



# Renewal

GOD'S STORY, OUR STORY

LENT WORSHIP RESOURCE



The Uniting Church in Australia  
QUEENSLAND SYNOD



# Renewal

## GOD'S STORY, OUR STORY

### Lent at Home

This resource has been created by a collaborative team from across the Queensland Synod of the Uniting Church, to help congregations, communities and families celebrate Lent together intergenerationally. In this document you will find Bible readings, themes, and suggestions for prayers and activities, to assist with weekly worship preparation for the six Sundays of Lent as well as Good Friday, and Easter Sunday.

During this season of Lent and Easter, we will use the lectionary readings (RCL year C) and the theme '*Renewal: God's Story, Our Story*' as we reflect on God's ongoing story of renewal for creation, and how our story weaves and intertwines with God's story. Over seven weeks, we will journey with people from past generations and hear stories of how God renewed their lives through transforming encounters, forgiveness, reconciliation, and faithfulness. As we hear and reflect on the stories of others, we will also reflect on how God is renewing our lives, and our Church, and what God is calling us to do in the renewal process.

#### Each week is themed:

**9**  
MAR

**LENT ONE**  
Assurance

**6**  
MAR

**LENT TWO**  
Transforming Encounters

**23**  
MAR

**LENT THREE**  
Seeking God

**30**  
MAR

**LENT FOUR**  
Forgiveness and  
Reconciliation

**6**  
APR

**LENT FIVE**  
Abundance

**13**  
APR

**LENT SIX**  
*Palm Sunday*  
Readiness

**18**  
APR

**GOOD FRIDAY**  
Confidence During Dark  
Times

**20**  
APR

**EASTER SUNDAY**  
God's Story, Our Story

This resource is also connected with the following resources:



**Make and Bake: An Easter Experience**, and the **Lent at Home** and **Lent with Small Groups** resources, which, used together, can enhance Family and Household Nurture by connecting what happens in worship on Sunday, with the ordinary, everyday parts of life.

These materials are designed to be printed and made available to congregation and community members.

The full suite of resources will be available to download from the Qld Synod Hub at:

<https://hub.ucaqlld.com.au/church-life/mission/#seasonal-resources>

## WHAT'S INCLUDED?

Each week of the worship resource includes Biblical themes to get you thinking, liturgy including a Call to Worship, as well as additional suggestions for Bible readings, prayers, interactive activities, mini messages, and sermon ideas. There are also weekly posters that can be used to create an expanding visual and interactive part in your worship space forming a focal point during the service.

During worship we have a unique opportunity to model to those in our community what it can look and feel like to encounter Jesus, experience Intergenerational connections, and hear God's Big Story. We encourage you to lean in and explore what this means for you and your community. If you have any questions about the resources, or how to use them, please contact the Qld Synod Mission Accompanying Team at [mission@ucaqlld.com.au](mailto:mission@ucaqlld.com.au).

Our deepest thanks to everyone who has helped to bring together this resource. We are blessed by your gifts, and we couldn't have done it without you and your contributions.

## BEING INTERGENERATIONAL

At the heart of the Uniting Church's understanding of what it means to belong to the Church, is an affirmation that every member, of every age, from every culture, no matter their gender, is called to confess the faith of Christ crucified and to be a follower of the way of Jesus. Through the gift of the Spirit, every member is equipped for their discipleship and expected to use those gifts for ministry in the world, (Basis of Union, paragraph 13).

As a Christ-centred community, the Uniting Church is called to be a place where our gathered life, including worship, embraces all generations. Because of this, and the impact that intergenerational connections have on life-long Discipleship, these Lent materials, are designed specifically to help give you some easy-to-use tools to practice and model being intergenerational in your community. For more information and tools for exploring Being Intergenerational visit <https://uniting.church/intergenerational-vision/>

### WHAT IS BEING INTERGENERATIONAL?

#### Being intergenerational involves:



Different generations engaging together in respectful relationships marked by mutuality (all benefit), reciprocity (all give and receive) and the recognition that God equally values all, NOT just being in the same space at the same time!



At least two different generations intentionally engaging together, NOT everyone being together all the time!



Valuing and respecting each generation, NOT simply focusing more on younger generations!



Creating, encouraging, and deepening relationships across generations, NOT activities, programs, or style of worship!



Intentional action, the modelling and deliberate cultivation of the values, attitudes and behaviours that enhance intergenerational engagement, from all those in leadership and who have influence, NOT just those in specific roles!

### WHEN THINKING ABOUT MAKING WORSHIP MORE INTERGENERATIONAL:



Give high priority to visuals and movement,



Include fun, excitement, and surprise!



Provide opportunities for interaction and conversation in small intergenerational groups within the worship service, and encourage these before and after worship too,



Provide multi-sensory experiences, including touch and taste as well as sight and hearing,



Use language that is hospitable, invitational, inclusive and easily understood by everyone,



Ensure explanations, invitations and directions are clear so that participants know what is expected, and that they have permission to try (or not to),



Involve different people from a range of generations in preparing and leading, and



Ensure invitations to programmed movement (e.g., actions, dancing, clapping during songs) are inclusive of all, respectful of different abilities, and can be modified to suit as required.

Visit <https://uniting.church/being-an-intergen-church-papers/> for more.



# Assurance

Lent One: March 9th

## Assurance:

*"The state of being sure or certain about something."*

**Britannica Dictionary**

*"A statement, assertion, etc, intended to inspire confidence or give encouragement."*

**Collins Dictionary**

God's story is one of forgiveness, hope, and faithfulness. Throughout the Bible, we constantly hear assurances that God is present, that God is at work, that God has a plan, and that God loves all people, despite our failings.

What about our story? As we consider what renewal means for our Church, and our lives, let's start by focussing on God's assurances to us. What has God already done in our lives, and where is God leading us? What can we say, with assurance, about God? What are we looking forward to with assurance? What does renewal look like to us – as the exiled Israelites looked forward to the promised bountiful land flowing with milk and honey, what do we look forward to?

## BIBLE READINGS



Deuteronomy 26:1-11



Psalms 91:1-2, 9-16



Romans 10:8b-13



Luke 4:1-13

## BIBLE THEMES

Moses assuring and instructing the exiled Israelites on what to do when they enter the land that God had promised to their ancestors (a bountiful land flowing with milk and honey)

Hear these words of assurance - God is our refuge, our fortress, our deliverer, and the one whom we can put all our trust in

Paul assuring us, in Romans, that "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved"

Jesus' assurance in who he is, and who God is, while being tested in the wilderness

## SET-UP:

(see Design and Creative Elements at the end of the document)



Display the RENEWAL word



Have brown thread/wool/  
yarn and scissors available  
for the creative reflection



Have baskets on display



Give each person a  
cardboard/paper copy of  
the basket template

## INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME

In everyday life, the word RENEWAL can be cause for dread – an insurance renewal will cost a lot of money, a passport or license renewal could mean lots of paperwork or time spent waiting in a line, and a rental renewal may bring a rent rise.

But the word RENEWAL can also bring a sense of hope, a sense of excitement, and a sense of thankfulness especially when things are being changed and improved. Check out these definitions:

*"A process in which something improves or is improved after being in a bad condition."*

**Cambridge Dictionary**

*"Renewal of something lost, dead, or destroyed is the process of it growing again or being replaced."*

**Collins Dictionary**

*"1. To make like new: restore to freshness, vigour, or perfection. 2. To make new spiritually."*

**Merriam-Webster**

During Lent, we will reflect on God's ongoing story of renewal for the whole of creation, and how our story weaves and intertwines with God's story. Over seven weeks, we will journey with people from past generations and hear stories of how God renewed their lives through transforming encounters, forgiveness, reconciliation, and faithfulness. As we hear and reflect on the stories of others, we will also reflect on how God is renewing our lives, and our Church, and what God is calling us to do in the renewal process. Using the lectionary readings, reflections, activities, and worship resources, we will experience the Easter story in a new way and consider what God is revealing to us.



## CALL TO WORSHIP

Introduce the word 'assurance'. Invite people to close their eyes and listen to spoken assurances about God.

Repeat the phrases, quietly and slowly at first, and then loudly and quickly, with confidence. You may like to invite people, from around the room, to speak the phrases, to give a surround-sound effect.

God's love and  
mercy endures  
forever

God heals

God saves

God hears and  
answers prayers

God is a refuge  
and a fortress

God is faithful

God protects

Come, let's worship together with confidence and hope.





## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

During this prayer, invite people to gently move their feet/heels up and down, to represent tired walking. Invite people to join in saying the repeated line, "Wander, wander, wander", in a weary voice.

## BIBLE READING IDEAS



Deuteronomy 26:1-11

You may wish to give some background to this reading. Where are the Israelites? What has happened before this event? How might the Israelites be feeling?

