

# Service of the Word or All Age Service Resources

## 'A Place to Call Home'

As many clergy create their own bespoke service sheets for Service of the Word or All Age Services, the following are offered as suggestions for the various elements. Where applicable, website sources are given which will hopefully make for easy 'cut and paste' access, should you wish to use any of these pieces.

## Opening Responses

God of Exiles, Shelter of the Homeless:

**You welcome all into the arms of your love.**

To all who wander, with no place to call home,

**You offer shelter and rest.**

Adapted from: <https://www.christianaid.ie/resources/emergencies/litanies-refugees>

*Or*

Your steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds.

**All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings**

How precious is your steadfast love, O God!

**All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings.**

In your light we see light.

**All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings**

*cf Psalm 36:5, 7, 9*

## Penitence

### The Coventry Litany of Reconciliation

*All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.*

The hatred which divides nation from nation, race from race, class from class,

**Father forgive**

The covetous desires of people and nations to possess what is not their own,

**Father forgive**

The greed which exploits the work of human hands and lays waste the earth,

**Father forgive**

Our envy of the welfare and happiness of others,

**Father forgive**

Our indifference to the plight of the imprisoned, the homeless, the refugee,

**Father forgive**

The lust which dishonours the bodies of men, women and children,

**Father forgive**

The pride which leads us to trust in ourselves and not in God,

**Father forgive**

*Be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*

Source: <http://www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/ccn/the-coventry-litany-of-reconciliation/>

*Or*

When we gather we ask God to forgive us for those things wrong things we have done: God our Father, we come to you and we are sorry for our sins.

For turning away from you and ignoring your will for our lives; Father, forgive us:  
**Save us and help us.**

For saying and doing things we know are wrong; Father, forgive us:  
**Save us and help us.**

For behaving just as we wish, failing to love you and failing to love others; Father, forgive us:  
**Save us and help us.**

## Suggested Readings and Sermon Theme: Hospitality and Blessing

**Genesis 18: 1-8 \\ Psalm 23 \\ Hebrews 13:1-5 \\ Luke 10:25-37 or Matthew 25:31-40**

### Sermon illustration: How many?

Invite two volunteers, kids or adults, to come and help with this illustration. The two volunteers stand facing each other and extend their arms towards each other and upwards until their palms are touching, creating an arch shape. Explain that you want to see how many people can fit under the arch and invite other kids in the congregation to come forward and see if they can find a place. When you've reached 'maximum capacity' count up the number and then challenge the group to see if you could possibly fit any more. See if the group come up with any creative solutions (the two people forming the arch stand on tip-toes and stretch as much as possible; swap the 'arch' people for two adults who are taller or who have longer arms and can stretch farther apart; make the arch bigger by making a chain of people holding hands to form the arch, rather than just two, everyone can become part of the structure, etc).

The texts suggested above, or other suitable texts, may be used to highlight biblical themes of hospitality, welcome and blessing: of God's welcoming each of us into the kingdom family, and of our extension of love, care and hospitality to those in our own communities who are marginalised or hurting.

## Prayers

We pray for all those who are uprooted,  
who are hunted, who are fleeing for their lives,  
and who so often find only closed borders,  
closed doors, and closed faces.  
*God of refuge, hear our prayer.*

We pray for the women and men,  
the children and the elderly  
who seek to find safety and solace  
and who yearn to begin new lives.  
*God of refuge, hear our prayer.*

We pray for those who pass by,  
who would rather not hear the pleading  
or see the fear or recognise  
the human being in need of help.  
*God of refuge, hear our prayer.*

Out of the depths we cry to you,  
awaken in us all the potential  
which may become your means  
of answering the prayers of others.  
*God of refuge, hear our prayer.*

Adapted from: <https://www.christianaid.ie/resources/emergencies/litanies-refugees>

You may consider using a simple, sung response such as a Taizé chant, for your prayers, for example 'O Lord, hear my prayer', (#620 in the *Church Hymnal*) or one of the following:

**Laudate omnes gentes**

Lau - da - te om-nes gen - tes, lau - da - te Do-mi - num. Lau -  
da - te om-nes gen - tes, lau - da - te Do-mi - num. Lau -

♪ **Sing prai-ses, all you peo-ples**, sing prai-ses to the Lord. / **Sjung lov-sång**, alla länder, och pri-sa Her-rens namn! / **Lob-singt, ihr Völ-ker al-le**, lob-singt und preist den Herrn. / **Can-tai to-dos os po-vos**, lou-vai nos-so Se-nhor. / **Que to-do el mun-do a-la-be**, a-la-be al Se-nhor. Que to-do el mun-do a-la-be, a-la-be al Se-nhor. / **Gie-do-kit vi-sos tau-tos**, gie-do-kiit Vieš-pa-čiuī. / **Сла-ви-те, всі на-ро-ди** Сла-ви-те Гос-по-да. / すべてのひとよ主をたたえよ / **Si-fu-ni wa-tu wo-te** si-fu-ni Mwen-ye-zi. / **Oh, kiit-ke nüüd kõik rah-vad**, oh, kiit-ke Ju-ma-tat!

