



ALL-AGE WORSHIP

Acts

An opening prayer

The parts in **bold** can be responses.

As we gather together, Lord, **help us to concentrate on you.**

As we try and put aside the things that distract us, Lord, **help us to concentrate on you.**

As we leave behind the things that worry us, Lord, **help us to concentrate on you.**

As we forget about ourselves, Lord, **help us to concentrate on you.**

As we worship you with songs of praise, Lord, **help us to concentrate on you.**

As we listen to stories from the Bible, Lord, **help us to concentrate on you.**

As we hear your teaching, Lord, **help us to concentrate on you.** Amen.

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from www.churchofscotland.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/37092/Creative_Prayer_ideas_Bristol_Diocese.pdf

Song suggestions

- 🎵 SoF 1757 'Mighty to Save' ('Everyone needs compassion') by Reuben Morgan and Ben Fielding, Hillsong
- 🎵 SoF 1774 'Every Promise' ('From the breaking of the dawn') by Stuart Townend and Keith Getty
- 🎵 SASB 241 'And can it be that I should gain'
- 🎵 'Help me be your eyes, Lord Jesus' by Doug Horley
- 🎵 'A little bit of heaven' by Doug Horley
- 🎵 SASB 329 'Who is it tells me what to do?'
- 🎵 SASB 775 'Master, speak'
- 🎵 SASB 580 'Dear Lord, I do surrender'
- 🎵 SASB 1002 'I, the Lord of sea and sky'

Bible Reading

Acts 8:26-40

You could either read it out, ask people to act out the story, or use this YouTube video (www.youtube.com/watch?v=HEqgyYFzdvE). This is quite a long video (9m 45s) so you might want to just show a section of it.

Games/Activities

The games and activities suggested below require a degree of listening and following instructions.

If we are to obey God, this means that we must listen and do, not listen and don't! We have included games that will encourage people to do this.

SIMON SAYS

It's a simple enough game that requires no particular resource, but the message comes across that we must listen at the right time and follow what is being asked of us. There is the downside that sometimes we don't quite get it right and therefore follow the wrong instruction when Simon **doesn't** say!

HOW TO TIE A TIE!

This activity requires one person to explain to someone else how to knot a tie correctly. It's easy enough to try to explain, but really difficult to follow and do! Sometimes, it's really hard to follow God's guidance and do what he asks.

It is usually much easier with someone who is familiar with tying a tie and harder with someone who is new to it or just plain awkward. You might choose your 'volunteers' in order to make separate points about our how our attitude or our experience affects how we listen to God.

BAKING A CAKE

Follow a recipe to put the ingredients together to make a cake. This can get messy!

A good recipe should help us produce a lovely result, but if we get it wrong, it can be a disaster. When we obey God, we get a good result, although it can sometimes be complicated.

THROWING THE SOCKS

This game requires lots of socks and some laundry bins. The person leading the game will have a pile of socks in the middle of the room, and lots of different socks. He/she will hold a laundry basket and shout out the colour of the sock. People playing will need to find that colour sock in the pile and get it into the laundry bin. Without warning, the leader will change laundry baskets and ask for a different colour sock, so the players need to listen carefully to the instructions and make sure they are ready for the change. (You could substitute socks and laundry bins with other items if you find them easier to source.)

CHINESE WHISPERS

This game is very simple and reminds us again to listen carefully so the message is not lost.

LISTENING TO EVERYDAY SOUNDS AND IDENTIFYING THEM

Play simple everyday sounds such as: sirens, animal sounds, turning a light switch on and off, playing with a spring, alarm going off, a clock ticking, dustbin lids or saucepan lids falling onto the floor, phone ringing, a door being opened.

As you play the sounds, ask people to shout out what they think they can hear. This is a good reminder of how we need to listen carefully!

Sound effects are available on the internet, eg, www.freesoundeffects.com

Talk and Response Time

It's always good to ponder on the Bible story and the message given. People of all ages will have lots of things to stop and think about how God is speaking and what God is saying to them.

This response time will hopefully offer people the chance to think about where they are with God.

The important thing to think about with Philip and the Ethiopian is they both listened and responded to what they heard, but in very different ways.

Philip had been sent by God to a specific place for a specific time. He listened and responded to God by

obeying and going. The Ethiopian listened to what Philip had to say about Jesus and so understood more about the Scriptures that were explained to him. He responded by asking to be baptised.

They both then went their separate ways – Phillip went away to Azotus and went on to preach in various towns, eventually settling in Caesarea (Acts 21:8). The Ethiopian went home. We will never know the impact that his conversion had in his life and how many others came to faith because of this encounter with Philip. Only God knows. What it does help us to see is that the impact of listening and obeying can have a profound effect on people we encounter in our lives, if we do what God asks of us.

We have considered some ‘wondering’ questions (as we may do in Godly Play) to help people think about the story for themselves:

- ◆ I wonder if Philip knew what would happen that day
- ◆ I wonder if Philip wanted to obey God
- ◆ I wonder what the Ethiopian was feeling before he met Philip
- ◆ I wonder what would have happened if Philip had not obeyed God
- ◆ I wonder if we always listen and obey
- ◆ I wonder where we are in this story

Both Philip and the Ethiopian were in different places in this story. Philip was a firm believer and was able to explain the Scriptures. He had seen and experienced Jesus in his life. The Ethiopian also knew the Scriptures but needed help to find out more. He needed nurturing and needed to know more about Jesus and who he was. It's OK to be either of these people in our Christian journey. At different times in our lives, we may be either of these. We all have times when we need guidance, and we have times when we are called to be God's voice to others. The idea of the chariot and the scroll is to help people evaluate where they are in their journey at this time and to use this in a response time, listening to what God has to say to them.

If people hear God calling them to go away to something or somewhere new, they might use the scroll (representing Philip). If they need guidance or need to make a commitment that takes them or keeps them at home they might use the chariot (representing the Ethiopian). A suitable piece of music could be used, eg:

‘Oceans (Where feet may fail)’ by Hillsong during this time (SoF 3167)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=6GGFb6LcX3U

Alternatively

‘The Very Next Thing’ by Casting Crowns

www.youtube.com/watch?v=PbCqoFldAmI

Candidates for officership are people who, like Philip, feel they have heard from God and need to go away in order to obey him. This isn't always easy for them or for the people they leave behind. It may cost them financially as well as emotionally. This is where the Candidates' Fund comes in. Candidates feel they are obeying God when they offer to spend their lives as officers in The Salvation Army, living to win souls, care for the poor, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, love the unloved, and befriend those who have no friends (extracted from the Officer's Covenant).

Benediction

Whatever's next, Lord, help us be ready. Help us to listen and obey. As we go, let your Spirit go with our spirit and lead us every day. Amen.