### **Wander, wander, wander.**

*Just like the Israelites wandered through the desert, we sometimes find ourselves wandering aimlessly.*

### **Wander, wander, wander.**

*God, please forgive us for when we wander through life unaware of your presence.*

### **Wander, wander, wander.**

*God, please forgive us for when we grumble, as we wander, and we don't acknowledge all that you have done for us.*

### **Wander, wander, wander.**

*God, please forgive us for when we wander straight past people who are lost, hurting, and confused, and don't stop to share your love or your hope.*

### **Wander, wander, wander.**

*God, please forgive us for when we wander into temptation and don't trust you.*

### **Wander, wander, wander.**

*God, please forgive us for when we wander in our own direction instead of following you, our guide.*

*Faithful God, like you called the Israelites to a land of milk and honey, you call each one of us into an abundant life. Help us to cease our aimless wandering and help us to strive towards all that you have called us to.*

AMEN

The good news is that God assures us that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.



## ACT IT OUT

Before the reading, explain that listeners will hear about:



a person with a basket  
(invite a person, carrying a basket, to come forward)



fruit (scatter fruit/grain on the ground)



a priest (invite this person, dressed as a priest, to come forward)



people celebrating  
(invite everyone to stand and cheer like a crowd celebrating)

During the reading, the Bible readers (narrator and person with a basket) and actors (person with a basket, priest, and people celebrating) speak and act out their parts.



## JUST IMAGINE

Before the reading, invite people to imagine a brand-new land that they'd love to live in. Encourage people to be as creative as they can. Invite people to share about their imaginary lands in huddles or pairs.

During the reading, invite people to listen out for the promised land that the Israelites are being assured about. After the reading, invite people to share about what they heard.



Psalms 91:1-2, 9-16

### Count the Assurances

Invite people to count or write down all of God's assurances that they heard during the reading.



Luke 4:1-13

### Say it with Assurance!

Before the Bible reading, talk about what it means to speak with assurance (see definitions). For example, when people are speaking with assurance, they may speak with confidence, or in an encouraging way.

**As a group, try saying some phrases with assurance. For example:**

*"You're off to great places! Today is your day! Your mountain is waiting, so, get on your way!"* **Dr Suess.**

*"Nothing is impossible. The word itself says 'I'm possible!'"* **Audrey Hepburn**

Once you've rehearsed speaking with a voice of assurance, invite people to speak Jesus' words, from this reading, with assurance.

## INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES, MUSIC, MINI MESSAGES, OR SERMON IDEAS:



### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

If you could enter a brand-new land, what would it look and feel like? (You can be as creative as you'd like)

When has someone assured you about something?

When have you assured someone or a group of people?

What is something that happened in your past that gives you assurance for the future?

What does the word renewal mean to you?

As you think about the renewal of the Church what assures you?

As the Israelites travelled towards the promised bountiful land flowing with milk and honey, what are you, and the Church, travelling towards with hope?





## SONGS



### Don't Let me Wander

Every Nation music



### Be With Those Who

#### Wander

GIA Music



### Wanderer's Prayer

Anointed Family



### Blessed Assurance

City Alight



## COOK OR ENJOY

Hot Vanilla Honey Milk

### [View recipe](#)

Honey Milk Toast <https://www.slurrrp.com/recipes/milk-and-honey-french-toas-1617687936>



## VIDEO

### Twins try the candy temptation challenge

These twins were assured that they could eat the candy when Mum returned. Do you think the twins will trust the assurance and wait to eat the candy?



## CREATE

Draw a before and after picture of the Israelites in the wilderness and then in the promised land. Then, draw a before and after picture of the Church – what could the Church look like in the future, with renewal?

(This activity would work well with the Just Imagine Bible Reading activity).



## REFLECTION

### RENEWAL REFLECTION

During a time of reflection and prayer, invite people to come forward and either tie yarn on the Letter R or cut a strip of yarn which will be tied at another time.

#### People can:

Reflect on the assurances that God has given them, in the past, or going into the future

Reflect on where God is calling them with assurance

Pray for renewal for the Church and their lives



## BASKET REFLECTION

Say something like: Moses gave the Israelites assurance that they would enter the promised land – a land flowing with milk and honey. This may not sound too exciting for us but imagine, after 40 years in exile, how amazing this promised land would be?

I wonder what you are hopeful for in the future – a land full of.....

You can have some fun with this, but also think about what your hopes are for the Church and for the people around you.

Invite people to write or draw their responses on the basket and place them around the RENEWAL word or in another designated place.

# Transforming Encounters

Lent Two: March 6th

## Encounter:

*"to meet (someone) without expecting or intending to."*

**Britannica Dictionary**

*"an encounter with someone is a meeting with them, particularly one that is unexpected or significant."*

**Collins Dictionary**

God's story is one of encounters. God doesn't stay distant. God doesn't love people from afar. Throughout the Bible, we hear of many encounters between God and humans – life-changing moments that inspired confidence and helped people/groups transform and renew their behaviour and their lives.

What about our story? As we consider what renewal means for our Church, and our lives, let's reflect on the times when we've had transforming encounters with God, or with other people. What did we learn through those encounters? How did our lives change because of those encounters? As we focus on renewal, who, in your life, or in your neighbourhood, needs a transforming encounter with God today?

## BIBLE READINGS



Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18



Psalms 27



Philippians 3:17-4:1



Luke 9:28-36(37-43a)

## BIBLE THEMES

Abram's transforming encounter with God – the covenant, God's future plan, Abram's belief

Peter, John and James' encounter with God - "This is my Son, my chosen, listen to him"

David's confidence and belief in God through difficult times

God's transforming power

Do not be afraid

## SET-UP:

(see Design and Creative Elements at the end of the document)



Display the RENEWAL word



Have stars on display



Have silver and gold thread/  
wool/yarn and scissors  
available for the creative  
reflection



Give each person a  
cardboard/paper copy of the  
star template



## CALL TO WORSHIP

(based on Ps 27 and Gen 15:1-12)

Invite people to say the repeated phrase.

Practice saying the repeated line with a voice of confidence.

Encourage people to look around the room, and catch peoples' eyes, and to use a beckoning hand on the word 'come'.

**Come, let's worship together with confidence**

For The Lord is our light and our salvation

**Come, let's worship together with confidence**

For the Lord is our stronghold

**Come, let's worship together with confidence**

For the Lord is our shield and protector

**Come, let's worship together with confidence**

For the Lord is full of goodness

**Come, let's worship together with confidence**

For the Lord transforms lives

**Come!**



## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Invite two people to lead this prayer – one person can read the bolded words, the other reads the un-bolded words.

Say something like:

I invite you to close your eyes and to sit in darkness. Make yourself a little uncomfortable by squeezing your hands or tensing your bodies. Be aware of the discomfort as you listen to these words: Darkness, Fear, Anxiety, Hopelessness, Pain, Disorder.

I invite you to keep your eyes closed as we slowly open ourselves up, breathe deeply, relax, and focus on God.

God of Transformation,

You meet us in the wilderness. **You meet us on the mountain top.**

You meet us at our hour of need. **You meet us unexpectedly.**

You bring light. **You bring hope.**

You bring clarity. **You bring healing.**

You bring restoration. **You bring love.**

And yet, we find ourselves hiding in the darkness instead of confidently stepping towards the light.

**Forgive us. Restore us. Help us take the first step towards you, the light.**

We find ourselves throwing pity parties instead of allowing ourselves to be transformed by you.

**Forgive us. Restore us. Open us up to the new possibilities that you bring.**

We find ourselves failing to recognise what you are doing in our lives and in the people and situations around us.

**Forgive us. Restore us. Open our eyes to see all that you are doing in and around us.**

**AMEN**

The wonderful news is that God forgives, God restores, and God continues to meet us, and transform us.



## BIBLE READING IDEAS

Introduce the word 'encounter' and in huddles share stories of encounters.

As the Genesis and Luke readings are read, invite people to listen out for the encounters.

Who had an encounter? What happened? How may people have been transformed by that experience.  
How would you have felt if you were in the readings?



Genesis 15:1-12



### STARS

Before the reading, share some star fun facts or lead a little star quiz. [This website has a few facts.](#)

At verse 5, start playing a video of stars in the sky. Listen to the words as you watch the stars. You might like to use this video: Starfield Space Ambient Music:



### WATCH

[God's Promise for Abraham](#): Saddleback Kids



Luke 9: 28-36



### IMAGINE

Invite people to close their eyes and imagine this reading. What do they see, hear, and feel? At the end of the reading, encourage people to sit in silence and reflect.



### WATCH

Watch [The Transfiguration](#)  
Lumo Project (until 1.50)



Psalms 27



### SQUEEZE AND OPEN

Invite people to squeeze their hands whenever they hear something difficult and open their hands whenever they hear something positive.

### WHAT COULD HAPPEN NEXT?

Pause throughout the reading (end of Verse 28, 29 and 34) and ask the question, "Pretend you don't know this story. What could happen next?" Invite people to share their creative responses with others. Then, listen to the full reading without interruptions.

### THAT'S UNEXPECTED!

This reading is full of unexpected happenings. Count how many unexpected things happen.

## INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES, MUSIC, MINI MESSAGES, OR SERMON IDEAS:



### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

When have you had a transforming encounter with a person?

When, or where, have you had an encounter with God?

When have you seen the church, or a community, transformed or renewed?  
What was the catalyst for that change to happen?

