

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2013

Order of Service for an Ecumenical Act of Worship

Supplementary material to use with all ages together

Three craft ideas to use during the service

Sometimes it is helpful to have a craft area (perhaps on a cloth on the floor, in convenient space) where some activity happens right through the service. This can be a quiet place, while being a hive of activity. Don't think of it as disrupting the service, it is just providing something additional. Some children (and some adults too!) find that they can concentrate better when their hands are occupied.

Walk the talk

One of the meanings we attach to walking is that it involves action and commitment. This is where the slogan 'walk the talk' comes from. In other words, don't just say you believe something, do something about it.

- Invite people to make paper footprints by drawing round their feet and cutting the prints out. Use paint, crayons or stickers to decorate them and add the slogan 'Walk the talk'.
- They could be displayed on lining paper in the worship space.
- After the service, you could ask people to give a donation to a Dalit charity (a Google search will offer plenty of possibilities) to 'buy' a footprint to take home as a reminder to pray for Christian Unity.

Gospel shoes

- Gather together some old boots, shoes and trainers which are ready to be thrown away (ask for donations beforehand or approach a local charity shop).
- Provide a range of decorative materials: markers, paint, stickers, glitter glue, etc. Invite people to transform the discarded footwear into the shoes of the Gospel – ready to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God.
- Alternatively, this craft activity could be done some days beforehand, and the footwear used to decorate the church.

It can be helpful to have some all age activities for people to do in their seats any time during the service.

Simple friendship bracelet

- Beforehand, cut lengths of wool about 30cm long in three different colours and knot sets of one of each colour together at one end. If you use the Emmaus story, see below, use the same colours – blue, red and yellow.
- Give everyone a set to plait or twist into a friendship bracelet representing the threefold instruction of Micah 6 - to 'do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with your God.'

Ideas to integrate into the service

Call and response to be repeated through the service

Adding a sense of pattern and repetition can make worship more accessible to children and to all non-readers; to all people who learn visually and experientially, too.

This call and response with actions can be integrated at key points throughout the service, e.g. after the Assurance of pardon, before and after the testimony of faith, before and/or after the Gospel, with the story used for the sermon/homily, at the Intercessions, at the Dismissal.

Teach it, with the actions, either before you start or at the beginning of the service.

Leader: What does the Lord want us to do?

Congregation: **To do justice**, *Hold hands out straight, palms facing inwards towards each other.*
love mercy *Turn hands so that palms face upwards.*
and walk humbly with our God. *Lift hands to shoulder level, palms still upwards, as if in a gesture of prayer.*

Ideas for Specific Points in the Service

Section I Opening Invocation

Stop after each phrase for people to turn round and shake hands with a person sitting near them:

There is neither Jew nor Greek ,	<i>Shake hands.</i>
There is neither slave nor free person,	<i>Shake hands.</i>
There is neither man nor woman,	<i>Shake hands.</i>
For you are all one in Christ Jesus.	<i>Shake hands with the other people near to you.</i>

Section III Confession of sin and assurance of pardon

As a symbol of being sorry for sin, the congregation could take off their shoes and bring them to a suitable point at the front of the church, e.g. the Communion table or a convenient step (or, if this isn't practical, each person takes off their shoes and puts them just in front of where they are sitting or standing). Do this before the spoken confession, introducing it with words such as:

When we are unkind or unfair, it is usually when we have our shoes on. I invite you to take your shoes off now, as a sign that you are sorry for the things you have done wrong, and as a sign that we are in the presence of God.

If people bring their shoes forward, ask them to come and fetch them back after the Assurance of pardon. This will probably take some time and involve discussion about which shoes belong to whom. Don't be afraid of this – openness, friendliness and cooperation could stand in the place of a formal sharing of the Peace at this point.

Section IV Liturgy of the Word Sermon/Homily

This story weaves together the themes of Micah 6.6-8 with the journey on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24.13-35).

You will need three long rolls of fabric ribbon (blue, red and yellow) 3-5 cm wide and 5+m long, and a plate or bread board with a loaf of bread on it. Choose bread that can be easily torn in half.

Before the service, put a table in a central place where everyone can see it and put the bread on it. Fix one end of each roll of ribbon to the floor in different places in the worship space. They will be unrolled during the story and each ribbon should reach all the way to the plate with the bread on it. One ribbon could come up a central aisle, and the two others come in from either side, or whatever positions will work within your building.

