

VOCATIONS SUNDAY 2018

All-age Worship Café Style - Shepherd and host

Setting up

The setting up of café style worship can be exciting. In any way you can the aim is to make the worship space as warm, welcoming and informal as possible. It may be as simple as making sure the space is warm, nicely lit, that there is a focal point that is different to usual and the smell of freshly brewed coffee is something that most people welcome.

You might like to have refreshments when people arrive.

If your building allows, you could move furniture around so that people can sit around table's, but this is not necessary you can take these ideas and adapt them so that they work in your setting.

Table top Ideas

Have a little bowl of sweeties or similar on each table, and some good colouring pencils and themed colouring sheets. You can print and photocopy the ones supplied or find your own. Children and adult colouring sheets are widely available.

Or

Have Pictures of a party, feasts, celebrations and anointing oil on the tables with printed copies of Psalm 23: 5-6 as a discussion starter. You might have pictures of your church's celebrations past and present that would spark memories, or print and photocopy the ones provided. Have a small basket of bread and a bowl of dipping oil on the table

Or

Have a simple home-made oil lamp lit on each table, add some nice smelling essential oils to create a beautiful smell in your worship space. Follow the link for a step by step guide <http://www.instructables.com/id/How-To-Make-Your-Own-Olive-Oil-Lamp/>

Place a printed discussion starter 'What smell do you like? What smells evoke special memories for you?'

Prayer of approach

Good shepherd, we are listening to the discussion and chatter around our tables. We are ready to meet with you through prayer, the singing of hymns, the sharing of food and the reading of your word. We long to hear the voice of the one who knows us and loves us. Come and make us your flock, stay and be our shepherd. Amen

Song suggestions

Come people of the risen king <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=giRGqL0Q8Co>

Or

Come let us worship. Mission Praise 97.

First Prayers

You prepare a feast for us,

You anoint our heads with oil,

You welcome us as your guest,

We can experience your goodness and mercy in so many ways;

It's there in the people around us. In the small acts of kindness. In the sharing of tears and sorrows, and through celebrating together in times of happiness and joy.

We see you in their spirit, that which makes them who they are.

We know you when we make time to know the other. When we gather to share food, and serve one another. When we listen, and engage in conversations and nurture relationships.

We praise and thank you for the blessings you pour down upon us, as we share life together in and through your son who knows and loves, as you know and love him.

How is it Lord that you are so visible and audible? So fragrant and touchable and yet we miss you?

Forgive us for the times we have failed to see you in the beauty of the people around us. When we have failed to serve one another, or been too busy to see a need. Forgive us for the times we have failed to embrace **otherness**, because of fear, lack of understanding or indifference.

God, we come humbly before you, confident that your Holy Spirit testifies with us, knowing that Christ's voice calls to us and that you who are goodness and mercy will pursue us all the days of our lives.

God heighten our senses and allow us to see you at work in the beautiful and the ugly, in the busy and the calm, in the solid and the mystical. May we see you in the unexpected and meet with you there. Amen

Reading: John 10:8-11

Talk One – Shepherd and Sheepfold (Outline Notes)

- John 10: 11-18 presents two types of shepherd. The first one, is a shepherd hand, who is hired to take care of the sheep for money. However, even when the shepherd is compensated for protecting the sheep, when danger comes which should have invoke feelings of protection for the sheep over and above money, it doesn't, and the sheep are left vulnerable and left to die. The shepherd has only attachment to himself and so the community is scattered, love and safety dies.
- The other shepherd, the good shepherd looks beyond himself, he is sacrificial in his care and takes the sheep to his heart. He takes the time to know them, to understand their individual needs. He welcomes others from outside is flock, to join and he offers protection, love and stands firm, so that nothing can part the shepherd from the sheep or the sheep from themselves.
- Jesus is this shepherd. He possesses all the gifts of the 'good shepherd'. We are his sheep. Loved, protected, gathered, honoured and our needs met.
- He leads us to nourishment and the safety of the sheep pen. In the sheep pen, we are surrounded by safety, we are better together, held in security and at home resting in the care of Jesus.
- To some of us this is a message of warmth and strength, however the use of the 'good shepherd' sometimes doesn't evoke images of safety. The sheep pen is not a place of safety to those who have been damaged by experiences of abuse, mental illness or persecution simply because they are different. The sheep pen is the most unsafe of places.
- The pen, is suffocating, crowded and hemmed in on all sides, to these people they long for freedom. The Good Shepherd, to them shouldn't be herding but loving.

