

A Seasonal All Age Worship Service

(SAAW011)

Lent: Mission Impossible

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“LENT: MISSION IMPOSSIBLE”

Service Aim:

1) To teach that the devil tried to stop Jesus succeeding in His “Mission impossible” (of rescuing mankind), by offering him alternative paths instead of the path of the cross. 2) To encourage us in our “Mission impossible” (of changing the world) to choose the path that says, “No” to sin and “Yes” to love.

Biblical Reference(s):

Luke 4:1-13, Colossians 1:13, Matthew 16:24, Deuteronomy 6:13, 6:16, 8:3

Outline of Service:

Welcome	Introduce the theme
Opening Prayer:	Litany from Psalm 91:1-2
Opening songs:	<u>A couple of songs praising God</u> (See Appendix 1)
Warm up:	“Mission impossible” announcement
Link:	Jesus was given a “Mission impossible.” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The devil offered Jesus 3 alternative paths instead of the path of the cross
Bible Reading 1:	Dramatised Luke 4:1-13
Song:	<u>Song praising Jesus</u> (See Appendix 1)
Talk 1:	Which path would Jesus take to fulfil his mission? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Self-sufficiency vs God-dependency 2) Power vs Service 3) Stardom vs Humility Jesus chose the path of the cross
Songs:	<u>Songs worshipping Jesus for his great love</u> (See Appendix 1)
Announcement:	“Mission impossible” announcement
Link:	We have been given a “Mission impossible,” but which path do we take?
Bible Reading 2:	Matthew 16:24
Talk 2:	“Say NO to sin” - Interactive talk.
Confession:	Write down sins on piece of paper, pray a prayer and then rip up paper & put pieces in a bin at the foot of the cross during the songs.
Song:	<u>A song of repentance</u> (See Appendix 1)
Talk 3:	“Say YES to love” - Interactive talk. Love= giving. What can we give?
Challenge:	To see how many acts of love you can do during Lent
Prayers:	
Notices	Hand out card crosses for people to use during Lent
Final song:	<u>Final song of commitment</u> (See Appendix 1)
Blessing	

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.

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Welcome:

Welcome everyone to the service and to the theme of “Lent – Mission Impossible”

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 litany from Psalm 91:1-2, (CEV) that the congregation can take part in:

Live under the protection of God Most High
and stay in the shadow of God All powerful
 Then you will say to the LORD,
You are my fortress, my place of safety;
You are my God, and I trust you

Opening Songs:

A couple of songs praising God as per Appendix 1

Warm up:

The warm up is a “Mission Impossible” announcement. The words of this announcement need to be spoken loudly using an “off-stage” microphone so that the words “boom” around the room. Begin the announcement by playing a few seconds of the “Mission Impossible” music², then fade the music as you make the announcement, then end the announcement with a few more seconds of music. The announcement is as follows:

Jesus.....this is your mission should you choose to accept it.
 There is a big problem on earth.
 Every man, woman and child is separated from their Heavenly Father because of their sins.
 They are being held by the enemy in his kingdom of darkness.
 None of them can escape.
 A daring rescue is needed to bring them into the kingdom of light.
 So prepare to leave heaven immediately;
 put on the clothes of a human being and enter earth as a baby.
 This mission has only one chance to succeed.
 It will cost you everything, even your life.
 This tape will self-destruct in five seconds.

¹ Church House Publishing – ISBN 0715120603

² Mission Impossible music can be found on YouTube (www.youtube.com) by putting “Mission Impossible Theme Tune” into the search bar.

Link:

Follow the announcement by saying something like the following:

Some of you may have seen the Mission Impossible films where Ethan Hunt, the main character is sent to do some impossible task, which he succeeds to do, after going through many dangerous adventures with all sorts of close shaves.

Jesus was given a “Mission impossible.”

- He was given the mission of rescuing people from the kingdom of darkness and bringing them into the kingdom of light. (Colossians 1:13)
- The crucial part of his mission would involve laying down his own life to make payment for people’s sins.

Today we are going to hear how the devil tried to stop Jesus succeeding in His mission.

- He tempted Jesus with three alternative paths to take;
- all of which would have avoided the cross.
- Let’s hear what happened.

Bible Reading 1:

The Bible reading is a dramatized version of Luke 4:1-13 and can be found in Appendix 2.

Song:

A song praising Jesus as per Appendix 1

Talk 1:

This talk would benefit from some simple Power Point slides listing the main points with a relevant picture and words.

So which path would Jesus choose to take to fulfil his mission?

- Let’s have a look at the three paths that the devil tempted Jesus to take.

The first path the devil tried to tempt Jesus to walk down was the path of TRUSTING HIMSELF rather than the path of TRUSTING FATHER GOD.

- The way he did it was by tempting Jesus to use his power to change stones into bread to satisfy his hunger, (Hold up a couple of stones) instead of trusting His Heavenly Father to meet his needs.

But Jesus knew that if He chose this path, his stomach might have been full, but his relationship with His Father would have been damaged.

- So he used some words from Scripture to respond to the devil.
- He quoted from the book of Deuteronomy and said “*Man does not live on bread alone,*” reminding the devil that no-one can live on just food alone.
- Real life comes from relationship with God.....and he wasn’t about to put that relationship in jeopardy by being disobedient.

The second path the devil tried to tempt Jesus to walk down was the path of POWER rather than the path of SERVICE.

- In this temptation the devil showed Jesus the possibility of setting up an earthly kingdom, where he would have all power and authority to do what He wanted to do,
- and where people would recognise Him as the King of the earth. (Hold up the crown)

What a way to fulfil his mission, to be instantly granted all power and authority to rule;

- but it came with a condition – and the condition was that Jesus would have to worship the devil.

