

A Seasonal All Age Worship Service

(SAAW008)

Harvest:

“Food for the body
and the soul”

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HARVEST – “FOOD FOR THE BODY AND THE SOUL”

Service Aim:

To show that God gives us food for both the body and the soul. Our response needs to be one of thankfulness to the Lord & a willingness to share what we have received with others.

Biblical Reference(s):

Acts 14:17, 1Timothy 6:17-18, Mark 4:3-9, 13-20

Outline of Service:

Welcome:	Introduce the theme
Opening Prayer:	
Refrain:	Psalm 118:1
Opening songs:	<u>A couple of songs to draw people into worship</u> (See Appendix 1)
Warm up:	“Bake-off challenge” – tasting different types of bread
Talk 1:	God is the provider of our food and some of it comes from simple seeds
Reading:	Acts 14:17
Talk 1 part 2:	Response to God’s goodness: 1) Thankfulness
Puppets:	“Why can’t I have?”
Link:	Two practical ways to learn thankfulness
Refrain:	Psalm 118:1
Song:	<u>A song/s of thanks to the Lord</u> (See Appendix 1)
Prayer:	Thankfulness prayer
Link:	Response to God’s goodness: 2) Share what we have with others
Drama:	“The tin of sweets”
Confession:	
Song:	<u>A song/s thinking about God’s call to share with others</u> (See Appendix 1)
Link:	God also provides us with food for our souls
Dram Reading:	Parable of the sower – Mark 4:3-9, 13-20
Talk 2:	What is the “Word” that the Farmer sows?
Prayer:	Prayer of commitment to Jesus
Refrain:	Psalm 118:1
Summary:	
Song:	<u>A Gospel focussed song</u> (See Appendix 1)
Blessing:	
Refrain:	Psalm 118:1

Notes for the service:

General notes and instructions for the service are in black font.

Prayers or responses said by the congregation together are in bold purple font.

The full script of a talk or other activity is in purple font.

Welcome:

Welcome everyone to the service and introduce the Harvest theme as “Food for the body and food for the soul”

Opening Prayer:

You may choose to open the service with:

- an informal prayer
- a prayer from a book like “New Patterns for Worship”¹ that the congregation can say together,
- or the following prayer that the congregation can say together:

“Lord, thank you for this opportunity to come together and worship you at this Harvest Celebration.

We welcome your presence amongst us.

Come and meet with us as we worship you, hear your Word and pray together.

For the glory of your name. Amen.”

Refrain:

The following refrain from Psalm 118:1 might be used all the way through the service at different points as a way of emphasizing our need to give thanks to the Lord.

“Give thanks to the Lord for He is good”

“His love endures for ever”

Opening Songs:

A couple of songs to draw people into worship as per Appendix 1

Warm up:

The warm up is a “bake-off” challenge with a difference! It is a tasting challenge of different breads. Invite a couple of members of the congregation to the front and blindfold them. Give each one of them a different type of bread to taste and then invite them to tell you what it is. Repeat a couple of times so that six different varieties of bread are tasted between the two people. You could use the following types of bread: Bagels, Brioche, Ciabatta, French bread, Granary bread, Naan bread, Panini, Pitta bread, Rye bread. Present the winner of the tasting challenge with a speciality loaf of bread.

¹ Church House Publishing – ISBN 0715120603
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Talk 1:

Isn't it amazing that the flour needed to make bread comes from a very simple seed like this one (*show a wheat seed*)

- A simple seed that's sown into the ground (*plant seed into a tray of soil*),
- watered (*water seed with watering can*) by the rain
- and nurtured by the sun that God sends (*show cardboard sun*)
- until it grows and produces a crop like this. (*show wheat-sheaf*)

A crop that can be harvested and refined, and then used to make into the variety of breads that end up in our supermarkets...like the ones we have seen in our "bake-off" this morning.

- From these small seeds comes the food that our bodies need for life

But we don't just have bread to eat do we?

