therefore, we praise you with psalms and
hymns and with thankfulness in our hearts
for the gift of yourself in Jesus.
Through your Spirit, may we put on
compassion, kindness, humility and patience,
so that those who do not know the power
of your presence will see your glory in us
and seek your forgiveness and grace.
In the name of the Christ we pray.
Amen

Option B: #755, and #757 (HWB)

Option C:

Eternal God of the universe, we thank you
that you do not leave us alone but place your
word within us and in the midst of our life
together. You are a living reality on the face
of the earth. Give us courage and commit-
ment to let your Spirit flow through us.
Emboldened by your Spirit, may we witness
to the power of your transforming love to
bring hope to a broken world. In Christ's
name we pray. Amen

Hymns and Other Songs Relating to the Scriptures and Theme

Music options from "Hymnal: A Worship Book" (HWB)

Call to Worship

#310 How good a thing it is (based on
Psalm 133)

Gathering and Praising

#278 Christ is alive! Let Christians sing!
#272 Christ is risen! Shout hosanna!
#274 O sons and daughters, let us sing!
#407 We are people of God's peace
#405 Where cross the crowded ways
#406 And is the gospel peace and love
#408 O day of peace

Praying

#30 Spirit divine, inspire our prayers
#356 Breathe on me, breath of God

Confession

#412 We shall walk through the valley
#411 I bind my heart this tide

Sermon Response

#506 I sought the Lord

Sending

#427 You shall go out with joy
#418 Move in our midst, verses 1, 3, 4

"Hymnal Subscription Service"

- If you believe and I believe, 1998:2 (923)
- Come and fill our hearts with your peace,
2000:2 (981) (also in "Songs and Prayers
from Taize," #28)
- He came down, 1998: 1 (893) traditional
- Cameroonian, arrangement by John L. Bell

"Sing and Rejoice!"

- #20 Fear not! rejoice and be glad
- #24 Fill my house (suggest inclusive
language)
- #31 God's family
- #60 Living stones
- #82 Kum ba yah
- #70 Many gifts
- #129 Unity
- #149 Yours is the kingdom

Other music options

- The peace of the earth be with you, words
for a Guatemalan traditional song, music
arranged by John L. Bell
- Goodness is stronger than evil, words by
Desmond Tutu, adaptation and music by
John L. Bell
- Come now O Prince of Peace, Korean tune,
words by Geoyong Lee, paraphrased by
Marion Pope
- We will take what you offer, words and
music by John L. Bell
- We come in peace, by Angela Clemens
- Come to me, by Gregory Norbet and
Weston Priory
- "God's Love is for Everybody: *Songs for
Small & Tall,*" CD with a "song and activity
guide" by Bryan Moyer Suderman &
friends (2002). The guide includes guitar
chords, musical notation and activity ideas
for using these songs with children in wor-
ship, etc. Contact Faith & Life Resources, a
division of Mennonite Publishing Network,
to order: 1-800-743-2484.
Songs include:
God's love is for everybody
On the Emmaus road
You gotta sing (When the Spirit
says sing)
God loves a picnic
Disciples in training
A God who makes friends
This little light of mine
- *Praise Hymns and Choruses*, Fourth Edition-
The Green Book by Maranatha Music
#11 Beloved let us love one another
#14 Blest be the tie that binds
(traditional melody with contempo-
rary piano accompaniment)



- #32 He is our peace
- #220 Make us one
- #238 Shine Jesus shine

Confession

Option A

When we do not accept as sisters and brothers those who are different from us, forgive us, O God. When we oppose you by opposing those who disrupt our routines and challenge our assumptions, forgive us, O God. When we willfully disobey you and lose faith in your purpose among us, forgive us, O God. In your mercy, restore us to newness of life. Empower us to witness with courage the presence of Jesus Christ among us. Amen

Option B

God, we confess that it is not easy to wait for you. Our world worships the power that acts quickly through force and might. It is difficult to wait on your reconciling power that comes slowly through love.

We admit, God, that while we claim to desire your reign of peace and justice, we take part in the ways of injustice, leaving little room for you to work in our lives.

