

LIVING WHOLEHEARTEDLY AS FOLLOWERS OF JESUS FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE WORLD



ALL AGE WORSHIP SERVICE

AUTUMN/WINTER RESOURCE PACK 2022-23

ENCOUNTERS

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INTRODUCTION

Included in this resource are the elements to form an All-age Worship Service along with some suggestions of how they can be used. We appreciate that every congregation is different, and so we encourage you to craft your service using the elements here that you think best suits your congregation. We also encourage you to be brave, to be creative, and to make use of all ages and abilities within your congregation.

The aim of this service is to explore wholehearted faith using the example of Timothy found in the New Testament. Within his story we see an everyday faith of a young man dedicated to following Jesus and to leading by example. The hope is that those worshipping together will be inspired to live wholeheartedly as followers of Jesus, and to live contagiously helping those around them to grow in faith.



CALL TO WORSHIP

Suggestion: *This reading could be read by different voices, a mix of younger and older, to show the worshipping together of all generations. If children or young people would feel timid to speak from the front, you could organise for the sections to be pre-recorded, and the reading presented as a video. The opening and closing line are simple enough to be spoken out by a very young child who may love to be included.*

Based on Psalm 111:1-4

Praise God!

**We will thank God with our whole heart
As we gather together with his holy people.**

**How amazing are the things of God!
We all should think on them day after day.**

**Everything He does tells of his glory and majesty.
His righteousness never fails.**

**He causes us to remember his wonderful works.
How gracious and merciful is our God!**

Praise the Lord!

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PRAYERS

Suggestion: These simple prayers can be grouped together at the beginning of the service or split up and read at different points in the service, perhaps broken up by songs or readings.

Another way of using this prayer to engage younger children is to explain that our opening prayer helps us to **look up** and think about God, to **look in** and think about ourselves, and then to **look out** to see that we are all here to worship together. You could get them to raise their hands in the first section, hold their hands over their hearts for the second section, and then hold their hands out towards others for the final section. This will help the children to understand what the words in the prayer are helping us to think about.

Looking up: A prayer of adoration & thanksgiving

Wonderful God, you made all things that surround us,
and every day we are reminded that you are good.
You are filled with love and kindness,
and we are so thankful to know that we are loved by you.
Father God, we praise and thank you for all that you are,
and for all that you have done. Amen.

Looking in: A prayer of confession

Kind and loving God, the One who is always with us.
You know us inside and out.
You see our wins, and you know our mistakes,
Yet you love us again, and again, and again.
Today we say sorry for the times in this week where we have not been at our best.
(Short pause)
Forgive us, we pray, and make us new.
Help us in this week ahead to live better, following the example of your Son, Jesus.
Strengthen us in your love and fill us with your joy. Amen.

Looking out: A gathering prayer

Generous God, we gather together to worship you.
To celebrate that we are loved, and to grow in our love for you.
Help us to love you with our whole hearts,
Lead us in your ways by the example of Jesus.
And use us, in the power of your Spirit, to tell others about you.
Speak to us through your word, spark a passion within us,
and may all glory be yours. Amen.

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INTRODUCING TIMOTHY

This service centres around the character of Timothy and his devotion and faith. It also invites us to see the importance of sharing faith in family, and how we have the opportunity to help each other grow in Christ. The following video created by Crossroads Kids Club offers a good introduction to the person of Timothy. Its overview of Timothy will be helpful for all age groups to hear, simply set the scene for this service and let the video introduce the congregation to Timothy.



Watch Video:

God's Story: Timothy

<https://youtu.be/w4GSFluzBSA>

If you don't have access to playing videos, you could communicate the information from this video verbally, or by printing out screen shots as visual aids.



BIBLE READING

1 Timothy 4:12-16 (The Message)

11-14 Get the word out. Teach all these things. And don't let anyone put you down because you're young. Teach believers with your life: by word, by demeanor, by love, by faith, by integrity. Stay at your post reading Scripture, giving counsel, teaching. And that special gift of ministry you were given when the leaders of the church laid hands on you and prayed—keep that dusted off and in use.

15-16 Cultivate these things. Immerse yourself in them. The people will all see you mature right before their eyes! Keep a firm grasp on both your character and your teaching. Don't be diverted. Just keep at it. Both you and those who hear you will experience salvation.