If God were to visit you, or your church today, what might be illuminated and transformed because of the encounter?

If you could transform something in your neighbourhood, church, or community, what would it be?



#### SONGS

[Consider the Stars](#)  
Keith & Kristyn Getty

[God in All of This](#)  
The Afters

[The Potter's Hand](#)  
(Hillsong Worship) roncobb1

[Totally Transformed](#)  
Jana Alayra



#### GAME

Before the service, place a number of stars around the room. Give people two minutes to count, or guess, the number of stars. People may walk around or stay in their seats.



#### MAKE OR EAT

Make some star biscuits.  
[View the recipe.](#)



#### VIDEO

Creatures of the Night: [Trail](#)  
[Cam Video](#)

If things were fully illuminated by God, in your life or in your community, what would you see?



### REFLECTION



#### RENEWAL REFLECTION

During a time of reflection and prayer, invite people to come forward and either tie yarn on the Letter E or cut a strip of yarn which will be tied at another time.

##### People can:

Reflect on the how God has transformed their lives

Reflect on the areas of their life, church, community that need transformation. How might we be involved in that transformation?

Pray for renewal for the Church and their lives

#### STAR REFLECTION

Invite people to write or draw on their star. How has God already transformed their lives? Who, or what situation, needs God's transformative power today? Place the stars around the RENEWAL word or in another designated place. I wonder what you are hopeful for in the future – a land full of.....

You can have some fun with this, but also think about what your hopes are for the Church and for the people around you.

Invite people to write or draw their responses on the basket and place them around the RENEWAL word or in another designated place.



# Seeking God

Lent Three: March 23rd

## Seek:

*"to try to find or get something, especially something that is not a physical object."*

**Cambridge Dictionary**

Hebrew word **-baqash**. *"Seeking to find or take something."* (Strong's 1245)

Hebrew word **-darash**. *"Searching, investigating, inquiring, requiring."* (Strong's 1875)

God's story is one of being present with humans. Throughout the Bible, we hear of people searching for, and drawing close to God, and seeking God's comfort, wisdom, and guidance. We also hear of people seeking God at times when they are desperate – desperate for God's mercy, forgiveness, and protection. Many generations before us have known, and shared their stories, of God being present when they draw close to God.

What about our story? As we consider what renewal means for our Church, and our lives, let's reflect on what it means to seek God in our everyday lives? When have you searched for God? When have you sought God for comfort, wisdom and guidance? When have you sought God for mercy, forgiveness or protection. What did you learn, experience, or feel during those times? As we seek God this Lent, what might God be saying to us?

## BIBLE READINGS



Isaiah 55:1-9



Psalms 63:1-8



1 Corinthians 10:1-13



Luke 13:1-9

## BIBLE THEMES

David, and the author of Isaiah, eagerly seek the Lord

An invitation to an abundant life

"God will abundantly pardon" Isaiah 55

God's steadfast love and faithfulness even when humans have ignored and rejected God

Repent!



## SET-UP:

(see Design and Creative Elements at the end of the document)



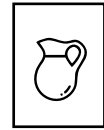
Display the RENEWAL word



Have blue thread/wool/yarn and scissors available for the creative reflection



Have a water display – pictures, collages, a jug of water, or real water



Give each person a cardboard/paper copy of the water jug template



## CALL TO WORSHIP

Have the sound of running water playing.

Say something like: As we come to worship, let's take some time to reflect on what we are thirsting for today. I invite you to sit quietly for a couple of minutes. During this time, you will hear words from Isaiah and Psalms. Listen and reflect on the words and what they mean to you. Let's take a few big breaths, get comfortable, close your eyes, and sit together quietly.

### Pause

"Hear, everyone who thirsts; come to the waters."

### Pause

"O God, you are my God; I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water"

### Pause

"Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near".

### Pause

"God's steadfast love is better than life"

### Pause

"My soul is satisfied"

### Pause

I invite you to slowly open your eyes.

Come, let's seek the one who quenches our thirst.

Come, let's cling to the one who's steadfast love is better than life.

Come, let's sing praises to the one who satisfies our soul.

Come.



## CALL TO WORSHIP

From [Hold Fast To What Is Good](#)

In the quiet, in the calm, in the stillness,

**We seek God.**

In the clamour, in the cry, in the grief,

**We seek God.**

In this time, in this place, with each other,

**We seek God.**

Even as we seek, let us worship God.



## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Watch some of Bluey's Hide and Seek video (see page 19) and then have a time of silence as people reflect on, and say sorry for, when they've been too distracted to seek God.



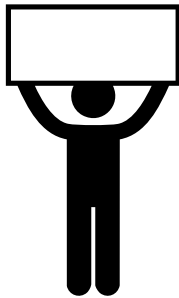
## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

### SET-UP:

Make seven signs – on one side write the things we seek (see prayer), on the reverse side write GOD.

Invite seven people to hold the signs and follow the directions, during the prayer.

*Seven people stand in a line, across the stage, with their backs and signs, to the people.*



## PRAYER FOR OTHERS

Show pictures of people, places, and situations that we can pray for. Invite people to pray in silence, as each picture is shown, and then join together in saying, "O God, you are our God; we seek you."

Dear God,

You are the living water.

You are the bread of life.

You are the light.

You are our salvation.

And yet, we are aware we don't always seek you.

Instead, we turn to the world and to others and:

We seek comfort

*(person holding the comfort sign turns around)*

We seek status

*(person holding the status sign turns around)*

We seek wealth

*(person holding the wealth sign turns around)*

We seek praise

*(person holding the praise sign turns around)*

We seek pleasure

*(person holding the pleasure sign turns around)*

We seek revenge

*(person holding the revenge sign turns around)*

We seek knowledge

*(person holding the knowledge sign turns around)*

We seek power

*(person holding the power sign turns around)*

For a while, it might feel good.

For a while, it may make us happy.

*(people smile and do a little dance)*

And yet, we know it doesn't fulfill, it doesn't truly satisfy.

*(people slowly slump)*

God, we turn to you. We thirst for you. We call on you.

*(turn the signs over to reveal GOD)*

For only you can satisfy. For only you can fill.

*(People holding signs look content and nod heads)*

Forgive us for not seeking you.

*(bow heads)*

Amen

The good news is that God hears our prayers and forgives us.



## BIBLE READING IDEAS



Isaiah 55:1-9

### AN INVITATION TO ABUNDANT LIFE

Give everyone a lavish invitation, which when opened, has the Bible reading on it. After the reading, invite people to share with others the verses or phrases that stood out to them.

### READ IT TOGETHER

As people arrive, give them a small handout with a picture of a fruit, vegetable, bread or healthy drink on one side, and with one verse of the Isaiah reading. During the reading, invite different groups to read their verse out loud. For example: Water – Verse 1, Bread - 2, Apple – verse 3, Corn – Verses 4 and 5, Banana – Verse 6, Apricot – verse 7, Milk – verse 8, Pear – verse 9. (These groups can also be used for other huddle/small group activities)



Psalms 63

### BRING IT TO LIFE

Have the Bible reader dress up as David. Invite the reader to come to the front and sit down wearily.

Bring the reading to life by making it seem as if David is in the hot/dry wilderness. You might shine bright lights on him, put yellow/brown drapes around him, and play sounds of the desert/wilderness during the reading.

Encourage the reader to bring the reading to life with their voice and actions.

Desert sounds: <https://pixabay.com/sound-effects/search/desert/>



Luke 13:1-9



### GARDENING SIMON SAYS

Play a 'Simon Says' game using gardening words – fruit, cut it down, prune, manure, water, dig.

After the game, invite people to say the gardener's line (verse 8 and 9) in the reading. I wonder what God may be saying to us in this reading.

## INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES, MUSIC, MINI MESSAGES, OR SERMON IDEAS:



### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

When have you been hungry or thirsty for something?

When have you desperately tried to find/seek an item/object?

What does it mean, for you, to seek God?

How does it make you feel knowing that many generations before you have sought God and that God has comforted, guided, protected, and forgiven?

When do you tend to draw close to God – for comfort, for guidance, for forgiveness etc?

What have you learnt or discovered when you've had a time of seeking God?

As you think about the Church, what issue or concern makes you want to seek God?





## SONGS

### First

Lauren Daigle

### Ask Seek Knock

Hillsong Kids

### When we Seek You

Vintage Worship

### The More I Seek You

Gateway Worship

### Seek Ye First

Maranatha! Music



## HUDDLE IDEAS

Chat about some of the reflection questions above

Write an invitation, like Isaiah, inviting people to seek God



## GAME

### HIDE AND SEEK

Hide a number of GOD words around the space. Give people a couple of minutes to seek all the words. The good news is that God doesn't hide from us when we seek God.



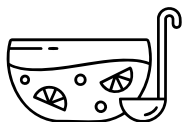
## VIDEO

Bluey Hide and Seek <https://iview.abc.net.au/video/CH1702Q039S00>

I wonder what distracts us from seeking God



## MAKE OR EAT/DRINK



### REFRESHING PUNCH

[VIEW RECIPE HERE](#)

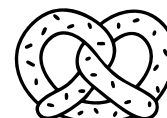
As you drink the punch, read Psalm 63:11.



