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A liturgy for the Season of Creation (SoC) 2012: Earth Sunday. Source: <http://ecofaith.org/mnc/soc>

You might also like to use elements of the original SoC liturgy: www.seasonofcreation.com, or the Seasons of the Spirit resource, which now also follows the SoC.

This liturgy was written to accompany the [ProjectReconnect](#) DVD resource (which includes an all ages reflection, adult reflection, additional readings with video accompaniment and songs. You can also download the videos free at <http://ecofaith.org/mnc/soc>).

Instead of using video, you could organise to hold worship outside this month, and use the Earth itself to speak to you of God.

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For Project Reconnect users: about this liturgy and DVD

Thanks to the project reconnect team for inviting me to contribute to these DVDs. Over time, “contribute” shifted to “produce the whole thing” as I thought of new possibilities, though technical and time limitations meant that many of them were scaled back- maybe next year! Any technical glitches in September’s DVDs are my fault, not the regular team’s!

I provided this liturgy which uses all or most of the resources on the DVD, so that you have a complete package if that is what you are looking for. It is also on the DVD in the extras folder with a couple of books.

Of course, you might only pick a couple of things off the DVD and write your own liturgies, or be using the original Season of Creation resources, or even the Season of the Spirit resources.

The DVD itself has been arranged so that everything is on the one menu screen, so you don’t have to dive into submenus for the songs.

The screenshot shows a DVD menu for 'SEASON OF CREATION MOUNTAINS'. The menu is divided into two columns. The left column contains sections: INTRODUCTION, ALL AGES, MNTN REFLECTION, QUESTIONS (STILL), JJ HOPE FOR CHURCH, ASHES TO ASHES, and IMMORTAL INVISIBLE. The right column contains songs: HOW GREAT THOU ART, HOW GREAT THOU ART (C), SHOUT 2 LORD, GO TELL IT ON MNTN, PRAISE WITH JOY, AMEN WE PRAISE U, WHERE WIDE SKY (C), WHERE WIDE SKY, FOR THE BEAUTY, BE THOU MY VISION, TRUE VALOUR / PILGRIM, MAY THE FEET (C), and NOW UNTO HIM. Callout boxes on the left explain: 'A silly story which kind of links to the adults reflection' points to the top banner; 'Teenagers+adults' points to the 'ALL AGES' section; 'Press MENU to exit' points to the 'QUESTIONS (STILL)' section; 'A “reading”' points to the 'JJ HOPE FOR CHURCH' section; 'The songs start here this week' points to the 'ASHES TO ASHES' section. Callout boxes on the right explain: 'Blue songs have some kind of interesting slideshow as part of them.'; 'Grey are just people singing, like a typical PR DVD.'; '(L) means on-screen lyrics which are either public domain or ok to screen'; and '(C) means you need copyright permission to project words to play these.'

I hope you find the included material helpful in our common quest to live better on the Earth, as disciples seeking the reconciliation and renewal of all creation (for us Uniting Church types, that’s from the *Basis of Union* chapter 3).

Some songs appear in more than one version, usually one with and without lyrics, which you can play depending on whether you have the relevant CCLI license to screen words in public. The ones with copyrighted lyrics end in (c). Others have public domain lyrics and so only one version.

Thanks to all the congregations who sang for this week’s DVD, including some newer songs I found in the big PR archive- but I don’t know who you are!

copyright notice

This liturgy was prepared by Jason John as part of the MNC Uniting Church ecoministry , and you are free to do whatever you like with it except sell it. If used unaltered, acknowledgment would be great. If altered, something like “based on a ... by Jason John, MNC ecoministry” would do.

Setup ideas

You might like to play one of the many CDs of forest birds or forest noises in the background for the entirety of the service, or if your location suits, just open the windows!

In lieu of the other video resources, you could play “Home” (<http://homethemovie.org>) silently in the background, which has stunning images of our planet and what happens upon it.

Do you have portable staging, or even a ladder, that could be used to elevate the worship leader/bible reader (as if they were on a mountain)?

You might want to appoint someone to jot down notes during the discussion, and/or to watch the reflection before hand, to use in the prayers of intercession.

Call to worship:

God was here before the mountains formed.

The mountains: a place of reflection, a place of encounter with God in the stories of our faith: For Noah, Abraham, Moses, Aaron, Mizpah and her companions, Elijah, the Shunammite woman, Elisha. Focus of prophetic hope, the mountain of Zion made new as holy mountain and place of peace for all nations.

Mountains.

Place of temptation and teaching and prayer for Jesus.

Place of revelation for Peter, James and John.

