

# Worship Resources for *Evangelism and Church Planting Sunday*

April 18, 2004

## Introduction



These worship resources are designed to assist you as you plan for worship on Evangelism and Church-Planting Sunday, April 18, 2004. If you are unable to use these ideas on that specific Sunday, please choose another date to emphasize evangelism and church planting as a part of being the missional church.

Primary Scriptures for April 18 include: Psalm 118:14-29; John 20:19-31; Revelation 1: 4-8. The suggested theme is, "Look, he is coming in the clouds" (Revelation 1:7). In the following pages you will find suggestions for the call to worship, invocation, hymns and other music options, children's story, thoughts for the sermon, illustrations, benediction, and additional resources.

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

## Call to Worship

### Option A

Based on Psalm 118: 24, 19-20  
(from Bulletin Series: April 18, 2004)

Leader: This is the day the Lord has made.  
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

**People: Open to us the gates of righteousness,  
that we may enter through them  
and give thanks to the Lord.**

Leader: This is the gate of the Lord  
The righteous shall enter through it.

**People: Today the gate of the Lord is our song of  
praise and adoration. Let us enter God's  
gate together and let God's Spirit come  
down and work through us. Amen.**

### Option B

#668 HWB

## Invocations

### Option A

Gracious God, we come into your presence this morning aware of the awesome gift of salvation that is available to each of us. We thank you that the gates of righteousness have been opened to us and that we have been called to be your followers. Let your Spirit come down and work through us this morning and all through the week ahead. Amen. (Psalm 118)

### Option B

God of peace and grace, we gather this morning in the light of your love. We thank you that you have freed us from our sins, and that you are always faithful to those who serve you. Make our hearts open and receptive that we may know clearly how to communicate your love to a hurting and broken world. Amen. (Rev. 1:4-8)

# Hymns and Other Songs Relating to the Scriptures and Theme

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

### Call to Worship

- #25 Jesus, stand among us
- #642 This is the day the Lord has made

### Gathering and Praising

- #19 Open now thy gates of beauty
- #43 Christ is our cornerstone
- #100 Praise him, praise him

### Proclaiming

- #238 Hosanna, loud hosanna
- #282 Proclaim the tidings near and far
- #301 Joys are flowing like a river

### Affirming faith

- #336 When peace, like a river
- #335 This is the threefold truth

### Confessing/Reconciling

- #147 Oh, how wondrous the grace

### Praying

- #356 Breathe on me, breath of God

### Sermon response

- #548 Teach me thy truth

### Sending

- #268 See the splendor of the morning
- #274 O sons and daughters, let us sing,  
verses 3,4,5

## "Hymnal Subscription Service"

- Come and fill our hearts with your peace, 2000:2 (981) (also in "Songs and Prayers from Taize," #28)
- Over my head, 2000:2 (999)
- Now go in peace, 2002:2 (1064)
- You've got a place at the welcome table, 2002:2 (1060)
- Peace before us, 2003:1 (1084)
- Sent by the Lord am I, 2003:1 (1087)

## "Sing and Rejoice!"

- #3 Alleluia No. 1
- #53 Let there be peace
- #107 The church within us
- #145 Ye are witnesses

## Other music options

- The peace of the earth be with you, words for a Guatemalan traditional song, music arranged by John L. Bell
- Come now O Prince of Peace, Korean tune, words by Geoyong Lee, paraphrased by Marion Pope

- We come in peace, by Angela Clemens "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 worship, 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  
Disciples in training  
A God who makes friends

- "Praise Hymns and Choruses, Fourth Edition," #32, He is our peace

## Confession

### Option A

God, you have invited us into a covenant with you. You sent your son Jesus, to show us how to love one another until his return. We find it difficult to live into that covenant. We despise those who remind us of your covenant with us. We shun your call. We are slow to be your partners in bringing your kingdom to the earth. While we are not worthy of your constant love and presence, forgive us and help us live in the promise of your reign. Amen.

### Option B

Merciful God, your son Jesus Christ demonstrated your love for the world in the humility of his first coming. Yet we have contradicted the faith we profess and the gospel that you have given us to share with the world. We have ignored your call to live in harmony with your creation. You have opened the doors to our souls and we don't like what we see. Our minds are fearful and our hearts need to be reminded that you came to save us from our sins. Come, Lord, and grant that we may be your witnesses to the world. Amen.

### Option C

O God, when you sent your son Jesus into the world, it was to show us Jubilee, the year of your favor. But we have been slow to show mercy and quick to excuse ourselves from participating in your mission. Forgive us, O God, for our blindness to the need for healing in our chaotic world. Teach us to be open to your purposes until your kingdom comes. Amen.