(Louez le Seigneur, tous les peuples. / Lodate il Signore tutte le genti. / Chwalcie Pana, wszystkie narody. / Прославляйте все народы Господа. Ps 117)

Music: J. Berthier  
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**Wait for the Lord**

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.  
Wait for the Lord. keep watch, take heart!

♪ **Con-tem-pla-ré tu vi-da**, en mi. Con-tem-pla-ré, Se-nhor, tu a-mor. / **Nah ist der Herr**, es kom mit sein Tag. Nah ist der Herr, habt Mut, bleibst wach. / **Con-fi-a em Deus**, teu sal-va-dor. Con-fi-a em Deus, E-le é a-mor. / **Pan blis-ko jest**, o-cze-kuj Go. Pan blis-ko jest, w Nim ser-ca mod. / **Bli-zu je Bog**, pri-ha-ja k nam. Bli-zu je Bog, le čakaj nanj. / **Blíz-ko je Pán** a je-ho den. Blíz-ko je Pán, ne-měj-te strach. / **Várj és ne félj**, az Ur jön már. Várj és ne félj; hű szív-vel várj! / **Vieš-pa-ties lauk**, jau Jis ar-ti. Vieš-pa-ties lauk, bu-dék šir-dy. / **Bli-zu je Bog**, o-če-kuj ga. Bli-zu je Bog, o-da-gnaj strah! / **Zo-tin ti prit** se ai po vjen zo-tin ti prit e mos ki trik.

Music: J. Berthier  
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Source: [https://www.taize.fr/en\\_article10308.html](https://www.taize.fr/en_article10308.html)

## Prayer Spaces

If time and your service format allow, you may like to use one or more prayer spaces.

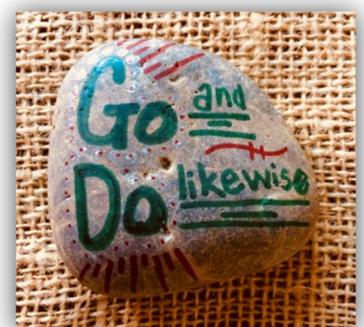
### 'A Place to Call Home' Banner

The week prior to this service, you might ask the Sunday club, or other creative volunteers, to create a banner that shows the outline of a home (brown kraft paper/parcel wrap works well). During the prayer time everyone would have the chance to write down a prayer, or younger children might draw a picture or add decoration to the home to represent their prayers. The banner could be displayed in the church for a few weeks to remind everyone of the appeal and to invite ongoing donations.

### Make and Take Prayer

Families can be given time to make a prayer reminder to take home. One option would be to create a tea light holders using old CDs (check out <http://flamecreativekids.blogspot.com/2013/08/light-of-world-cd-craft.html> for instructions). These can be decorated with permanent marker, stickers and sequins. A second option would be to have a variety of smooth stones available. Using permanent marker, families can write on their stone 'Go and do likewise' and decorate it. Families can take home their tea light holder or decorated stone and place it in the kitchen, dining room, or another part of the home where it can be a daily reminder for family prayer.

You may like to provide this or another suitable prayer on small cards for everyone to take away: 'God our Father, help us to see the world around us with your eyes of love. May we not turn away or pass by the needs of those around us. Guide us to recognise those in need as our neighbours and to extend your loving care in our communities. Amen.'



## Closing Prayer

Give us, Lord God, a vision of your Kingdom as your love desires it: a world where the weak are protected, and none go hungry, a world where life is shared, and enjoyed by all, a world where all races, nations and cultures live in tolerance and respect, a world where peace is built with justice, and justice is guided by love. Give us the inspiration and courage to build your Kingdom here and now. **Amen.**

Source: <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-02/caweek18-prayers.pdf>

## Blessing

May Christ draw you to humility and worship,  
and bring you to see God at work;  
and the blessing ...

Go forth into the world in peace;  
be of good courage;  
hold fast that which is good;  
render to no one evil for evil;  
strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak;  
help the afflicted; honour everyone;  
love and serve the Lord,  
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit;  
and the blessing ...

*1 Thessalonians 5.13-22*

Now may the blessing of God the Father,  
who made from one every nation that occupies the earth;  
of God the Son who bought us for God  
from every tribe and language and people and nation;  
and of God the Spirit who brings us together in unity,  
be with us and remain with us always.

**Amen.**

*cf Acts 17.26; Revelation 5.9*

Source: Church of England, *Common Worship*

## Suggested hymns:

From *Church Hymnal*

- 618 Lord of all hopefulness
- 623 Our heavenly Father, through your Son
- 494 Beauty for brokenness
- 496 For the healing of the nations
- 498 What does the Lord require for praise and offering?

From *Thanks and Praise*

- 88 Longing for light, we wait in darkness
- 120 Praise the One who breaks the darkness
- 147 The Lord's my shepherd (Townend)
- 156 We bring you, Lord, our prayer and praise
- 158 We shall go out with hope of Resurrection