We turn to you in repentance and openness to your Spirit. Forgive us and show us how to clear a path for you in our lives. Come to us and reveal your power to heal this land and our broken lives. Amen

Option C

God, you have come to us in Jesus, your chosen one. We confess that we turn from your love. We are yours, yet we refuse you. We cling to the security of our familiar ways rather than accepting the new life you offer us. We tolerate hatred, violence and injustice. We do not accept those unlike us as our brothers and sisters. We do not trust in your great compassion. Forgive us and renew a right spirit in us that we may live as your children. Through the grace of Jesus the Christ. Amen

Prayer for the Offering

God of peace, and giver of all good things, accept these gifts, which we give with joy, in recognition of the bountiful blessings you have bestowed upon us. May they in some small way help to unify our lives and spirits

with our hurting, economically deprived sisters and brothers around the world. We seek the peace of your shalom in our lives and in the lives of all who call on your name. In the strong name of Jesus we pray. Amen

Ministry to Children

This lesson should focus on sharing what we have received, specifically the good news that Jesus is alive and comes to meet us. The leader should bring a bag of chocolate Easter eggs for an object lesson.

1. Do you like chocolate? Did you get any last weekend?
2. What would happen if I gave the bag to one of you and that person took the whole bag and left with it? What would you think of him/her? (They might answer: selfish, mean, etc.)
3. That's true; that would not be very nice thing to do. What if that person would go and eat the whole bag? (That person might feel sick)
4. I want to tell you a little bit about Easter eggs. There are all kinds of Easter eggs. Some are candy, some are chocolate; sometimes people take real eggs and decorate them. (Talking about other types of Easter eggs would add to the story time.) What eventually happens when a chicken sits on her eggs? What will come out of the egg? (A little chick)
5. New life, a new little chick. At Easter, the same is true about Jesus. We know that when he died on the cross, they put him in a tomb and then three days later, God brought Jesus back to life. Just like a chick out of its shell, Jesus came to life! So at Easter we give Easter eggs reminding us that Jesus rose from the dead on Easter morning.
6. This morning, we are talking about Jesus meeting us and asking us to share with others that he is alive and brings us peace. If we did not tell other people this good news; if we never invited our friends and classmates to church where they could hear about Jesus and find out how much he loves them, we would be selfish, just like if we kept all these chocolates to ourselves.
7. So remember, these eggs remind us that Jesus is alive. I want you each to take a handful of these chocolate eggs and go into the congregation and give each one of them to someone different and tell them, "Jesus is alive." Be sure to keep one for yourself!



Sermon starters:

Acts 4:32-35, Psalm 133, 1 John 1:1-2:2,
John 20:19-31 By Jean Jacques Goulet

It is no coincidence that Evangelism and Church Planting Sunday falls on the first Sunday after Easter, for our outreach can be based on nothing else but encountering the risen Jesus. Our texts today are a powerful testimony to our missional God: the one who comes to us, the one who ministers to us, the one who calls us to do the same for others.



Today's gospel passage begins dramatically with the disciples cowering behind locked doors, afraid for their lives, and despondent, their hopes and dreams killed with Jesus on the cross. But the risen Jesus comes to the disciples, where they are, as they are. That Christ reaches out to us is not only the foundation of our missional theology, it is also the foundational experience of what it means to be a Christian. We are people who have met the resurrected Christ. The resurrected Jesus comes even to the doubting Thomas. The rest of our message as a church will mean nothing unless we invite people to meet the resurrected Jesus who has come once again to them in their doubts, their fears, their woundedness.

We have not only encountered the risen Christ but we have experienced his blessing. The peace Christ offered was not and is not just a greeting; it is an experience that changes lives. The Holy Spirit that Christ has left his church is what Christ continues to give us as we encounter him. We are not left alone: the Spirit continues to bring us healing and peace so that we become transformed people.

The disciples in the early church — the same group that had just days earlier been hiding in fear, shattered men — were now testifying with great power “to the resurrection of the Lord, and great grace was upon them.” (Acts 4:33) This is the gift of our encounter with our resurrected Lord. We are transformed and empowered to go out in his name, bringing to others what we have received. Individual lives, as well as communities, will begin to reflect the peace that is found in the commonwealth of our God. As our lives become a reflection of peace, we will, with the writer of 1 John, be able to say, “We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we

have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life — this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it ...” Our joy and lives will be complete as we reach out to others as Christ reaches out to us.

Benediction

Option A: #763, #765, and #766 (HWB)

Option B

You are the light of the world.
Let your light so shine,
that others may see the good things you do
and glorify God.
God is with us now and always.
Go in peace.

Option C

Eternal God, you have called us
into your church
to be witnesses to your faithfulness.
We depart from this place to be your servants
to the human family, and to proclaim the
good news to the entire world.
May your presence go with us
as we go forward as your ambassadors.
Amen

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