- God has provided us with many other delicious foods to enjoy.

Today we are celebrating Harvest and Harvest is an opportunity for us to remember that all of our food is provided by the Lord.....

- He is the one who gives us the seeds, the soil, the rain and the sun.....
- He is the one who gives strength to those who work on the land to plant the seeds, and then harvest the crops.
- He is the one who fills the oceans with fish and the land with animals that we enjoy to eat. Listen to this verse from Acts.

Reading:

The reading is Acts 14:17 and can be read by a child, young person or adult in a modern version of the Bible.

Talk 1 part 2:

So how do we respond to all of God's goodness to us?

- Part of our response is to thank Him for what we have been given.
- But how many of us are really thankful for what we have?
- How many of us remember to thank God for the food we eat each day?
- We may pray, "Give us this daily our daily bread".....but do we thank Him when He does?
- So often we take everything we have for granted, including our food, and we can end up feeling pretty discontent.
- I think that has happened to James.....

Puppets:

The puppet script is "Why can't I have?" (see Appendix 2)

This script works with a boy puppet "James"² and an "off-stage" Dad. The aim of the puppet script is to demonstrate ingratitude and the resulting discontent that follows.

² You can purchase a boy puppet from www.onewayuk.com
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Link:

Encourage people to develop the habit of thankfulness. A couple of practical things to develop the habit of thankfulness could be suggested here eg.

- Thank the Lord before each meal for the food He has given us, and
- Thank the Lord at the end of each day for five good things He has given us. Try to pick five different things each night.

Refrain:

Repeat the refrain with the congregation:

“Give thanks to the Lord for He is good”
“His love endures for ever”

Song:

A song/s of thanks to the Lord as per Appendix 1

Prayer:

The “Thankfulness” prayer (see Appendix 3) can be led by six different people eg a Mother, a Worker, a Teenager, a Teenage boy, an Older person, a Child and can be adapted according to the people you have available.

Link:

Part of our response to God’s goodness is to thank Him for what He has given us.

- Another part of our response to God’s goodness is to share what we have we others.

Many people around the world and even in this country don’t have enough food to eat.

- God has provided more than enough food to go around, but often we aren’t willing to share it, because we forget that we are actually all part of one human family.

Drama:

The aim of the very simple drama, “The tin of sweets” (see Appendix 4) is to show that God is a generous Father and provides enough for everyone, but we often don’t think of others when we take what we want. This drama can be followed up by saying something like:

St Paul wrote a letter to Timothy and in it he said:

“Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.” (1Tim 6:17-18)

Confession and Absolution:

Introduce the Confession prayer by saying that if we are honest with ourselves, we are often not very good at sharing our wealth with others.

Lead into a Confession prayer. This could be:

- an informal Confession prayer led by the service leader or
- a Confession prayer from a book like “New Patterns for Worship” that the congregation can say together eg Prayer B42, or
- the following Prayer that the congregation say together:

**Forgive us Lord where we have failed to be thankful for all of your blessings.
 Forgive us Lord where we have put our hope in our wealth rather than in you.
 Forgive us Lord where we haven't shared what you have given us with others.
 Help us to become grateful and generous people as we put our hope in you.
 In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.**

Follow this with a prayer of Absolution. This could be:

- an informal prayer led by the service leader or
- an Absolution prayer from a book like "New Patterns for Worship."

Song:

If you take an offering of food at this service do it here. Explain what will happen to the collected food.

On this Harvest Sunday we have an opportunity to share what we have by bringing food to church to share with others. During this next song, please bring any food you have brought with you forward.

A song/s thinking about God's call to share with others as per Appendix 1, during which the food is received.

Link:

Introduce the dramatized reading by saying something like:

We began this service by thinking about how the food we need to give our bodies life often comes from a tiny little seed.

- But there is another food that we need.....food that gives life to our souls.

This food comes from a different sort of a seed, which God also generously gives us.