Place of restoration and reunion of the 11 with the resurrected Christ.

For their worship amidst the doubt.

So come, to worship and praise the Lord, whether you come overflowing with faith, or nagged by doubt.

Come and meet God in our worship together.

Optional Read Ps 148 “Praise the Lord”

Either one leader or responsively. Just make sure it sounds powerful and bold, not like a dirge ;-)

Welcome/introduction (optional DVD/download)

This is mountain Sunday, the fourth week of the Season of creation, which is being celebrated by churches around the world today.

Started with Norman Habel and the Victorian Synod of the Uniting Church, and is now part of the lectionary for many churches globally.

Today we reflect on mountains: which feature so strongly in the Hebrew faith, and in Jesus' ministry. The ages old mountains which remind us that God is ancient, and mysterious.

Many Australians don't live near the mountains, but we can all attempt the difficult task of getting to a place away from the bustle, getting somewhere where we can see things with a new perspective. Somewhere to meet the mysterious God of the mountains.

Every Sunday morning is a mini mountain top experience: a journey to a place where we gather to see things anew, and meet the awesome God of the mountains.

Opening Song: Immortal, Invisible (DVD)

Opening prayer:

God of 70,000, million million *million* stars and countless planets.
We give thanks for your interest in ours.

God of the mountains, we thank you for your presence here....
... also on this plain

Or
... here on this mountain (if you are lucky enough to be worshipping on one)

Still within and amongst us by your Spirit.
You are welcome here.

We pray for a sense of your presence here amongst us, and an openness to what you have to say to us this morning.

Give us ears to hear and the courage to respond.

God, your kingdom come, your will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.
Amen

OPTIONAL SONG: Ashes to Ashes (DVD)

A song by Andrew Dutney, the new president of the Uniting Church, written in the 80s. People might like to start trying to sing along if they heard it before.

Song(s)

Confession (this follows especially from the song choices above)

Pick up the themes of the songs selected, and our occasional failure to remember them (ie God's greatness, forgetting to praise etc)

Empower us again to our calling: agents of the reconciliation and renewal of the whole creation.

All ages input (DVD)

The boys and I were mucking around making a move based on "Dude vs Wild" which we saw on youtube, and coincidentally it seemed to reflect (or make a hopefully amusing parody of) the themes in the adults reflection.

Song:

Offering

In thanks for this wonderful Earth, and to help the church participate in its reconciliation and renewal, we make our offerings: a practical prayer for the kingdom to come on Earth as in Heaven.

Offering prayer

Reading

Matt 4:8-11; Matt 5:1-2; Matt 14:23; Matt 15:29-31; Matt 17:1-2; Matt 26:36-38; Matt 28:16-20
(compiled on last page of this resource)

Alternatively, the original SoC readings are Isaiah 65:17-25, Ps 48:1-11, Ro 8:28-39, Mark 16:14-18

Trad UCA.

In this is the Word of the Lord.

Or

In ancient words we have heard
the Spirit speak anew.

Thanks be to God!

Reflection (DVD)

Sharing

1. Divine moments for you: did they come suddenly and easily, or after struggle and endurance?
2. Is coming to church like climbing a mountain? Do you meet God there? Do others? Visitors?
3. For you "up the mountain": terrific or terrible? Any of the emotions Jesus or the disciples did?
4. Imagine God's eye view from the mountain: what intercession does that lead you into?

Song:

Notices?

Intercession

A time of open prayer, or
A led prayer based on the themes and discussion which follows.
(appoint someone before hand to jot down some notes.)

And/or the "Lord's prayer:" Matthew's version would be best (Matt 6:10ff)

Song:

Sending forth/Blessing

Maybe you need to come down off the mountain.
Maybe you need to make time this week to get up there.
It might confront you with temptation
Maybe it will reveal Jesus afresh.
Perhaps it will fill you with faith and determination in your mission.
Or even rekindle your doubt.

Whatever happens, go with the love of God, the kindness of our Lord Jesus, and in the friendship and fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

Amen

Exiting song:

Reading: Compilation for the reflection: Matthew mountain medley

Read them together with a pause in between each. Several readers might be a good idea.

Matt 4 Finally, the devil took Jesus to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour; and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'" Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

Matt 5

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matt 14

After Jesus had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone.

Matt 15

After Jesus had left that place, he passed along the Sea of Galilee, and he went up the mountain, where he sat down. Great crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, the maimed, the blind, the mute, and many others. They put them at his feet, and he cured them, so that the crowd was amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the maimed whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel.

Matt 17

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white.

Matt 26

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. Then he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me."

Matt 28

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

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