## Prayer for the offering

### Option A

Generous God, giver of life, we pray your blessing on these, our monetary gifts. They are given as an expression of our deep love for you, and of our intention to participate fully with the One who feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, strengthens the weak, offers hope to those in despair, and seeks justice for the downtrodden. May our hearts be touched by the wounded in our world, and may we respond in love as you have taught us to do. Amen.



### Option B

Thank you, God, for the gift of peace that is ours when we accept Jesus into our hearts as Savior and Lord. Now we ask your blessing on the gifts of money that have been brought this morning. We pray that they may be used to bring life, justice, and peace to a sinful and suffering world. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

## Children's time

Bring a lock with you. Talk about the purpose of the locks. You might want to explain simply how they work. Ask kids if they have ever unlocked their house. Ask them to try the key in the lock. Tell a story about locking yourself out of the house. Share how Jesus was able to enter past the lock, and enter into the room. Ask them to wonder what his first words might have been to the disciples. "Peace." Complete the time by explaining how "passing the peace" was a tradition in the early church. Invite the children to walk around and offer the peace of Christ to people in the church. Then invite the adults to join in with the children, as well as with each other, to end the children's time.

## Sermon starters

### John 20:19-31

Rather than making many points in the sermon, perhaps make one point in different ways:

- Jesus offers peace as he meets the disciples in their fear (verse 19)
- Jesus offers peace as he sends them out (verse 21)
- Jesus offers peace as he enters their lives again (verse 26)

Verse 19: "Locked behind doors because of fear of the Jews." Brian McClaren, in his book *More Ready than You Realize: Evangelism as Dance in the Postmodern Matrix* (Zondervan, 2002), presents a series of e-mail conversations he has with someone exploring Christian faith. McClaren says the perception of Christians is often that they are not perceived as "safe" to talk to about issues of faith. The image of being "locked behind doors because of fear" is one that others may have about us. When Jesus enters into conversation with the grieving disciples in Luke 24, he meets them where they are, in their present situation. (See also Luke 24:17-19)

Verse 19 continued: Jesus starts his entrance into his disciples' lives with the offer of peace. Ed Silvano in his book *Prayer Evangelism* (Regal Books, 2000) makes the case that in our witness to others, it is our blessing of peace that changes our attitude to one of blessing others, rather than trying to change them. We stop "cursing" those whom we want to bless, and our blessing of peace releases life to them. Silvano makes the point that our blessing of peace also breaks the power of evil: "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet." (Romans 16:20) Ultimately, it is our offer of blessing and love that changes the spiritual climate around us. We often start with an attitude of trying to change others, instead of beginning with the blessing of peace.

Verses 26-29: Jesus does not argue with Thomas, but allows Thomas to experience him.

Anecdote: We have used "Alpha" for the past five years in our congregation. Alpha is a practical introduction to Christian faith. After the video exploring various themes around faith, there is a small group time. The leader is not there to argue with people about beliefs, only to ensure that everyone speaks and is heard. The point is creating a safe place for exploration, inviting the Holy Spirit to take the initiative with people wherever they are in their lives.

### ***Sermon Starters continued***

Visual image: Locks, "locked doors," which keep things inside and keep things out. The first thing to be unlocked is our own heart and attitude toward others, our attitude toward evangelism. We may want to be a witness to others, but our own prejudice, or perhaps indifference, keeps us from doing so. Peace is a key that unlocks our hearts. It is this peace that others feel and experience from us and respond to.



#### **Other Scriptures:**

Luke 10:5, 6: "... Whatever house you enter, first say "peace to this house!" And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person ..."

Ephesians 6:15: "As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace..."

"Modern churches built ministries and devised strategies to draw people in. Postmodern churches design ministries to release the Spirit inside its members and send them out. Modern evangelism led to a decision. Evangelism in the emerging culture leads to a long-term journey ... based on trust, relationship, 'listen and learn' and prayer ..." Source: *A is for Abductive: The Language of the Emerging Church*, page 115, by Leonard Sweet, Brian McClaren, and Jerry Haselmayer, (Zondervan, 2003)

### **Benediction**

Based on John 20. 19-31  
(from Bulletin Series: April 18, 2004)

Peace be with us all.  
As God sent Jesus, so God is sending us.  
God breathes on us and says to us,  
"Receive the Holy Spirit"  
May we go out as witnesses in the  
power of the Spirit.  
May the peace of the Lord go with us.

### **Additional resources from "Hymnal Subscription Service"**

- "And you ... peace be with you," a skit by Ted Swartz, is based on John 20:19-23. The suggested use is prior to reading the John passage. 2001:1 (31)
- "Sharing the Light of Christ" by Rosita Benner Derstine may be used as a sermon response: carry a small lighted candle for someone needing Christ's light and peace to a cross. 1999:1 (27)
- Prayer by Janet Morley, may be used after the sermon or after "Sharing the Light of Christ." 2003:1 (1097)

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