Dramatized Reading:

The parable of the sower could be read straight from the Bible ie Mark 4:3-9, 13-20 or it could be dramatized (see Appendix 5)

At the end of the drama say that you are going to unpack the "seed" that Jesus was talking about in His parable. At this point you might like to pass around the small version of the "Faithin5"³ cards so that each person receives two of them.

Talk 2:

God is our Father and loves us with a love that is greater than anything else in the world. *(Project/show a picture of a heart)*

- He wants to bring us into His family where we can enjoy knowing Him as our Father.

However because we have chosen to ignore Him and live self-centred lives,

- we are separated from Him and it feels like God is very far away. *(Project/show a picture of a sad face)*

The good news is that God loves us so much that He has done something about all of this.....*(Project/show a picture of a cross)*

- Amazing as it sounds...He sent his Son Jesus to come to earth 2000 years ago.

³ You can purchase these from www.faithin5.com/buy/message-cards

Jesus came to show us His Father's love and then when He was 33 years old, he was crucified on a cross,

- to take the punishment that our sins deserve.
- Three days later Jesus rose from the dead, proving that He is God's Son.

If we choose to come to Jesus, believing that His death paid for the wrong things we have done, and turning away from living a self-centred life,

- we are welcomed into God's family,
- where we can know God as our Father.

Not only that but we are given a very special gift: *(Project/show a picture of a Holy Spirit flame)*

- The Holy Spirit actually comes to live inside us,
- making life with God an exciting reality.

That is the seed that Jesus was talking about in the parable of the sower.....and it is a seed that is given to everyone.

But we have a choice with what we do with our seed. *(Project/show a picture of a u-turn)*

As we saw in the parable just dramatized:

We can immediately forget about the good news we have heard,
or

We can respond to God's invitation to know Him but then fall away because of trouble in our life,
or

We can respond to God's invitation to know Him but then fall away because of worry or riches,
or

We can respond to God's invitation to know Him and enjoy a fruitful life.

We are all offered the same seed.

- The seed of an invitation into relationship with God.

We know we need food to keep our bodies alive.

- This invitation into relationship with God is the spiritual food we need to bring our souls to life.
- I wonder how you will respond to God this morning.
- I wonder which person you identify with most in the drama.
- Let's take a moment of quiet as we think about this. PAUSE

Prayer of Commitment to Jesus:

Explain that you are going to give people an opportunity to accept God's invitation of relationship by praying a simple prayer together. Invite people to say as much or as little of the following prayer as they want to:

Lord Jesus,

Thank you for your love that invites me to know you.

I believe that Jesus died on the cross and rose again so that I could be forgiven and receive your gift of life.

I am sorry for all of the ways that I have rejected your love and have lived a self-centred life.

Please forgive me.

I now turn away from living life my way to follow you.

Please come and be my Saviour and my Lord and fill me with your Holy Spirit.

For the glory of your name. Amen.

Follow this prayer with the service leader inviting the Holy Spirit to come and fill each person who has turned to Jesus in their hearts. Alternatively you could use the commitment prayer at the back of the booklet, "Why Jesus"⁴ by Nicky Gumbel.

Refrain:

Repeat the refrain with the congregation:

"Give thanks to the Lord for He is good"

"His love endures for ever"

Summary:

Summarize the service by saying something like:

This morning as we have celebrated Harvest together, we have been reminded that:

- God gives us food for the body.
- We respond to God's goodness to us by being thankful and by being willing to share what we have with others.

God also gives us food for the soul.

- We can respond in different ways to this food, but if we receive it – let's be thankful for it & willing to share it.

You were all given two "faithin5" cards earlier. (Prior to Talk 2)

- Can I challenge you to give away one of those cards to someone who has not yet heard the Gospel.

Song:

A Gospel focussed song as per Appendix 1.