- Jesus is Saviour and so he continues to lay down his life for them, he knows their needs and doesn't pen them in but looks after them on the hillside. Jesus creates a new centre of safety. He says 'Just as the Father knows me and I know the Father – and I lay my life down for the sheep', he builds new community for those sheep to feel safe.
- How do we build a community in Christ, that builds trust, gives back power, encourages safety and acceptance?
- How do we do this in our churches?

Video prayer/invitation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s27D7M8biuI>

Food

Enjoy food together. You could make it into a Eucharist meal or cook whatever you like and host to your hearts content.

Reading: Psalm 23

Talk Two – Host and Inclusive Kingdom (Outline Notes)

- Link between scriptures - John 10: 11-18 and Psalm 23. Both of these reading share the image of the 'Good Shepherd'. They share the strong image of Jesus as protector, leading us through dangerous terrain to safe places of refuge and peace. We are loved as individuals and as part of a community of Christians.
- In the previous talk we were asked: how do we create safe spaces in our communities? We were searching for a new way to interpret the sheep pen.
- Psalm 23 introduces the image of the host, in verse 5 'you prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows'.
- Hosting: In ancient Near Eastern Culture, at a banquet it was customary to anoint a person with fragrant oil. Hosts were also expected to protect their guests at all costs. (taken from life study application Bible NIV). This is still true for us today, when we throw a party, or a celebration, we want each one of our guests to have a

good time. We want them to enjoy food, drink and company. Most of all we want them to feel safe and able to relax and have a happy time. They are in our care, they are responsibility.

- God does this for us, even with enemies surrounding us he gives us a protection of a host, he is the perfect shepherd and host. We are in his care forever.
- Invite people to feedback what qualities we need in a host to ensure a safe and inclusive place.
- Review feedback and incorporate into reflection. It takes work, prayer, and the action unconditional love to create these church families and communities. But, Jesus is walking, leading us all the way to safety. We can start by offering the invitation, fulfil the hospitality of the host, and enjoy the blessings of the feast and celebration laid out before us.

Song suggestion: Mission Praise 667

Jelly baby prayers

Place a bowl of jelly babies on each table and ask the congregation to choose one and hold onto it to use during the prayer.

1. Nurture: If you have a red jelly baby: Please pray that our friendships found in our church families will continue to be nurturing, caring and loving to all.
2. Open Minded: If you have a green jelly baby: Please pray for our hearts, our minds and ears to be open and tolerant to those who are different to us.
3. Non- Judgemental: If you have a black jelly baby: Please pray that we see people through the eyes of Jesus, and extend a helping hand of encouragement.
4. Integrity: If you have a yellow jelly baby: Please pray that we treat each other with kindness and live a life that is honest, truthful and holy.
5. Acceptance: If you have a White jelly baby: Please pray for a kingdom, for a church, for a community that is accepting, and celebrates the blessings that come with diversity.

6. Respect: If you have any other colour: Please pray for a living code of respect amongst us, which creates a peaceful, compassionate and inclusive space to grow in the Spirit.

Prayer will be a time of quiet. People can pray silently or offer spoken prayer. The worship leader will need to discern when enough time has been given to prayer and draw the prayer to an end.

Blessing

Lead us out of the sheep pen and onto the dangerous hillside of every day, and through us may others come to know the sound of your voice. May it echo across lands and nations, and across time and space. And as we live for you may we know your goodness and mercy pursuing us through all our days. Amen.