### EYE/FACE BISCUITS

[VIEW RECIPE HERE](#)

Remember to seek God as you eat these biscuits.



### PRETZELS

[VIEW RECIPE HERE](#)

The 'folded arms' of the pretzel can help us remember to seek God and pray.



## REFLECTION

### RENEWAL REFLECTION

During a time of reflection and prayer, invite people to come forward and either tie yarn on the Letter N or cut a strip of yarn which will be tied at another time.

#### People can:

Reflect on times when they've sought God

Reflect on what they are seeking God for now, for their lives, and for the Church

Pray for renewal for the Church and their lives



### WATER REFLECTION

Take a small dry sponge and think about the areas of your life, and your Church, that may be thirsty for God. Soak the sponge in water and imagine God filling you, and the Church, up with life-giving water. As you squeeze out the water, thank God.



### WATER JUG REFLECTION

Invite people to write or draw on their water jugs. What are they seeking God for, at the moment? What do they thirst for? What do they want God to pour out in their community? Place the water jugs around the RENEWAL word or in another designated place.

# Forgiveness & Reconciliation

Lent Four: March 30th

## Reconciliation:

*"the act of causing two people or groups to become friendly again after an argument or disagreement."*

**Britannica Dictionary**

*"The Greek term **"katallagé"** refers to the restoration of a relationship, particularly the reconciliation between God and humanity through Jesus Christ. It signifies the change from enmity to friendship, emphasizing the removal of the barrier of sin and the establishment of peace with God."*

**Bible Hub**

God's story is one of forgiveness and reconciliation. Throughout the Bible, we hear of many people/groups rejecting and ignoring God and God's ways. And yet, we also hear powerful stories of God forgiving and bringing reconciliation, with grace and mercy, and the new life that springs up afterwards.

What about our story? As we consider what renewal means for our Church, and our lives, let's reflect on our own shortcomings, and the times when we've experienced God's forgiveness and/or reconciliation. Let's also reflect on who we may need to seek reconciliation with before renewal can occur.

## BIBLE READINGS



Joshua 5: 9-12



Psalms 32



2 Corinthians 5:16-21



Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

## BIBLE THEMES

Israel eats bread and grain again - *"Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt."* Joshua 5

Acknowledgement of sin

The joy of forgiveness

Be reconciled to God

A new creation

Lost and found

## SET-UP:

(see Design and Creative Elements at the end of the document)



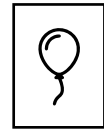
Display the RENEWAL word



Have brightly coloured threads/wool/yarn and scissors available for the creative reflection



Have balloons and streamers on display



Give each person a cardboard/paper copy of the balloons



## CALL TO WORSHIP

Option: Hide the words forgives, reconciles, creates, and renews around the space. Invite people to search for the four lost words. Celebrate when the words are found. Show the words during the call to worship.

Invite people to say the repeated line – you may like to use party whistles, streamers, and/or instruments to make it sound and feel like a celebration.

### Let's celebrate and rejoice

For God forgives.

### Let's celebrate and rejoice

For God reconciles.

### Let's celebrate and rejoice

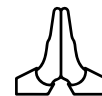
For God creates.

### Let's celebrate and rejoice

For God renews.

### Let's celebrate and rejoice

For we were lost but now we are found.



## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

(based on Joshua 5:9)

Invite people to practice doing some rolling arms. This movement can be used during the prayer.

God,

We look around and we can see you at work – in small ways and in wondrous ways

But so often we don't acknowledge all that you've done, and continue to do in our lives, and in our world.

### Forgive us and roll away our disgrace

God, we know that you forgive and reconcile

But so often we don't think others are deserving of your forgiveness, and we don't attempt to reconcile.

### Forgive us and roll away our disgrace

God, we know that you are full of unconditional love

But so often we don't share that love with others or accept your love in our lives.

### Forgive us and roll away our disgrace

The good news is that God does forgive us and rolls away our disgrace. And we can celebrate and rejoice because of that.





## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

(based on Joshua 9)

Say something like:

In Joshua 5:9, The Lord said to Joshua, *"Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt."*

I wonder what it would mean for God to roll away our disgrace. Let's sit with the word disgrace and some of its synonyms for a while. What would you like God to roll away in your life, and in the Church?

Disgrace, shame, contempt,

Degradation, dishonour, disrespect,

Scorn, abuse, meanness,

Pollution, slander, embarrassment.

God, please forgive us for all the things that came to our mind when we heard those words.

Please roll away our disgrace.

Let's now sit with some of the antonyms of disgrace:

Grace, clean, approve,

Honour, purify,

Elevate, commend.

God, create in us something new, something beautiful, and something which points to you.

Amen

The good news is that God does forgive us and rolls away our disgrace. And we can celebrate and rejoice because of that.

## BIBLE READING IDEAS



2 Corinthians 5:16-21

### RECONCILIATION

Read some definitions of reconciliation.

Invite people, in pairs, or small groups, to come up with an action that demonstrates reconciliation.

During the reading, invite people to do the action whenever they hear the word 'reconciliation'.

### COUNT IT!

Count how many times you hear the word 'reconciliation' during the reading. (5 times)



Luke 15:11-32

### ACT IT OUT

Invite people to act out the reading. You will need a narrator, a father, two sons and a slave. A pig is an optional, but entertaining, character.

### WATCH IT

[The Prodigal Son: The Lumo Project](#)

### JOIN IN

Invite people to say the father's words (verses 22-24, 31-32) with a sense of joy and celebration

## INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES, MUSIC, MINI MESSAGES, OR SERMON IDEAS:



### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

When have you found something that you thought was lost? How did you feel when you found it?

What does forgiveness and reconciliation mean to you?

What have been some of the church's shortcomings in the past? How has God worked through those situations? What new life has sprouted from the darkness?

What does a 'new creation' look like to you?



#### VIDEOS

[Dung Beetle Rolls Enormous Dung Ball with Difficulty](#)

What burdens/rubbish/pain have we been rolling around with us? What would happen if God rolled those things away?

[The Angry Bee: A Story about Forgiveness](#)

Is there anyone in your life who you need to forgive or seek forgiveness from?

What have you missed out on, in the past, because forgiveness hadn't occurred?



#### SONGS

[Lost is found song](#)  
Long Crendon Baptist Church

[Where Forgiveness Is](#)  
Sidewalk Prophets

[Broken yet forgiven](#)  
Bethel Music

[Prodigal Son](#)  
The Rolling Stones

[I forgive](#)  
John Burland



#### MAKE OR EAT

**YUM YUM BALLS**  
Make these [Yum Yum Balls](#) to represent the things that God has rolled away from our lives.

**NEW LIFE COOKIES**  
Make some [New Life Cookies](#). The M&Ms represent what's been rolled away/forgiven in our lives. The grass represents the new life that can happen when we've been forgiven.



#### CREATE

**GRASS HEAD**  
Make a grass head to represent the new things that God has in store for us. <https://www.yates.com.au/garden-hub/grow-a-funny-grass-head/>

**BEFORE AND AFTER**  
Paint or draw a Before and After Picture – one side shows what it is like to be removed from God, and one side shows what it is like to be reconciled with God.



## GAMES

### OPPOSITE FREEZE

Explain that in today's readings there are a lot of opposites – lost and found, without and with, old and new, disgrace and grace, dead and alive. Teach people some actions that show the positive things that God has done for us (see below). Play some music, and when the music stops, call out a 'negative' word from the list below. Invite people to quickly do the opposite 'positive' action. Repeat a number of times.

Lost – Found (hands around eyes like glasses)

Without – with (hands on heart)

Old – new (jazz hands)

Disgrace – grace (hands cupped)

Dead – alive (jump and lift hands)



### SKITTLES

Set up skittles and then roll a ball to try and knock down as many skittles as possible. As you do, thank God for rolling away your disgrace/sins.



## REFLECTION

### RENEWAL REFLECTION

During a time of reflection and prayer, invite people to come forward and either tie yarn on the Letter E or cut a strip of yarn which will be tied at another time.

#### People can:

Reflect on what forgiveness means to them

Reflect on who they may need to forgive or be reconciled with

Reflect on where God is creating something new

Pray for renewal for the Church and their lives



### CELEBRATION REFLECTION

Invite people to write or draw on their balloon. People can thank God for the forgiveness and reconciliation that God has brought to their lives. Place the balloons around the RENEWAL word or in another designated place.



# Abundance

Lent Five: April 6th

## Abundance:

*"1. a copious supply; great amount, 2. fullness or benevolence, 3. degree of plentifulness."*

**Collins Dictionary**

God's story is one of abundance. Throughout the Bible we constantly hear of God's abundant love and blessings undeservedly poured out on humans.

What about our story? As we consider what renewal means for our Church, and our lives, let's reflect on the times when we have been showered with God's abundance. What did this look or feel like? As we look to the future, who, in your life, or neighbourhood, is in desperate need of experiencing God's abundance? What role can you play in sharing God's abundance with them, or others?