Blessing:

Pray a simple prayer to end the service something like:

Freely you have received, freely give. And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

Refrain:

Repeat the refrain with the congregation:

"Give thanks to the Lord for He is good"

"His love endures for ever"

[Notices: If your church gives out verbal notices my suggestion is that you do that just before the final song. That way the flow of worship is unbroken]

⁴ You can buy these from the Alpha Shop UK at <https://shop.alpha.org/why-jesus-nicky-gumbel>

Appendix 1 - Ideas for Songs and Hymns:

i) A couple of songs to draw people into worship. Ideas include:

- Give thanks to the Lord our God and King (Chris Tomlin © 2000 worshiptogether.com songs / Six Steps Music / Adm.by Kingsway Music)
- Let everything that (Matt Redman © 1997 Kingsway's Thankyou Music)
- O Lord you're great (Ishmael © 1985 Thankyou Music)
- Praise Him you heavens (Russell Fragar © 1998 Russell Fragar / Hillsong Publishing / Kingsway Music)
- We come to you with a heart of thanks (Brian Doerksen & Steve Mitchinson © 1999 Vineyard Songs)
- We plough the fields and scatter (Matthias Claudius)

ii) A song/s of thanks to the Lord. Ideas include:

- Blessed be your name in the land (Beth & Matt Redman © 2002 Thankyou Music)
- Come you thankful people come (H Alford)
- God is good, God is great (Alan Price © 1994 Daybreak Music Ltd)
- I give thanks (Vineyard Kids)
- Thank you very much (Alan Price © 1996 Daybreak Music Ltd)

iii) A song/s thinking about God's call to share with others. Ideas include:

- Beauty for brokenness (Graham Kendrick © 1993 Make Way Music)
- For the fruits of His creation (Fred Pratt Green © 1970 Stainer & Bell Ltd)
- God of justice (Tim Hughes © 2005 Thankyou Music)
- To you O Lord our hearts we raise (After W.C Dix)
- When I needed a neighbour (Sydney Carter © 1965 Stainer & Bell Ltd)

iv) A Gospel focussed song. Ideas include:

- Creation sings the Father's song (Keith & Kristyn Getty & Stuart Townend © 2008 Thankyou Music)
- For the beauty of the earth (Folliott S Pierpoint)
- Great is thy faithfulness (Thomas O. Chisholm)
- O Lord my God when I in awesome wonder (Stuart K Hine)
- We have a Gospel to proclaim (Edward J Burns)
- Who O Lord could save themselves (Matt Redman & Jonas Myrin © 2008 Thankyou Music)

Appendix 2 – Puppet Script - “Why can’t I have?”

Characters:



The script is a dialogue between a young boy puppet called “James” who wants to follow Jesus but keeps getting things wrong, and his dad, who is an “off-stage” male voice. The puppet is operated by a person from behind a screen and so it is essential that their voice and the off-stage voice is heard; radio-microphones are ideal. Puppets and puppet screens can be purchased from many sources including <http://www.onewayuk.com/>

.....
(Enter James)

James: I am feeling very fed up this morning. It’s not fair mum telling me I have to tidy up my room for cousin Charlie coming....I don’t even want him to come....that boy has everything.....it’s just not fair..

Last time I went over to his house he had just been given the Xbox 360 with live gold membership *(or latest up to date game)* Can you believe that he was playing games at the same time as his friends.... I mean how cool is that? All I have is my old PS2 and dad says I’ll have to save up my pocket money if I want an Xbox.

Save up my pocket money.....well that’s a laugh....if I had thirty pounds a week like Charlie does, then it wouldn’t take too long to save for an Xbox now would it.... but on a measly one pound fifty a week it will take me forever. Hmmm....

And another thing.....Charlie has a brand new iphone 6 *(or latest up to date phone)* and whenever he comes over he has another really cool game he has downloaded....I won’t even tell you what sort of phone I have or you’ll laugh, as it is such a dinosaur. I wish I lived in his family.....

And another thing....his family has a dog. Mum and dad know that I have always wanted a dog....but oh no....what do I get....a goldfish....I mean who wants fish? You can’t exactly play with a fish now can you? I tried, but it fell down the sink, and then boy, was I in trouble. Charlie’s family have a beautiful German shepherd dog....now that is what I call a pet.

