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Risen and Real: Resources for Intergenerational Worship Easter to Pentecost Year B

Intergenerational faith formation in the gathered worship space

Invitations to encourage and strengthen and care for one another across the generations in our gathered worship times can come in many forms.

There are lots of wonderful ways to open space and nourish the culture of intergenerational faith formation and discipleship. Just as there are manifold gifts of the Spirit, and countless ways that these gifts can be combined to shape our gathered worship life, so are the ways of connecting and serving one another with intention and attention to the dynamics and treasures of many ages together.

The first and foremost gift of intergenerational community is that it liberates us from the divisive categories age and generation – old/young/child/youth/boomer/millennial – and calls us to face one another not as an ‘age category’ but as a human. We gather as plain and humble humans, regardless of age, agility, ability, acumen or assets to celebrate and collaborate and mourn and struggle and sort and discern our life in God together.

This resource provides lots of options for each of the seven weeks of the season from Easter to Pentecost. The material is drawn from a close and integrated reading of all of the lectionary texts for each week and follows a number of strong themes that recur through the weeks across the narratives, gospels, epistles and psalms.

The approach here is not like a Christian Education curriculum with didactic goals or learning outcomes or teaching points.

This approach seeks to help the whole people of God find their experiences and convictions and calls forward in the texts of scripture.

We use the images and phrases and symbols and actions of the texts as starting points for our expressions of celebration and praise, our prayers of confession and solidarity with a world in need.

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Intergenerational faith gatherings call us to be our whole selves. We are not just 'students' coming to 'learn something' or 'get something out of the service', and we are not just observers of a finely polished ritual. We are not a list of identity markers – age, gender, ethnicity, education, class, employment/marital status, ability/mobility/sanity, nor a hierarchy of leaders, rosters, volunteers, helpers, pew-warmers, attenders, some more invested, more powerful, than others.

No, in the gathering of God we bring our whole complex category-defying selves into a new configuration of mutually enriching shared experience from which we emerge changed and changing.

We are creators, communicators, contemplators, celebrators, incarnators and liberators; we make the road of worship and discipleship and mission by walking together.

The liturgies, prayers, music, readings, activities and art in this resource are all steeped in the texts, in the story of the resurrection, the risen Lord of the Cosmos, and the results this brings in the form of challenges and choices and changes in the lives of Jesus' followers and the communities they are located in.

The diversity of different voices and viewpoints in your community from across the ages and life experiences are a rich resource for bringing to life the full witness of God's work in the world. This is a strong theme across the weeks from Easter to Pentecost, as the followers of Jesus share through words and actions of many kinds – being arrested, selling their property and sharing things in common, running alongside a royal chariot, baptizing believers of a different region, rolling the dice to choose another apostle. The diverse ways that the disciples respond to the resurrection of Jesus and the wide range of imagery the scriptures offer to explore what life in the light of the risen Lord of the cosmos looks like – rejected blocks built into a new structure, radically risky shepherd leadership, interconnected fruity vines, living streams of baptism, a common life shared on the basis of love.

Our stories of witness to what we see in the world today interweave with the stories of scripture. We help one another tell the stories of faith from scripture, and tell our own stories of faith. Both of these witnesses strengthen our faith, (discipleship), strengthen our community (service), and strengthen our capacity and competence in witnessing to the kingdom of God within our wider world (Mission).

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What's included

Call to Worship – one liturgy that serves 7 weeks, encapsulating all of the themes under the main idea of being witnesses and we tell simply of what we have seen heard and encountered of the Living Lord Jesus.

Art images – accompany the call the worship liturgy and summarise the themes of all the texts across all the weeks. There is a main image for each week, but most weeks some parts of the text will also align with a couple of the other images.

There are a number of suggested ways of using these images from background thematic art to specific reflection exercises, to creative prayer
The images are all original pieces created in close dialogue with Melbourne artist Chris Booth and can be used on screen or printed freely for worship, discipleship and mission in association with this material, and with fair acknowledgement.

Songs of Praise and Celebration - each week has a featured intergenerational interactive song of celebration – a song with an integrated activity to enrich the experience of corporate music, and draw all ages together with multiple ways to engage personally and serve one another.

Confession – one confession prayer that serves the seven weeks, encapsulating all of the themes paralleling the call to worship.
There are different actions drawn from the images of the texts, that can be offered alongside the spoken confession liturgy.

Early Word – Each week offers at least one, sometimes two Bible engagement resources to shape the 'early word' time of the service (often which is more like a children's talk, with scant reference to any of the texts), and encourage the sensory, out-loud, embodied communal reading and exploration of the bible text.

What's not here...

This resource assumes that communities will probably have other, more conventional readings of the Bible in the service as well, and use locally sourced content for Ministry of the Word and celebration of sacraments.