## BIBLE READINGS



Isaiah 43:16-21



Psalms 126



Philippians 3:4b-14



John 12:1-8

## BIBLE THEMES

*"I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth; do you not perceive it?"* Isaiah 43: 19

God has done great things over many generations

A harvest of joy

Knowing Christ

Pressing on towards the goal

Mary anointing Jesus' feet with an abundance of perfume, extravagant generosity

## SET-UP:

(see Design and Creative Elements at the end of the document)



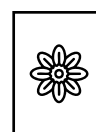
Display the RENEWAL word



Have yellow thread/wool/ yarn and scissors available for the creative reflection



Have yellow flowers or wheat around the room – new life, abundance



Give each person a cardboard/paper copy of the flower





## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Before this prayer, invite people to practise saying the bolded words using whining voices and doing some tantrum actions.



## CALL TO WORSHIP

Invite two people, or two groups, to lead the call to worship.

Can you believe it?!

**We're invited!**

God invites you.

**God invites me.**

God invites us all.

**Not to some boring, bland party.**

But to an abundant life.

**There'll be more than we could ever expect!**

We're sure to be blown away by all that God has in store for us!

**So, let's prepare!**

Let's seek God and be open to what is to come.

**Let's shout for joy for the Lord has done great things for us.**

Dear God,

Thank you for inviting us into a life of abundance with you.

Thank you for all the blessings that you pour out onto us.

Thank you for always being close when we seek you.

You have given us so much and yet so often we think, "**it's mine!**"

Silence

You have given us so much and yet so often with think, "**it's all mine!**" and don't share with others.

Silence

You have given us so much and yet so often we think, "**I want more!**"

Silence

You have given us so much and yet so often we think, "**It's not enough!**"

Silence

You have given us so much and yet so often we think, "**It's not fair - they've got more!**"

Silence

Loving God, please forgive us and help us gain a new understanding of all that you have done for us and provided us with. Please open our eyes to the opportunities when we can be generous with our time, money and attention.

Amen

The good news is that God is merciful and abundantly pardons us.



## BIBLE READING IDEAS



Isaiah 43: 16-21

### M'S & W'S

Make an M and W symbol with your three middle fingers each time you hear/read a word starting with an M or W (The NRSVUE has lots of words – mighty waters, warrior, wick, way, wilderness etc)

### IMAGINE

Close your eyes and picture all the Scenery unfolding. Which is your favourite part

### REWRITE

Rewrite this reading with Scenes from today's world.



Psalms 126

### SOUND EFFECTS

Pause throughout the reading and invite people to make sound effects whenever they hear these words:

Laughter – laugh

Joy/rejoice – woo hoo!

Great things – Wow!

Watercourse – Splish splash, splish splash

Tears/weeping – crying sounds



John 12:1-8

### I WONDER

During the reading, pause to reflect on what people may be feeling and thinking.

*Before the reading: Invite people to recline, in their chairs, like they are satisfied after a full meal.*

After V2: I wonder what they were talking about, thinking about.

*Before continuing, have someone spray perfume around the room.*

After V3: I wonder that Mary was thinking and feeling.

*Before continuing, invite people to put their hands on their hips.*

After V6: I wonder what Judas was thinking and feeling? What about the others?

*Before continuing, invite people to put their hands on their heart.*

After the reading: I wonder where you see yourself in this reading.



### WATCH

[John 12:1-50: Lumo](#) (verses 1-8)

## INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES, MUSIC, MINI MESSAGES, OR SERMON IDEAS:



### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

When have you experienced abundance?

When have you experienced God's abundance?

When has your church or community shown abundance to others? How did people react to that?

When have you seen the stark contrast between people living with an abundance and people living without abundance?

Who in your community or neighbourhood would you like to shower with abundance?

When have you seen, or experienced something old being made new? What new thing might God want to do in your life, or in your community?



### SONGS

[Old for New](#)

Hannah McClure

[God of Abundance](#)

Kat Mills Music

[New Day](#)

Danny Gokey

[The Goodness of God](#)

The Crosby Family

[The Way](#)

Pat Barrett

[Very big things](#)

Orange Kids Music



### MAKE OR EAT

Make some [flower biscuits](#) to share with others

Make a lavish dessert to share with others



### CRAFT

### MAKE PERFUME

[With children](#)<sup>23</sup>

[With adults](#)<sup>24</sup>



### VIDEOS

[This Lie Can Keep You from Living](#)

[Generously](#)

The Bible Project

"God is the host, and humans are his guests, in a world of opportunity and abundance. We are called to keep the party going, to spread his goodness".

What does this look like to you?

"One of the most important ways that we can experience the abundance of God's new creation is sharing with others because of our trust that God is the generous host. How have you shared the abundance of God's new creation?"

[Faceyalk: Bluey](#)

What might you or your church be 'hogging'? How can you share God's abundance so that others may experience it and enjoy it?

[Sharing is Caring:](#)

Notebook Babies

Is there anything that you aren't sharing with others?



## REFLECTION

### RENEWAL REFLECTION

During a time of reflection and prayer, invite people to come forward and either tie yarn on the Letter W or cut a strip of yarn which will be tied at another time.

#### People can:

Reflect on when they have been blessed by God's abundance

Reflect on who they may share their abundance with

Reflect on how their Church could share abundance with others

Pray for renewal for the Church and their lives



### FLOWER REFLECTION

Invite people to write or draw on their flower. When have they experienced God's abundance? How can they share God's abundance with others? Place the flowers around the RENEWAL word or in another designated place.





# Readiness

Lent Six: Palm Sunday - April 13th

## Readiness:

*"willingness or a state of being prepared for something."*

**Cambridge Dictionary**

*"the state of being ready to act when the need arises."*

**Merriam-Webster**

God's story is one of being ready to act. Throughout the Bible we hear of God's readiness to forgive, comfort, guide, protect, and transform. We also hear many stories of people being ready to follow God's instructions and plans, and make changes, no matter what the cost.

What about our story? As we consider what renewal means for our Church, and our lives, let's reflect on our readiness – our readiness to follow God, our readiness for change, our readiness to praise God, our readiness to bring comfort and healing to others, our readiness to step out of our comfort zones. What might we have to change now to be ready for what God is going to do in the future?

## BIBLE READINGS



Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29



Luke 19:28-40

## BIBLE THEMES

The disciples ready to obey Jesus' unusual request

Praise

The people ready to welcome Jesus

The Lord needs it

The people ready for a King

His steadfast love endures forever

## SET-UP:

(see Design and Creative Elements at the end of the document)



Display the RENEWAL word



Have green thread/wool/  
yarn and scissors available  
for the creative reflection



Have palm fronds and  
colourful material around  
the room



Give each person a  
cardboard/paper copy of the  
palm branch



## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Have two people act out these words:

**Are you ready?**

Once I finish my list of jobs.

**Are you ready?**

Once I get a bit more qualified.

**Are you ready?**

Once I rest up.

**Are you ready?**

Once everyone else is ready.

**Are you ready?**

I was but now I have to do something else.

**Are you ready?**

Once you give me a really clear idea of what's going to  
happen.

**Are you ready?**

Once I'm feeling healthy and happy.

**Are you ready?**

Nearly. Just give me a bit more time.

Loving God,

We're sorry for the times when we haven't been ready to  
follow you and your call.

We're sorry for the times when we've made up excuses not  
to be ready.

We're sorry for the times when we've been distracted and  
didn't allow ourselves to be ready.

We're sorry for the times when we haven't trusted you.

We're sorry that our un-readiness has meant that we  
haven't been able to jump into action when you've  
prompted us.

Please forgive us and help us keep our vision on you and  
your calling in our lives. Amen



## CALL TO WORSHIP

(based on Ps 118)

Say something like: Are you feeling ready for worship?

Let's ready our bodies by warming them up - lead  
body warming exercises like shaking hands, running  
feet, rubbing faces etc.

Invite people to say the 'you betcha!' line with a big  
thumbs up action.

Are you ready to worship? Are you ready to give thanks?

**You Betcha! For this is the day that the Lord has made.**

Are you ready to worship? Are you ready to give thanks?

**You Betcha! For God's steadfast love endures forever.**

Are you ready to worship? Are you ready to give thanks?

**You Betcha! For God is good.**

Are you ready to worship? Are you ready to give thanks?

**You Betcha! For God has done marvellous things.**

Are you ready to worship? Are you ready to give thanks?

**You Betcha! For God is our light and our salvation.**

Let's worship and let's give thanks to our God.

## BIBLE READING IDEAS



[Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29](#)

(NRSVUE translation)

### SONG WORDS

Display the Psalm words or give everyone a handout with the words.

Invite people to look for phrases that have been used in worship songs. If people don't know many worship songs, invite them to identify phrases that would work well in worship songs. Give time for people to share their ideas and then read the Psalm listening out for the phrases – O give thanks to the Lord for he is good. His love endures forever. This is the day that the Lord has made. I will give thanks to you.

### MULTIPLE READERS

Have multiple readers read the Bible passage - narrator, disciples, Jesus, colt owner, crowd (everyone), pharisee.