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ALL AGE ILLUSTRATION

Has anyone ever played the game 'follow the leader'?

(If you have some willing volunteers, why not get them up and have a quick game so that everyone understands the concept. If you don't think this would work, you could alternatively show a clip from Peter Pan of the following the leader song).

The basic rules of 'follow the leader' are simple. One person is chosen to be the leader, and everyone else must line up behind them and follow their steps and actions exactly. If someone fails to follow the leader exactly, then they are out of the game. It's a fairly simple game, but there are some skills needed if you want to be good at it:

1. You need to see the leader... If you are going to be good at this game, then you need to know who the leader is, and be able to watch them carefully so you move in the same way that they do. Now, this can be tricky, the further down the line you are, and you might fall victim to following someone else in the line. You are trusting them to see the leader, but maybe they aren't watching so carefully, and they make a wrong move, and so then do you! Before you know it, you are out of the game. So, it's crucial that you see the leader for yourself, and the closer to the leader you can be, the better chance you have.
2. You need to be paying close attention... This game is a real test of your focus and observation skills. If you take your eyes off the leader, even for a second, you risk getting distracted and missing a change of action in the leader, and then being put out of the game. So, when you play this game, you can't be doing anything else at the same time. You can't be playing on your phone, and then expect to also be able to watch what the leader is doing, or you will for sure miss a vital instruction, and find yourself out of step.

You need to see the leader and you need to be 100% focused on them if you want to find yourself the champion of this game.

The skills of this game are also very important when it comes to faith. If we want to grow in faith in God, then we need to employ these two very important skills.

Firstly, we need to make sure we are looking at the leader, Jesus, and following him. In Hebrews 12:2 it tells us that we need to fix our eyes on Jesus, for he is the leader and perfecter of our faith. It tells us to think on him, to consider how he lived, and to think on how he died, and to live our lives just like he did.

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Watching the people around us, might certainly show us glimpses of Jesus, but really, we need to be fixing our eyes on him if we are to grow in our own faith. We see this in Timothy, he was dedicated to learning and growing in Christ. He observed Paul closely, and he learnt much from his mother and grandmother, but ultimately, he fixed his eyes on Christ and followed carefully his teachings and lived his life wholeheartedly for him. Remember, we can learn a lot from those around us, but if we really want to be strong in faith, then we need to make sure we are looking at Jesus, studying his life and words, and then following his steps with care and devotion.

And secondly, we need to be focused on this task, and not become distracted. If we are to be wholehearted followers of Jesus, then it requires wholehearted attention. Again, we see such an example of this in Timothy. He was not deterred from his devotion to Jesus, and because of this his life became an example for many. In our bible reading today, we heard Paul encourage Timothy to stay focused, to not let anyone's opinions distract him, but to continue living with dedication, integrity, and passion, and then others will be able to see the love of Christ in him and be drawn to faith. Timothy's focus was admirable, and his wholehearted commitment to faith and the love of Christ inspired those around him.

We too can learn a lot through his story and example. We can see the importance of living out a genuine faith, of how it can encourage others to come to know Jesus. His story also invites us to ask some questions of ourselves:

- Is Jesus the leader we are looking to? Are our eyes fixed on him? Are we drawing close to him in our daily lives?
- And, are we wholeheartedly focused on following him? Or have we become distracted in some way? Following Jesus requires our whole selves.

Today, as we look to the example of Timothy, we want to invite God to strengthen us as we follow him. We also want to put aside any distractions that pull our eyes away from looking to Jesus, our leader, and recommit ourselves to following him wholeheartedly.

Ways to expand:

If you want to expand this illustration, you will find the Contributor's Small Group notes on Timothy very helpful. These are attached at the end of this resource and will provide a deeper focus on the study of Timothy's character.

You may also want to draw attention to the passing on of faith that happens between Timothy and his mother and grandmother. Highlighting the crucial relationship and biblical truth of intergenerational faith may be an important encouragement to those in your congregation. Or perhaps this could be a follow-up Sunday, taking a deeper look at why we need to pass on faith to generations that follow.

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CREATIVE PRAYER RESPONSE

This prayer response is to allow the congregation space and time to think through the questions put to them at the end of the all-age illustration. It is to invite them to recommit themselves to being wholehearted followers of Jesus.