I am starting to feel really cross now.... life is sooo unfair.

And another thing..... Charlie’s family are taking him skiing at Christmas to the Austrian alps....will we be going skiing..... oh no? Dad doesn’t like flying and mum can’t ski, so yours truly here will never learn how to ski..... think I need a change of parents!

Dad: (off stage) James, James, where are you? Charlie’s just arrived

- James: I s'pose I had better go...and try and be friendly with Charlie...the guy who has everything!
- Dad: I thought we'd go down the park and give Charlie a go on the go-kart that we spent the last few months building out of your old pram. Are you ready?
- James: Mmm...yes that is slightly embarrassing.....that go-kart is the envy of the neighbourhoodbut...
- Dad: And then we'll come back and challenge Charlie to a game of football in the garden before we go out to Pizza hut for lunch.
- James: Oh...yes, I'd forgotten about the new goal posts I had for my birthday this year
- Dad: Make sure you bring down that delicious fudge that your mum made with you last night. I'm sure Charlie would love to try a piece.
- James: Yes dad....I'm coming.....OK OK.....I know what you're all going to say.....life isn't as unfair as I thought it was and perhaps I ought to be a little bit thankful for what I have! But I have to say that I would still like a pet.....the snake I found in the field and have hidden under my bed is just not the same as a dog now is it?

Exit James

Appendix 3 – Thankfulness Prayer

People: Mother, Worker, Teenager, Teenage boy, Older person, Child

.....

Mother: Even though I need to get out of bed before everyone else in order to prepare breakfast, find clean clothes, iron a shirt and cope with frayed tempers;
Thank you Lord for my family. There are many who are lonely.

Worker: Even though I have to get up early to commute to work, work long hours and pay high taxes;
Thank you Lord for the opportunity to work. There are many who have no job.

Teenager: Even though mum won't buy me all the clothes I really want;
Thank you Lord that I have something to wear each day. There are many who have no clothes.

Teenage boy: Even though I don't always find what I want to eat in the kitchen cupboards and the supermarkets sometimes run out of the things that I like;
Thank you Lord that I have enough to eat each day. There are many who are starving.

Older man: Even though I have a lawn that needs mowing, rooms that need painting and a fence that needs fixing;
Thank you Lord for my home. There are many who are homeless.

Child: Even though I have to go to school every week day, work really hard when I get there, and then have loads of homework;
Thank you Lord for my school. There are many who don't have an opportunity to have an education.

All: Thank you Lord for all that you give us. Amen.

Appendix 4 - Drama - "The Tin of Sweets"

Cast: Father, Child 1, Child 2, Child 3, Child 4, Child 5

Props: Table laid out with a table-cloth on it, tin with 25 wrapped sweets in it, small plastic bag

.....
(Enter Father carrying tin of sweets, which he puts down onto the table)

Father: I've got a treat for my children today.....now if my maths is right there is enough in this tin for all of them to have five each. I'll trust them to take what they need when they get home.....all of my children know that I expect them to share.

(Exit Father. Enter Child 1. Looks in tin)

Child 1: Oh look at these lovely sweets – so much variety.....I think I'll have one of those *(picks out sweet)*, two of those *(picks out two more sweets)*, one of those *(picks out another sweet)* and three of those as they are my favourites. *(picks out 3 more sweets and walks off)*

(Enter Child 2. Looks in tin)

Child 2: Look at all of this lot – 1,2,3,4 *(grabs 4 sweets)*. Mmmm....I don't think I've got enough... let's take just a few more...5,6,7,8. *(grabs another 4 sweets and shoves some in their pocket and walks off)*

(Enter Child 3. Looks in tin)

Child 3: Oh look at that.....there's only 10 sweets left.....well they're all mine – all mine!
(pulls out a plastic bag, empties the rest of the tin into it and walks off)

(Enter Child 4 and 5. Looks in tin)

Child 4 & 5: There's nothing left for us.....Why hasn't our Father provided for us? Doesn't he love us? *(Child 4 and 5 walk off disconsolately)*

Appendix 5 – Dramatized parable of the sower (Mark 4:1-10, 14-20)

Cast: Narrator, Sower, Seed that falls on path (P), Seed that falls on rock (R), Seed that falls among thorns (T), Seed that falls on good soil (G).

