



WORSHIP CHANGES LIVES – Supporting Resources

BELONGING

Church and Worship

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The sequence of words which begins the Eucharistic Prayer at Holy Communion, sometimes called by its Latin name 'Sursum Corda' (= 'lift up your hearts') has been used from the earliest days of Christianity.

The Lord be with you
and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give thanks and praise.

We are all on the Way of Christ, disciples learning to follow Jesus more closely. Sometimes it seems that other people are way ahead of us on their journeys, but we all have a place in the body of Christ, and without each other, the body won't work properly. Even at baptism, we have already begun our Christian journey: babies, children, young people or adults. And all of us are still learning, no matter how much we know, or how close to God we seem.

Looking AT

- Describe any parts of an act of worship you have been to that help remind you that you are part of a Christian family.
- Can you list any activities or events that have made you aware that you travel with Christians all down the ages, as well as the people in church today?

Looking IN

- Can you identify a start to your Christian journey or not?
- What have the high points of your journey been?
- Do you ever feel in church that other people know or understand a lot more than you do? Are there particular things that make you feel like this?

Looking OUT

- How do you help people in your church to tell each other about their Christian journey?
- If we are a team, how can we learn to work better with people that we don't want in *our* team?
- What single thing *would* most revolutionise worship in your church?

Think about things that would draw people in your church closer, and encourage them to work together. This might be a social event, or participating in a charity day for a local or national organisation. You could even work with other Christian churches in your area on a joint service or a fun event.

Deep peace, pure white of the moon to you.
Deep peace, pure green of the grass to you.
Deep peace, pure brown of the earth to you.
Deep peace, pure grey of the dew to you.
Deep peace, pure blue of the sky to you.
Deep peace of the running wave to you.
Deep peace of the flowing air to you.
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you.
Deep peace of the shining stars to you.
Deep peace of the Son of Peace to you.

Fiona Macleod *Under a Dark Star* (1895)

Looking AT

- Do you have somewhere you go to be close to God? If so, describe it.
- Where have you been especially aware of the presence of God?

Looking IN

- Where in the world would you like to go and pray?
- Do you find you can be quiet and allow God to touch you? When is this easiest or most difficult?
- Does your church building feel like a holy place?

Looking OUT

- Do you think visitors to your church would think it seems loved and prayed in? What would make them think like this?
- Would you prefer people to describe your church as comfortable or as awesome? Why?
- Are there spaces in our worship (times when God can speak to us in the silence of our holy place)? Could these be encouraged, and how?

Looking DEEPER

Make time to visit a place of pilgrimage as a church group, and enjoy the presence of God there. Afterwards talk about the experience, and how this might affect the way you use the space in your church for worship.

David Brown, *God and the Enchantment of Place: Reclaiming Human Experience* (OUP, 2004)

Robin Gibbons, *House of God: House of God's People* (Alcuin / SPCK, 2006)

Richard Giles, *Re-pitching the Tent* (Canterbury Press, 2004)

Richard Giles, *Creating Uncommon Worship* (Canterbury Press, 2004)

John Inge, *A Christian Theology of Place* (Ashgate, 2003)

Philip North & John North, ed, *Sacred Space* (Continuum, 2007)

Kevin Seasolt, *Kevin A Sense of the Sacred* (Continuum, 2005)

Philip Sheldrake, *Spaces for the Sacred* (SCM Press, 2001)

David Stancliffe, 'Creating Sacred Space: Liturgy and Architecture Interacting' in David Brown and Ann Loades, ed, *The Sense of the Sacramental* (SPCK, 1995)

BIG QUESTION

- **Does the worship in your church encourage or inhibit people from working together?**
- **Does it encourage or inhibit them to find church a holy place?**

All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3: 16-17

Stories from Scripture should inspire us, encourage us, energise us and propel us out of church to make a difference in our world. But sometimes the reader sounds bored or confused by the Bible reading, and we leave church feeling as though we have not been equipped to bring God into our working week. Make sure you know what the readings have been on Sunday, and later in the week, take another look. God might surprise you when you see how relevant the Bible is to work, home, and leisure time.

Looking AT

- What things are done in your church's worship which helps people see the Bible as important? (For example, you could think about particular actions in the service, what is printed in pew leaflets etc.)
- Do you think the Bible is read aloud well in your church? What things contribute to it being well read?

Looking IN

- What helps you to understand Scripture, both at home and in church?
- What else might help you to read the Bible through the week?
- Does the Bible help you to make connections with your life, and the things you are thinking and praying about?
- Do you ever feel inspired by the Bible to do something differently?

Looking OUT

- Do all the people who come regularly to your church own a Bible?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of worshippers having the Bible readings in front of them (either on a leaflet or in pew Bibles)?
- Do you ever have church Bible studies to look at seasons, issues or books of Scripture together?