### WATCH-IT

[Luke 19:28-48: Lumo](#)



[Luke 19: 28-40](#)

### ARE YOU READY?

Split the room into five sections – each section is a character/group from the reading.

Pause during the Bible reading to ask different people/groups if they are ready. Pause after:

V31: Are you ready, disciples? We're ready

V34: Are you ready, colt owners? We're ready

V35: Are you ready, Jesus? I'm ready

V36: Are you ready, crowd? We're ready

V40: Are you ready, pharisees? Hmphhh

Re-read the reading and stop in the same places. This time think about what could have stopped the people in the story from not being ready? Pride, Fear, Lack of trust etc

## INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES, MUSIC, MINI MESSAGES, OR SERMON IDEAS:



### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

How are you getting ready for Easter?

What is something you like getting ready for?

What is something you don't like getting ready for?

What does it mean to be ready for God?

What might you need to do to be ready for what God is wanting to do in your life, in your Church, in your community?

What stops you being ready for God?



## SONGS

### Do Something

Matthew West

### Prepare the Way

Bethel Music

### This is the Day

City Alight

### Hosanna

Yancy & Little Praise Party

### Hosanna

Paul Baloche

### Hosanna

Vineyard



## GAMES

### GET READY

Hold a competition between two or three people - who can get ready the fastest? (Get ready for school/work/day at the beach)

### SEEK AND FIND

As people come to worship, give them a card with a Palm Sunday object on it.

During worship, people need to find other people with the same object.

In pairs or small groups, people can talk about some of the reflection questions (see above).



## MAKE OR EAT

Make these cute Donkey Biscuits



## CRAFT

### Make palm fronds

### Make a Palm Sunday Spinner

### Make a Palm Sunday Playdough Mat



## REFLECTION

### RENEWAL REFLECTION

During a time of reflection and prayer, invite people to come forward and either tie yarn on the Letter A or cut a strip of yarn which will be tied at another time.

#### People can:

Reflect on what stops them being ready for God

Reflect on how they might get ready for what God has in store for them

Pray for renewal for the Church and their lives



### PALM BRANCH REFLECTION

Invite people to write or draw on their palm branches. If they were in the Palm Sunday story, would they have been ready to follow and praise Jesus? Place the palm branches around the RENEWAL word or in another designated place.





# Confidence During Dark Times

Good Friday - April 18

## Confidence:

*"the feeling or belief that one can have faith in or rely on someone or something."*

**Oxford Languages**

God's story is one of light, hope, and confidence during dark times. Throughout the Bible, we hear of people who remain confident in God even when everything around them seems to be falling apart. These people know that God will forgive, restore, protect, and guide them even if they feel forsaken (or like a worm as the Psalmist David did!).

What about our story? As we consider what renewal means for our Church, and our lives, let's reflect on the dark times of our lives when there seemed to be no hope. What did you learn from those times? How did you experience confidence or hope in God? As we look to the future, what gives you confidence? How might you share your confidence with others? And how might you support others during dark times so that renewal can occur?

## BIBLE READINGS



Isaiah 52:13-53:12



Psalm 22



Hebrews 10:16-25



John 18:1-19:42

## BIBLE THEMES

God has not abandoned us

Crying out to God

The suffering servant

Forsaken but still confident in who God is, and all that God has, and will do

A new covenant

"Future generations will be told about the Lord and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, saying that he has done it." Psalm 22: 31

Jesus confident in who he is and God's plan, through his death

Peter not being confident and his denial of knowing Jesus

## SET-UP:

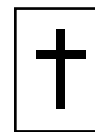
(see Design and Creative Elements at the end of the document)



Display the RENEWAL word



Have seven pieces of sheer black fabric ready to hang over each letter



Give each person a paper/cardboard copy of the cross template and a small piece of sheer black fabric

### Please Note:

There are less ideas provided in this resource as we recognise that many Churches have their own Good Friday traditions and service outlines.



## CALL TO WORSHIP

This call to worship may be spoken by a number of people.

Invite people to hold themselves in an embrace/bear hug.

We may come feeling little hope.  
We may come feeling despair.  
We may come feeling the darkness suffocating us.  
We may come feeling mentally or physically unwell.  
We may come feeling forsaken  
We may come feeling uncertainty.  
We may come feeling full of groans and complaints.  
Invite people to cup their hands in front of themselves

But we come....  
Knowing that God is near  
And we come....  
Knowing that God hears our cries  
And we come...  
Knowing that God is light  
And we come....  
Knowing that God keeps us safe  
And we come...  
Knowing there is hope

We come with confidence knowing that deliverance is just around the corner.



## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Optional: during this prayer, slowly cover up the letters of the RENEWAL word with sheer black fabric, to represent the darkness.

Today is full of darkness.  
There's betrayal. (cover the letter R)  
There's violence. (cover the letter E)  
There's denial. (cover the letter N)  
There's pain. (cover the letter E)  
There's rejection. (cover the letter W)  
There's mocking. (cover the letter A)  
There's suffering. (cover the letter L)

As we read the Good Friday story, we realise that we are often in the midst of the darkness.

Optional: Invite people to cover their crosses with black fabric.

All seems dark. All seems lost. All seems hopeless. Renewal seems like a distant thought.

PAUSE

Optional: Invite people to remove the black fabric from their crosses.

God, please take away the veil of darkness in our lives and illuminate the areas of our lives, and of our community, where we need to step out from the darkness and move towards the light with hope and confidence.

Amen

Even in the darkness, God is near and present. God has a plan. And God remembers our sin no more.



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

When have you felt confidence during a dark time?

Have you ever felt like a worm, like David in Ps 22? What other descriptions would you give to hard times?

What gives you confidence during hard times?

When have you cried out to God?

Who has told you about the Good News of Jesus and who have you told so that future generations will know?



## REFLECTION



## CROSS REFLECTION

Invite people to cover their cross with the black fabric.

They may reflect on the dark times of their life when there seemed to be no hope.

Invite people to remove the black fabric and write or draw on their crosses.

What gives them confidence in the darkness of Good Friday? What are they confident about in the future?

Place the crosses around the RENEWAL word or in another designated place.

You may wish to play this video before or after the time of reflection: [What's so Good About Good Friday?](#): Passion

# God's Story, Our Story

Easter Sunday - April 20

God's story, spanning all of time, is one of overwhelming love for God's creation. Throughout the Bible, we hear of people destroying, neglecting, and abusing God's perfect creation. We hear of people abandoning God's way and choosing their own way. There is death. There is destruction. There is pain. There is darkness. And yet, through it all, God upends, God challenges, God acts, and God renews in unexpected, unconventional and miraculous ways to bring healing and restoration to creation.

What about our story? As we focus on renewal of our Church, and of our lives, let's think about the ways that God has challenged us, healed us, restored us, and worked in unconventional or miraculous ways to bring healing and restoration to our lives? As we think about all that God has done for us, what is our response going forward? How might we act differently or share God's story with those around us?

## BIBLE READINGS



Isaiah 65:17-25



Psalms 118:1-2, 14-24



1 Corinthians 15:19-26  
OR Acts 10:34-43



John 20:1-18  
OR Luke 24:1-12



Other:  
Psalm 136:1-9, 23-36

## BIBLE THEMES

God's steadfast love endures forever

God's love is for all people

This is the day that the Lord has made,  
let us rejoice and be glad in it

Christ- the first fruits

New heavens and a new earth

Women proclaim the resurrection

Different reactions to the empty tomb

## SET-UP:

(see Design and Creative Elements at the end of the document)



Display the RENEWAL word



Have white and gold thread/wool/yarn  
and scissors available for the creative  
reflection



Give each person a paper/cardboard  
copy of the Empty Tomb



### Please Note:

There are less ideas provided in this resource as we recognise that many Churches have their own Easter Sunday traditions and service outlines.



## CALL TO WORSHIP

(Psalm 136:1-9, 23-26)

### God's Work in Creation and in History

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,  
**for his steadfast love endures forever.**

O give thanks to the God of gods,  
**for his steadfast love endures forever.**

O give thanks to the Lord of lords,  
**for his steadfast love endures forever;**

who alone does great wonders,  
**for his steadfast love endures forever;**  
who by understanding made the heavens,

**for his steadfast love endures forever;**

who spread out the earth on the waters,  
**for his steadfast love endures forever;**

who made the great lights,  
**for his steadfast love endures forever;**

the sun to rule over the day,  
**for his steadfast love endures forever;**

the moon and stars to rule over the night,  
**for his steadfast love endures forever;**

It is he who remembered us in our low estate,

**for his steadfast love endures forever;**

and rescued us from our foes,  
**for his steadfast love endures forever;**

who gives food to all flesh,  
**for his steadfast love endures forever.**

O give thanks to the God of heaven,  
**for his steadfast love endures forever.**

Invite people to do Auslan sign language on the repeated words - great (good) and day.

Auslan signs can be [found here](#).

It's a **great day** to be here.

It's a **great day** to tell stories.

It's a **great day** to rejoice.

It's a **great day** to reflect.

It's a **great day** to listen.

It's a **great day** to be with each other.

It's a **great day** to hear God's story in a new way.

It's a great day to worship.