Props: A few large cut-out cardboard “seeds,” Heat lamp or large picture of the sun, Card sign to hang around P’s neck that says, “Robbed,” Card sign to hang around R’s neck that says “Troubles,” Card sign to hang around T’s neck that says, “Worries and Wealth,” Card sign to hang around G’s neck that says, “Fruitful”

.....
(Enter Narrator)

Narrator: Again Jesus began to teach by the lake. The crowd that gathered around him was so large that he got into a boat and sat in it out on the lake, while all the people were along the shore at the water’s edge. He taught them many things by parables and in his teaching said: “Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed.

(Enter Farmer scattering some card “seeds” on the ground at the front of the church / room)

Narrator: As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path,
(Farmer pretends to throw a seed and P enters. P immediately crouches down on the floor)

Narrator: and the birds came and ate it up.
(R, T and G “fly” in “squawking” and carry P off stage)

Narrator: Some fell on rocky places where it did not have much soil.
(Farmer pretends to throw a seed and R enters. R immediately crouches down on the floor)

Narrator: It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow
(R “grows” up until s/he is standing with her/his arms by her/his side)

Narrator: But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched and they withered because they had no root.

(P runs on with a heat lamp, which s/he shines at R and R gradually “shrivels” until s/he is lying dead on the ground. T & G then run on and drag R off)

Narrator: Other seed fell among thorns
(Farmer pretends to throw a seed and T enters. T immediately crouches down on the floor and then “grows” up until s/he is standing with her/his arms by her/his side)

Narrator: The thorns grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain.
(R, P and G run on and surround T. They then “choke” T who gradually “shrivels” until s/he is lying dead on the ground. R, P and G then carry T off)

Narrator: Still other seed fell on good soil.
(Farmer pretends to throw a seed and G enters. G immediately crouches down on the floor)

Narrator: It came up, grew and produced a crop
(G then "grows" up until s/he is standing with her/his arms above her/his head)

Narrator: some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times.
(G stretches up and waves her/his arms around)

Narrator: Then Jesus said, "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear". When he was alone, the twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables. Jesus said, "The farmer sows the word"
(Enter Farmer scattering some card "seeds" on the ground)

Narrator: Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown.
(P enters with the sign, "Robbed" around their neck. P immediately crouches down on the floor)

Narrator: As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them.
(R, T and G "fly" in "squawking" and carry P off stage)

Narrator: Others like seed sown on rocky places
(R enters with the sign, "Troubles" around their neck. R immediately crouches down on the floor)

Narrator: hear the word and at once receive it with joy.
(R "grows" up until s/he is standing with her/his arms by her/his side)

Narrator: But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.
(P runs on with a heat lamp, which s/he shines at R and R gradually "shrivels" until s/he is lying dead on the ground. T & G then run on and drag R off)

Narrator: Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word;
(T enters with the sign, "Worries and Wealth" around their neck. T immediately crouches down on the floor and then "grows" up until s/he is standing with her/his arms by her/his side)

Narrator: But the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.
(R, P and G run on and surround T. They then "choke" T who gradually "shrivels" until s/he is lying dead on the ground. R, P and G then carry T off)

Narrator: Others like seed sown on good soil
(G enters with the sign, "Fruitful" around their neck. G immediately crouches down on the floor)

Narrator: hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop
(G then "grows" up until s/he is standing with her/his arms above her/his head)

Narrator: some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown.
(G stretches up and waves her/his arms around)

Exit G and Narrator.