

Resources for Worship - Epiphany

An occasional series from the Diocesan Worship and Liturgy Committee

What does the season of Epiphany mean for you? For many in our congregations Epiphany stops with three kings and a theme of gifts. A time of clearing up decorations rather than discovery. For many more it may not even be that, just the tail end of Christmas when they give church a miss because they have been rather a lot recently. However the readings which appear year after year in the Lectionary give a rather more powerful motive to the season. The baptism of Christ, the calling of the first disciples, the miracle at Cana, all speak of discovery and decision. We are forced to consider a rather more important theme with which John the Baptist, the disciples and the wedding guests would have come face to face. **Who is Jesus and what does he mean for my life?** This sheet attempts to give worship ideas which help to ask the question and suggest answers for worshippers.

The Baptism of Christ and the anointed Son of God

This year the Baptism of Christ may easily be forgotten if Epiphany is transferred to Sunday. This is a great pity and materially affects the understanding of Epiphany.

One option is to move the Baptism of Christ to the following Sunday, displacing the readings for that day.

Times and Seasons gives a service (which is best used as a starting point to adapt to your setting rather than a finished service) which includes Epiphany, the Baptism of Christ and the wedding at Cana all in one go.

Whatever you decide, these themes are some of the best in the year to worship with movement and inclusion of all ages.

The following is the introduction for a service sheet explaining worship in this way for the Baptism of Christ. It encourages the whole congregation to gather round the font and then the altar. Contact us if you would like more details of the service or how to adapt the T and S suggestions to provide something memorable.



We are on a journey!

A journey through our Christian life which takes us from baptism to the kingdom of heaven. Today's worship hopes to capture some of that sense of journeying together.

Made members of the body of Christ through baptism, we share in that body in communion.

Today's service is not supposed to be perfect.

Rather it is supposed to capture some of the imperfections of human life through which the anointed Christ breaks through in sacramental rays of light.

Come and join in!

Epiphany Sunday and 3 kings!

Here is an all age way to proclaim the gospel on the feast of the Epiphany. It is possible to use up to about 15 children and adults in this liturgy but you can do it with as few as 4.



The Gospel is announced.

Sing first verse of We three kings (W3K) whilst congregation gather around crib (or turn to face it). *May need extra music cover.*

Use a dramatized form of Matthew 2: 12 from e.g. The Dramatized bible (ISBN 978-0551017795) or dramatize it yourself

At the point when the Magi give their gifts the relevant verse from W3K is sung whilst the king (dressed in costume of course) puts the gift in front of the stable and the relevant figure is added to the crib scene. You can even include the positioning of the star above the stable in the drama.

The relevant Acclamation from Times and Seasons Epiphany Eucharist (p163, Acclamation at the Presentation of the Gifts) is said before the next verse of the carol W3K.

The final verse of W3K is sung after the Acclamation for myrrh, then the last sentence of the Gospel is proclaimed.

The Gloria can be sung whilst people return to their places for the sermon. This adds an effective note of celebration.

Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KWJh-rgzcus>

This is quite good but very 3 kings focussed



This is a broader message but with a very American accent

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sPAFQakL-JE>

They both seem to be copyright free.



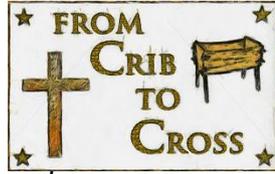
Broadcast the Good News!

Why not use the Epiphany season to run a short Christian Enquiry course? It fits the season beautifully and we have a readymade audience in which to advertise it, in Christmas services.



Making sense of Candlemas

The strap line for Candlemas in Promise of His Glory was 'One last look back to Christmas, and now turn towards the cross.' To achieve this bitter-sweet result some combination of candles, the Nunc Dimittis (both redolent of the Light of the world) and the juxtaposition of the crib before it is packed away and a large cross are all invaluable.



Why not give everyone a small candle (dipped in coloured wax as an activity the day before) and process the whole congregation round the church in such a way to pass first the stable and then the cross (think through carefully how to achieve this). End near the church doors for the choir to sing a setting on the Nunc Dimittis and a dismissal such as this adapted slightly from Times and Seasons:

TURN TOWARDS THE CRIB

We stand near the place of new birth.

We go to carry his light.

TURN TOWARDS THE CROSS

We turn from the crib to the cross.

We go to carry his light.

TURN TOWARDS THE DOOR

We go to carry his light

Let us shine with the light of your love.

Thanks be to God.



A really powerful ending to the season of discovering about Jesus.

Poem

Epiphany Carol (I)

'Mary most holy, oh maid undefiled,
What do you see when you look at your child?'
'I see gold poured out where the manger once stood
And his tender feet nailed to a cross of hard wood.'

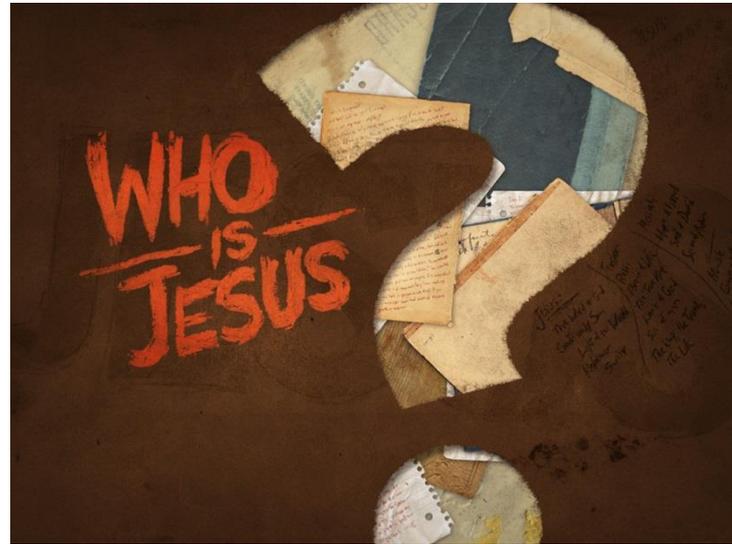
'Mary most lowly, immaculate one,
What do you see when you look at your son?'
'I see incense rise to the dwelling of God
And the rule of armed might where my gentle son trod.'

'Mary most loving, to whom prayer is poured,
What do you see when you look at your Lord?'
'I see myrrh and aloes anointing his head
And the babe at my breast in the tomb, pierced and dead.'

'Mary most gracious, whom archangels sing,
What do you see when you look at your King?'
'I see my beloved soft laid in a stall
And the child of my heart raised the ruler of all.'

Copyright © Diana Jones 1996

Diana gives permission for you as long as copyright acknowledgement is made.



Picture

<https://sceanutgallery.files.wordpress.com/2014/02/who-is-jesus.jpg>

This picture is pretty widely copied on the internet so probably copyright free.

Music

There is a Light (Church on the Move)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AmOZOqJhr6A>

This would work equally at Christmas as Epiphany. It fits very well with the broader theme of the season as something to listen to with or without the YouTube video in the background.

Song

It is really difficult to find good songs about the Wedding at Cana. Here is a possibility. You'll either love it or hate it!

http://www.carolynshymns.com/in_cana_at_a_wedding_feast.html

See the note about copyright at the bottom of the webpage

Perhaps the tune Tyler (A man there lived in Galilee) works well as a tune.

If you have interesting ideas about worship in the season of Epiphany, feel free to email them to us at stalbandsdwl@gmail.com

We will endeavour to circulate them.

Similarly if you want more details about anything on this sheet, please email us.

To sign up to what we hope will be a regular monthly sheet on ideas for worship, email us at the same address asking to be put onto the circulation list.