Invite people to do the Auslan signs on the repeated words - God and Story. Signs can be [found here](#).

### God's story

It spans all of time

### God's story

It's one of overwhelming love

### God's story

It's one of forgiveness and redemption

### God's story

It's one of healing and renewal

### God's story

It's for all of us

So, let's come and worship and  
weave our stories with God's story.



## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Prepare six large books with the following words on the cover –

love

hope

reconciliation

good news

forgiveness

renewal

### Reader One:

God's story is a story of love. Show and then open the 'love' book.

What's our story?

### Reader Two:

God's story is a story of hope. Show and then open the 'hope' book.

What's our story?

### Reader Three:

God's story is a story of reconciliation. Show and then open the 'reconciliation' book.

What's our story?

### Reader Four:

God's story is a story of good news. Show and then open the 'good news' book.

What's our story?

### Reader Five:

God's story is a story forgiveness. Show and then open the 'forgiveness' book.

What's our story? (show and then open the 'forgiveness' book)

### Reader Six:

God's story is a story of renewal. Show and then open the 'renewal' book.

What's our story?

God, when we hear about your wondrous story, we realise that our stories often don't align with your story. Please forgive us.

Please weave your story with our own stories to bring love, hope, reconciliation, good news, forgiveness, and renewal to our lives, our communities, and our world.

AMEN

## INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES, MUSIC, MINI MESSAGES, OR SERMON IDEAS:



### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What are you rejoicing in this Easter?

How has God restored you over Lent?

If you could create a 'new earth' in your community, what would it look and feel like?

How do you think you would have reacted to the news of the empty tomb?

How does your story intertwine with God's story?



### MUSIC

Before or during the reflection you may want to watch:

[God is in this Story](#)

Katy Nichole and Big Daddy Weave

[Tell the Story](#)

Shane and Shane

[I Will Sing the Wondrous Story](#) Keswick



### REFLECTION

#### RENEWAL REFLECTION

During a time of reflection and prayer, invite people to come forward and either tie yarn on the Letter L or cut a strip of yarn which will be tied at another time.

#### People can:

Reflect on what God's story means to them

Reflect on how God has been in their own story

Reflect on what changes need to be made to their own story before renewal can occur

Pray for renewal for the Church and their lives



### EMPTY TOMB REFLECTION

Invite people to write or draw on their empty tomb. What does God's Easter story mean to you? How does God's Easter story intertwine with yours?

## SUGGESTED SONGS

Titles, composers, and songbooks are listed. The following abbreviations are used for the songbooks:

**TIS** -Together in Song, **SIS** -Scripture in Song, **Sce** -The Source

### LENT 1: ASSURANCE

A Mighty Fortress is Our God **TIS** 103  
Be Still and Know **SIS** 27  
Be Bold, Be Strong **SIS** 465  
Because He Lives **Sce** 701  
Blessed Assurance **Sce** 52  
Comfort, Comfort **TIS** 647  
Forever (Chris Tomlin)  
Great is Your Faithfulness **TIS** 154  
In Christ Alone. (Keith and Kristyn Getty)  
In Heavenly Love Abiding **TIS** 588  
It is Well with my Soul  
Jehovah Jireh **SIS** 184  
Jesus Strong and Kind. (Colin Buchannan)  
Praise to the Lord, the Almighty **TIS** 111  
Sent Forth By God's Blessing **TIS** 571  
Standing on the Promises (Russell Carter)  
Still (Hillsong)  
The King of Love My Shepherd Is **TIS** 145  
The Trees of the Field **SIS** 397  
To God Be the Glory **TIS** 147  
What a Friend We Have in Jesus  
You Are Mine (David Haas)

### LENT 2: TRANSFORMING ENCOUNTERS

All are Welcome (Marty Haugen)  
And Can It Be **TIS** 209  
Be Still, for the Presence **Sce** 47  
Beauty for Brokenness **TIS** 690  
Come, All You Vagabonds (Townend, Edwards and Baggailey)  
Come As You Are **TIS** 693  
Christ Be Our Light **Sce** 1409  
Filled With the Spirit's Power **TIS** 411  
Go Forth in His Name (Graham Kendrick)  
Here I Am, Lord **Sce** 246  
I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say **TIS** 585

In a Church That's Moving Forward  
(Andrew Williams ) (Tune – Nettleton)  
May the Mind of Christ My Saviour **TIS** 609  
Refresh My Heart, Lord (Geoff Bullock)  
Sent Forth By God's Blessing **TIS** 531  
Surely the Presence (Lanny Wolfe)  
Tell Out, My Soul **TIS** 161  
The Power of Your Love (Geoff Bullock)  
The Summons  
There's a Light Upon the Mountains. **TIS** 276  
To God Be the Glory **TIS** 147  
Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus **Sce** 533  
You Are Mine (David Haas)  
Your Will Be Done (City Alight)

### LENT 3: SEEKING GOD

As the Deer **SIS** 460  
Be Still and Know **SIS** 27  
Be Thou My Vision **TIS** 547  
Breathe On Me, Breath of Go **TIS** 407  
Come As You Are (Deidre Brown) (As One Voice)  
For Those Tears I Died (Marsha Carter)  
Guide Me, O Thou Great Redeemer **TIS** 569  
Jesus, Be the Centre **Sce** 826  
Just a Closer Walk With Thee (Author anonymous)  
My Eyes Be Open **Sce** 894  
Open My Eyes, Lord, help me to see your face (Jesse Manibussan)  
Open Our Eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus **SIS** 390  
Open the Eyes of My Heart, Lord (Paul Baloche)  
The Power of Your Love/Lord I come to you (Geoff Bullock)  
Touching Heaven, Changing Earth (Reuben Morgan)



#### LENT 4: FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION

All Creatures of Our God and King **TIS** 100

All Praise to Our Redeeming Lord **TIS** 442

And Can It Be **TIS** 209

Beauty for Brokenness **TIS** 690

Comfort, Comfort (Robin Mann)

Dear Father, Lord of Humankind **TIS** 598

Freely, Freely (Carol Owens)

God of Creation (words by Craig Mitchell)

I am a New Creation **Sce** 191

I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say **TIS** 585

I'm Forgiven (because You were forsaken . . .)

Jesus, Strong and Kind (Colin Buchannan)

O How Good It Is (Keith and Kristyn Getty)

O Lord, You Search Me and You Know Me (Bernadette Farrell)

Yours Be the Glory **TIS** 380

#### LENT 5: ABUNDANCE

All Creatures of Our God and King **TIS** 100

All Things Bright and Beautiful **TIS** 135

All Things Praise You **TIS** 148

Did You Ever See a Kookaburra Laugh **TIS** 175

Holy, Holy, Holy **TIS** 132

Immortal, Invisible **TIS** 143

Joyful, Joyful We Adore You **TIS** 152

Now Thank We All Our God **TIS** 106

O Worship the King **TIS** 133

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty **TIS** 111

Sing of the Lord's Goodness **TIS** 183

Tell Out, My Soul **TIS** 161

To God Be the Glory **TIS** 147

#### LENT 6 PALM SUNDAY: READINESS

A Voice is Heard ATW 430

Beauty for Brokenness **TIS** 690

God of Light, We Are Waiting for You (Gail Berberick)

Guide Me, O Thou Great Redeemer **TIS** 569

Hosanna (Brooke Ligertwood)

Lord, Let Me See **TIS** 681

Make Way, Make Way (Graham Kendrick)

Sent Forth By God's Blessing **TIS** 531

The Summons (Will you come and follow me . . .) (John Bell)

Wave those branches high (David McGregor)

#### GOOD FRIDAY: CONFIDENCE IN DARK TIMES

All Ye Who Pass By

Be Still, My Soul **TIS** 123

Cornerstone (My hope is built on nothing less . . .) (Reuben Morgan)

For You, Deep Stillness (Robin Mann)

Great is Your Faithfulness **TIS** 154

Hope (Geoff Bullock)

I'll Be Always Loving You (Trisha Watts)

Like a Candle (Craig Mitchell)

My Song is Love Unknown **TIS** 341

O Love That Will Not Let Me Go **TIS** 602

O Sacred Head **TIS** 339

Still (Hillsong)

The Lord's My Shepherd (Stuart Townend)

You Are Mine (I will come to you in the silence . . .) (David Haas)

#### EASTER SUNDAY: GOD'S STORY, OUR STORY

Across the Lands (Townend and Getty)

Christ is Risen (Graham Kendrick)

Christ the Lord is Risen Today. **TIS** 370

Come People of the Risen King (Townend and Getty)

I Will Sing the Wondrous Story **TIS** 233

Lord of the Dance (I danced in the morning . . .) **TIS** 242

Resurrection Hymn (See, what a morning . . .)  
(Townend and Getty)

Yours Be the Glory **TIS** 380

## DESIGN AND CREATIVE ELEMENTS

Throughout the seven weeks of Lent and Easter, there are three different display and reflection ideas that can be used each week, to bring the overall theme 'Renewal: God's Story, Our Story', and weekly themes, to life.

Over the weeks, the display will be renewed as people add their reflections.