Before the service, give each person attending two hearts.
(One for now, and one for intercessions).

These can be templates of paper or card that you have printed off or picked up at a local craft shop. Just make sure they are big enough to be written on. Perhaps you could have two different colours for the hearts, to help distinguish this prayer response from the intercessions.

Remind the congregation of the questions in the all-age illustration. Invite them to consider prayerfully if they want to be a wholehearted follower of Jesus, and if so, then encourage them to write their name on one of the hearts. We then want to encourage them to give this heart forward, as a sign of committing their heart to Jesus. This can either be done by encouraging people to come forward and place their heart in a basket at the front, or you could collect them along each row with a basket, (the younger members of the congregation could be great helpers for this).

While this is happening, we encourage you to play a piece of music, and intentionally give people time to think carefully about their response to these questions. Don't rush this time, as it may be important for people to have a moment to think. We recommend the song, 'Running to the Light' by Brandon Lake. There are a variety of lyric videos found online for it, and the opening verse has appropriate words to compliment this response.

Once all hearts have been collected, and the song has ended, close with this simple prayer:

**Lord Jesus, take our whole lives and make them yours.
Teach us, lead us, encourage us and equip us, we pray. Amen.**

If you wanted to take this further, you could encourage the congregation on the way out to lift someone else's heart and commit to praying for that person over the next weeks and months. Invite the congregation to pray and encourage one another in their spiritual growth.

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INTERCESSIONS

As you come to the intercessions, you can make use of the second paper heart that you have given out before the service.

Our intercessions invite us to pray sincerely for others. For this service, as we think about our wholehearted faith, the intercessions could be focused specifically on those who have yet to experience this wholehearted faith, or who have need to meet with Jesus.

Invite the congregation to think about the people in their lives: at home, at work or school, in their neighbourhoods. Who would they like to see come to know Jesus more?

Encourage them to write the name or initials of those people on their second heart. This time they are going to keep the heart and place it somewhere where they will see it regularly. The invitation is to commit to praying for those people daily, that their lives might be changed by the love of Christ.

After you have given them time to write down the names or initials, take a moment to pray, perhaps pause before the prayer, so each person can offer their own personal prayer for the one who God has brought to their mind:

Welcoming God, you have created and love us, each and every one.

We pray for those that you have brought to our minds in this moment.

May you make yourself known to them, and may they be receptive to your love and grace.

We pray for your miraculous interventions, and your overwhelming love to change their lives.

We also pray that as you grow in us, that we may be an example to others.

May the love of Christ be seen in us, in how we live and love.

Take and use us for your glory in the lives of others.

In the power of the Spirit, and in the love of Christ. Amen.

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HYMN/SONG SUGGESTIONS

	MP	HP	STF
All to Jesus, I surrender	25		
I want to walk with Jesus Christ	302		
Take my life, and let it be	624	705	566
Be thou my vision	51	378	545
In Christ alone, my hope is found	1072		351
I have decided to follow Jesus	272		
My hope is built on nothing less	1334		
I'm giving you my heart	1190		

For interactive children's worship songs, you can use one of the videos created by the TOM team and available on YouTube.

Here are some suggestions that could fit well:

Follow You (Follow You | Children's Worship Song)

Every Move I Make (Every Move I Make | Children's Worship Song)

Ask, Seek, Knock (Ask, Seek, Knock | Children's Worship Song)



BENEDICTION

Father God, fill us with your love.

Lord Jesus Christ, guide us in your steps.

Holy Spirit, equip us with your words and actions.

Father, Son, and Spirit, take our wholehearted offering and transform your world.

Amen.

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ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

If you have some very small children and are concerned about them not engaging easily in the service, you could consider giving them a colouring sheet as they come into church. It is important that the colouring sheet is connected to the theme on the service, so a page about Paul and Timothy, or a heart template that they can design. You will be surprised how much they will still hear in the service as they complete this sheet and will make the connections between what they hear and what they are colouring. As the children leave church, it will be important for those leading to take a moment and look at their pictures, as this will give value to how that child has been able to worship too during the service.

For older children who perhaps struggle, you could download a children's sermon notes template for them to complete. These can be helpful tools at helping children to concentrate and engage throughout worship, and there are many examples that will come up in a google search. Choose one that suits your children best.



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[Contributor Notes](#)