Looking DEEPER

The Church of England authorises lectionaries to ensure a balanced diet of Scripture through the year (see www.cofe.anglican.org/worship/liturgy/commonworship/texts/lect/lectfront.html) The Weekday Lectionary (for Daily Prayer) is supported by an exciting new publication *Reflections for Daily Prayer* (issued quarterly by Church House Publishing) www.chpublishing.co.uk/feature.asp?id=2393697

See also

Anna de Lange & Liz Simpson, *How to ... Read the Bible in Church* (Grove Worship Series 177)

The notes to *Common Worship* suggest that a 'sermon' may take the form of less formal exposition, the use of drama, interviews, discussion, audio-visuals and the insertion of hymns or other sections of the service between parts of the sermon. Think about ways in which the 'sermon slot' might be developed in your own church.

A helpful source of support for preachers is The College of Preachers
<http://www.collegeofpreachers.org.uk>

See also:

Keith Beech- Grueneberg & Phillip Tovey, *Evaluating the Use of the Bible in Preaching* (Grove Worship Series 191)

Tim Stratford, *Interactive Preaching* (Grove Worship Series 144)

Phillip Tovey, *Preaching a Sermon Series with Common Worship* (Grove Worship Series 178)

John Waller, *How to prepare and preach a sermon* (Grove Worship Series, 182)

Another exciting 'way in' to the Scriptures is to use Godly Play. If you haven't used it before, ask someone locally or in the diocese to come and help (find out more at www.godlyplay.org.uk). Don't think you can't try Godly Play if you have no children worshipping in your church – it can help adults to look at a Bible story in a new way.

Words said at baptism

I baptize you
in the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Prayer at the giving of a candle at baptism

God has delivered us from the dominion of darkness
and has given us a place with the saints in light.

You have received the light of Christ;
walk in this light all the days of your life.
**Shine as a light in the world
to the glory of God the Father.**

Common Worship: Christian Initiation

Babies and children, young people and adults, even older people ask for baptism. Our journey on the Way of Christ isn't for one age or one sort of person. Everyone is called to follow Jesus, and to share their journey with others.

Looking AT

- If you (or someone you know) was baptised as an adult, ask them to describe what they remember of their baptism service.
- If you have been at a baptism service as godparent or parent of a child being baptised, what do you remember being important in that service.

Looking IN

- In some churches people are sprinkled with water to remind them of their baptism - or sprinkle themselves. Why is it important to remember that you are baptized when you go to church?
- How would you describe your Christian journey to someone who isn't a Christian?

Looking OUT

- Many babies baptized in the Church of England come from families that don't regularly attend church. How might we encourage such families to worship with us?
- Do the people in church and those coming for baptism understand the symbols we use at baptism? How might we help their understanding?
- What can a church do in a service to remind everyone there people that the newly baptised now belong to the Church and to Christ?

Looking DEEPER

Look at the resources provided to accompany the journey of faith, before and after baptism, before and after confirmation, and for the ongoing journey of the Christian church in *Common Worship: Christian Initiation* (CHP, 2006).

A helpful book which makes connections between worship, mission and pastoral care is Mark Earey, Trevor Lloyd, Ian Tarrant (edd), *Connecting with Baptism* (CHP, 2007)

Words at the giving of communion

The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee,
preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life.
Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee,
and feed on him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving.

The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for thee,
preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life.
Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for thee, and be thankful.

Book of Common Prayer

The body of Christ, broken for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Common Worship

Words at the Dismissal, at the end of the service

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.

Common Worship

Children sometimes say that communion isn't a meal – there isn't enough to eat and drink to sustain even a small person. But Holy Communion doesn't need to be physically sustaining – it nourishes life in a different way. Jesus tells us that we should not be coming to worship if we are not OK with another person (Matthew 5.23-24). First we must put our relationships right, and then we can properly worship God. At the Eucharist, Jesus is the host – all are welcomed to worship God, but as we grow in our faith, there are also some expectations that we prepare ourselves beforehand.

Looking AT

- Are there particular words or actions in the communion service that you always find very meaningful? What are they?
- Have you ever celebrated Holy Communion in a different place or in a different way? What did you notice? What did you feel?

Looking IN

- How important is taking communion to you?
- Do you prepare for communion before the service? How?
- Are there relationships you could put right before you next receive communion?

Looking OUT

- How hospitable is your church to people who do not receive communion?
- At the end of the service, the dismissal sends us out to live and work to God's praise and glory. What does your church do to help draw attention to the importance of this? What else might be done?

Looking DEEPER

Many churches benefit from holding an occasional 'teaching service' that explains the origin and meaning of the different parts of the Holy Communion service. For more information go to

Diane Craven and Mark Stafford, *About to Receive: Resources for exploring the Eucharist* (Diocese of Southwark, 2005)

Tim Sledge and Margaret Withers, *Creative Communion* (BRF, 2008)

Mark Beach, *Holy Communion (Using Common Worship series)* (CHP, 2000)

Another excellent resource is the series of *Study Leaflets on the Eucharist* compiled by Durham Diocesan Liturgical Committee. These are available to download at <http://www.durhamliturgy.org.uk/>