**The three design and reflection elements are:**

1

### A LARGE RENEWAL WORD

(Overall theme)

Display a large R-E-N-E-W-A-L word made up of seven separate cardboard letters. These should look boring and bland. Over seven services, this RENEWAL word will be renewed/transformed as people reflect on, and weave their stories and prayers, onto each letter.

Each week, one letter of the RENEWAL display will be covered in a colour/s which draws inspiration from the Bible readings. On Easter Sunday, each letter will be completed and a colourful RENEWAL artwork, made by many people, will be displayed.

2

### INDIVIDUAL PAPER SYMBOLS

(Weekly theme)

These symbols can be used to help people reflect on the weekly theme and their own stories. People will be invited to colour, draw, or write on the symbols and add them to the Renewal display.

3

### DISPLAY OBJECTS/SYMBOLS

(Weekly theme)

Similar to the other weeks, these symbols represent a part of the weekly theme and Bible readings. They are displayed in the room as a visual reminder of the weekly theme and readings.

## COLOUR & SYMBOLS

**Here are the suggested list of colours and symbols for each week:**

### LENT ONE:

Assurance

R of Renewal is covered in thread

Light Brown thread is used to reflect the wilderness and the basket

Symbol – Basket (with or without fruit in it – grapes, apples, figs)

### LENT TWO:

Transforming Encounters

E of Renewal is covered in thread

Silver and Gold thread is used to reflect the stars in the sky and the transfiguration

Symbol - Star

### LENT THREE:

Seeking God

N of Renewal is covered in thread

Blue thread is used to reflect the water

Symbol - Pottery jug with water flowing from it

### LENT FOUR:

Abundance

E of Renewal is covered in thread

Bright coloured thread is used to reflect the joy of forgiveness and celebration of the lost being found

Symbol -Balloons



### LENT FIVE:

Forgiveness and Reconciliation

W of Renewal is covered in thread

Yellow thread is used to reflect the abundance of Nard perfume and wheat

Symbol – Yellow flowers (maybe wheat)

### LENT SIX:

Readiness

A of Renewal is covered in thread

Green thread is used reflect the Palm branches

Symbol -Palm Branch

### GOOD FRIDAY:

Confidence During Dark Times

Hang sheer black material over the word Renewal (God's renewal is still there in the dark times!)

Symbol - cross

### EASTER SUNDAY:

God's Story, Our Story

L of Renewal is covered in thread

White and Gold thread is used to represent Jesus rising from the dead

Symbol - Empty Tomb



## DESIGN AND CREATIVE ELEMENTS

For some further inspiration check out these yarn-wrapped letters:

<https://www.artbarblog.com/yarn-wrapped-cardboard-letters/>



## URL REFERENCES:

Don't Let me Wander: Every Nation music <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wnPkWfS-Us>

Be With Those Who Wander: GIA Music <https://giamusic.com/resource/be-with-those-who-wander-pdf-du01792>

Wanderer's Prayer: Anointed Family <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U7YQB-JIHHw>

Blessed Assurance: City Alight <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=htnYxmtn8BU>

Hot Vanilla Honey Milk <https://www.food.com/recipe/hot-vanilla-honey-milk-376362>

Honey Milk Toast <https://www.slurrrp.com/recipes/milk-and-honey-french-toas-1617687936>

Twins try the candy temptation challenge <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4YIXcXKhJ8l>

How Many Stars in Space: Astronomy:  
<https://www.astronomy.com/science/astro-for-kids-how-many-stars-are-there-in-space/>

Starfield Space Ambient Music: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GoihJiAqI4s&list=RDyZ37ITWT1yg&index=15>

God's Promise for Abraham: Saddleback Kids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zUhs-MWoTbg>

Lumo Project (until 1.50) <https://www.bible.com/videos/25272-the-transfiguration>

Consider the Stars: Keith & Kristyn Getty <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j7rlvi2eKbE>

God in All of This: The Afters [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9kWK\\_Wu-wKM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9kWK_Wu-wKM)

The Potter's Hand (Hillsong Worship): roncob1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YHAXBg8dJ3k>

Totally Transformed: Jana Alayra <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tb26Eup6dUY>

Star Biscuits: Women's Weekly <https://www.womensweeklyfood.com.au/recipe/baking/star-biscuits-2975/>

Creatures of the Night: Trail Cam Video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2KEjZOgXHjU>

Hold Fast To What Is Good <https://holdfasttowhatisgood.com/liturgy/call-to-worship/>

Desert sounds: <https://pixabay.com/sound-effects/search/desert/>

First: Lauren Daigle <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RbWQV3OiRqA>

Ask Seek Knock: Hillsong Kids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J3vXskhl1ig>

When we Seek You: Vintage Worship <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zl4HpTAXRaE>

The More I Seek You: Gateway Worship [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mEWD\\_r\\_bfp60](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mEWD_r_bfp60)

Seek Ye First: Maranatha! Music <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EsBpM9IcBts>

Refreshing punch <https://theorganisedhousewife.com.au/recipes/coles-tropical-punch/>

Eye/Face biscuits [https://www.kidspot.com.au/kitchen/recipes/funny-face-biscuits-recipe/0ec2uz1x\\_](https://www.kidspot.com.au/kitchen/recipes/funny-face-biscuits-recipe/0ec2uz1x_)

Pretzels <https://www.faithward.org/lent-pretzels-recipe-and-pretzel-prayer/>

Bluey Hide and Seek <https://iview.abc.net.au/video/CH1702Q039S00>

The Prodigal Son: The Lumo Project <https://www.bible.com/videos/25273-the-prodigal-son>

Lost is found song: Long Crendon Baptist Church <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B4ocmG4AsjU>

Where Forgiveness Is: Sidewalk Prophets <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dRpabLhQZ2k>

Broken yet forgiven: Bethel Music <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ZGbeYtcq-I>

Prodigal Son: The Rolling Stones <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=humDgJ-SmHI>



I forgive: John Burland <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fEdq81Sqy7M>

Dung Beetle Rolls Enormous Dung Ball with Difficulty: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xNjymt6oCcQ>

The Angry Bee: A Story about Forgiveness <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-aEUjlxOK-Y>

Yum Yum Balls: <https://www.food.com/recipe/yum-yum-balls-63973>

New Life Cookies. <https://www.recipegirl.com/easter-grass-sugar-cookies/>

Grass Head: <https://www.yates.com.au/garden-hub/grow-a-funny-grass-head/>

John 12:1-50: Lumo (verses 1-8):  
<https://www.jesusfilm.org/watch/lumo-the-gospel-of-john.html/lumo-john-12-1-50/english.html>

Old for New: Hannah McClure <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DXXj9bNrZNo>

God of Abundance: Kat Mills Music <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YEkFF9yPrQ>

Danny Gokey: New Day <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0TrKXehB0pg>

The Goodness of God: The Crosby Family <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J-qMv1roB7E>

The Way: Pat Barrett <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MOzsJlk8p6I>

Very big things: Orange Kids Music [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYUx\\_E3MhwU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYUx_E3MhwU)

Flower biscuits to share with others <https://kidseatbyshanai.com/daisy-cookies/>

Make some perfume (children) <https://mericherry.com/2017/03/28/making-perfume-with-kids/>

Make some perfume (adults) <https://www.thepeacefulhaven.com/how-to-make-your-own-natural-perfume/>

This Lie Can Keep You from Living Generously: The Bible Project <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=62CiiEkRCso>

Faceytalk: Bluey <https://iview.abc.net.au/video/CH2003Q012S00>

Sharing is Caring: Notebook Babies <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fmR-BBj3U1M>

Do Something: Matthew West [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b\\_RjndG0IX8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b_RjndG0IX8)

Prepare the Way: Bethel Music <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iB5xUn4lWo0>

This is the Day: City Alight [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gb\\_Excnk0\\_4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gb_Excnk0_4)

Hosanna: Yancy & Little Praise Party <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iVwhdqDrfz8>

Hosanna: Paul Baloche <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VMBDWG9tseU>

Hosanna: Vineyard <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dAiBntMtViY>

Palm Sunday objects <https://flamecreativekids.blogspot.com/search/label/Palm%20Sunday>

Donkey Biscuits <https://starstreet.ucwa.au/2023/01/25/vivamus-erat/>

Make palm fronds <https://mommynippets.com/hosanna-branch-wavers/>

Make a Palm Sunday Spinner <https://flamecreativekids.blogspot.com/2013/03/palm-sunday-spinner.html>

Make a Palm Sunday Playdough Mat <https://flamecreativekids.blogspot.com/search/label/Palm%20Sunday>

What's so Good About Good Friday?: Passion <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FzxXvEtf9D0>

Auslan signs can be found here: <https://auslan.org.au/dictionary/words/good-1.html>

God is in this Story: Katy Nichole and Big Daddy Weave <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ryD3D9X2myk>

Tell the Story: Shane and Shane <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K-ry0j2uAJs>

I Will Sing the Wondrous Story: Keswick:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HQLLCxbOH4A&list=RDHQLLCxbOH4A&start\\_radio=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HQLLCxbOH4A&list=RDHQLLCxbOH4A&start_radio=1)