During the service one person waits at each unrolled ribbon. Ensure they know the cue for unrolling it:

Ribbon 1 blue	'we thought that he would bring God's justice to us'
Ribbon 2 red	'not only God's justice, but also God's mercy'
Ribbon 3 yellow	'listened as he explained the Scriptures to them'

As each theme from Micah is mentioned, the storyteller should pause in the story and wait while the relevant ribbon is unrolled. This should be done slowly and purposefully, not worrying about the silence; the purpose is to give people time to think. The end of the ribbon can be tucked under the plate of bread. The ribbon roller can then return to their place and the story continues.

The story will work best if it is told rather than read. Ideally, the storyteller should learn it like a monologue and try to enter the imaginary space of the story as she or he tells it. If you are gripped by a story yourself, it will be gripping to listen to. Avoid 'ad libbing' as this tends to make a story too wordy.

At the end, the bread is lifted up, blessed and broken using the three sets of hand gestures already introduced for 'doing justice', 'loving mercy' and 'walking humbly with our God'. See *Call and response to be repeated through the service*.

The Emmaus Road Story

Two friends began to walk together. They knew they would be walking for about two hours, but sometimes they did not talk at all, because they were very sad. Sometimes they talked about how hard it was to feel sad and disappointed. Nothing had worked out in the way that they had hoped, and now there was nothing left to do but to walk home.

A third person came up and walked beside them. 'What are you talking about as you walk along?' he asked. They were so sad that they stopped walking altogether and stood still. 'Are you the only person who hasn't heard about Jesus?' they asked. 'He did wonderful things and we thought that he would bring God's justice to us (*The first ribbon is unrolled.*) We thought he would save the people, but then it all went wrong and he was arrested and executed. And now some people say he is alive again, but it makes no sense to us.'

'Walk with me,' the stranger said. 'Not only have your feet gone slow with sadness, but your hearts have gone slow, so that you are slow to believe what is written. The Messiah, God's Chosen One, was always going to suffer before the glory came. He brings not only God's justice, but also God's mercy (*The second ribbon is unrolled.*) To do this, he had to walk a path of sadness and pain – things did not go wrong, they went right. Just as God had planned. Walk with me, and I will explain things to you.'

So they walked humbly with him, and listened as he explained the Scriptures to them. (*The third ribbon is unrolled*)

By the time the two friends reached their house, they felt a lot better. The stranger looked as if he was going to walk on somewhere else, so they asked him to stay. 'It is late,' they said. 'Please come to our house.' So the stranger stayed, and they asked him to say the prayer before they ate their meal together.

And he lifted up the bread (*Hold hands out straight, palms facing each other*), blessed it (*Turn palms upwards*) and broke it and gave it to them (*Lift hands up with broken bread in each hand*). And suddenly they saw the pattern and they knew who he was. And the moment they knew who he was, he was gone. They couldn't see him anymore. And they set off right away to walk back and tell his other friends: how he did act justly (*Point to the blue ribbon*) and how he did love mercy (*Point to the red ribbon*) and how they could all now walk humbly with their God (*Point to the yellow ribbon*).

And when we hear their story of walking on the road, we can take part too.

We can *Everyone does the actions together.*
act justly, *Hold hands out straight, palms facing inwards towards each other.*

love mercy, *Turn hands so that palms face upwards.*
and walk humbly with our God *Lift hands to shoulder level, palms still upwards, as if in a gesture of prayer.*

Section V Prayers of Intercession

The prayers on the service sheet use the image of walking. This idea strengthens the imagery by including sixteen people in a simple action.

- Two people, preferably a child and an adult, slowly walk forwards during each bidding. As the words of the bidding are read out, the adult and the child walk on a solemn journey, perhaps from the back to the front, or from the side to the front. The child carries a chunky pillar candle (lit) and the adult carries an unlit taper or small candle.
- At the finish of each bidding, but before the sung response starts, the adult takes a light from the child's candle and lights another pillar candle already placed at the front of the worship space. The child then places their candle next to the one just lit and the adult puts out their taper or small candle.
- They return to their places during the singing of the response. This should mean that there are sixteen pillar candles burning by the end of the intercessions, a sign of hope and of the presence of God.

These materials were written by Rachel Nicholls and produced by ROOTS for Churches. ROOTS publishes weekly lectionary-based worship and learning resources across all ages.

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