Jesus' response to the devil was again to quote Scripture.

- He quoted from the book of Deuteronomy and said: "*it is written: Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only*"

Jesus knew that his mission was a mission to save, which meant serving people, not ruling over them in power and might,

- and he certainly wasn't going to worship the devil!

The third path the devil tried to tempt Jesus to walk down was the path of FAME rather than the path of HUMILITY.

- Do something really spectacular to attract public attention, tempts the devil.
- Jump off the temple and the angels will guide you gently down to the ground.
- If you do that, you will be famous overnight.
- You will have people eating out of your hands. They will really believe that you are the Son of God

What a way to begin his mission.....it would certainly be a quick way to bring Jesus recognition.

- But this temptation for fame would have meant publically testing His Father's faithfulness, and Jesus wasn't willing to put His Father to the test.

Jesus' response to the devil was again to quote Scripture. He quoted from the book of Deuteronomy and said: "*It says, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test"*"

Three temptations Jesus faced.....

- Three different paths to avoid the costly path of the cross.
 - The path of trusting himself instead of the path of trusting God.
 - The path of seeking power for himself instead of the path of serving others.
 - The path of looking for fame for himself instead of the path of humility.

But Jesus being full of love for His Father said "No" to each sinful path, and being full of love for us he said, "Yes" to the path that would take him to the cross to deal with our sins.

Because Jesus was willing to walk the path of the cross,

- our deepest need for relationship with God is met as our sin has been paid for.

Because Jesus was willing to walk the path of the cross,

- we are invited into the Kingdom of God where Jesus reigns as King.

Because Jesus was willing to walk the path of the cross,

- our Heavenly Father blesses us through our lives and gives us all that we need.

Jesus truly completed the mission impossible He was sent on....

- Let's worship Him.

Songs:

Songs worshipping Jesus for His great love as per Appendix 1

Announcement:

The second “Mission Impossible” announcement needs to be handled in the same way as the first announcement in other words, it needs to be spoken loudly using an “off-stage” microphone so that the words “boom” around the room. Begin the announcement by playing a few seconds of the “Mission Impossible” music³, then fade the music as you make the announcement, then end the announcement with a few more seconds of music. The announcement is as follows:

People of God.....this is your mission should you choose to accept it. You have received forgiveness for your sins and been brought into God’s family. Now your mission is to join me in going into the entire world and changing it with my love. Tell people the good news of my love for them. Teach them my ways. Show them my love with acts of kindness, for you are my hands and my feet. I will be with you and will give you all that you need. This mission has already cost me everything, even my life, and it will cost you too. This tape will self-destruct in five seconds.

Link:

Wow, that’s exciting isn’t it? We have a Mission impossible too - a mission of changing the world with Jesus’ love.

So how will we succeed in our mission? Like Jesus, what path should we take?

- Listen to this:

Bible Reading 2:

The Bible reading is Matthew 16:24 and could be read by an adult, child or teenager.

“Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.”

Talk 2:

This talk needs the prop of a large cardboard cross. On the back of the cross are the words, “SAY NO TO SIN” and on the front of the cross are the words, “SAY YES TO LOVE.” During the talk you will be writing down “sins” on the back of the cross and “acts of love” on the front of the cross, so you will need a thick marker pen.

If we are going to succeed in our mission of changing the world with the love of Jesus, we, like Jesus, need to walk the path of the cross.

That means saying “No” to the path of sin (*Show your cross with the SAY NO TO SIN facing the congregation*) and saying “Yes” to the path of love (*Show your cross with the SAY YES TO LOVE facing the congregation*)

Every day we will be tempted to walk the path of sin.

- What sins do we face? (*Receive answers and make sure that they include, “Not trusting God”, “Wanting power” and “Wanting fame.”*)
- What are we going to say to the path of sin? (*Receive answers*)
- That’s right, we are going to “SAY NO”

³ Mission Impossible music can be found on YouTube (www.youtube.com) by putting “Mission Impossible Theme Tune” into the search bar.

Confession:

For this part of the service you will need a large cross set up somewhere that is accessible to people in the congregation, and a large dustbin at the foot of the cross lined with a black dustbin liner. Each member of the congregation will need a piece of paper and a pencil.

Sometimes we say “Yes” to sin and so we are going to ask the Lord to forgive us now.

- Would you like to pick up your paper and pencil. As we have a moment of quiet allow the Lord to show you where you have said “Yes” to sin.
- You might like to write down on your paper any sins that come to mind or draw a picture of them as the Lord brings them to mind.

So let’s pray.....Holy Spirit of God we ask that you would search our hearts and show us any sins that we need to confess to you this morning, as we choose to say “No” to sin in our lives. PAUSE

Please join me by saying the words in bold as we ask the Lord’s forgiveness together.

Lord please forgive us when we have said “Yes” to sin;
when we have failed to love you,
chosen to ignore you and done what we have wanted to do.

Please forgive us

Please forgive us when we have put ourselves first,
lived selfishly and not cared about other people.

Please forgive us

Lord we want to change and we need your help.

Help us Lord

Thank you that you chose the path of love and died on the cross
so that our sins can be forgiven.

Thank you Lord

Help us to follow you and walk the path of the cross,
saying “no” to sin,

Help us Lord

loving you with all of our hearts,
and loving other people as we love ourselves.

Help us Lord

In Jesus’ name we pray.

Amen.

Thank you Lord that when we confess our sins you are faithful and just and forgive us our sins and wash us clean again. Amen.

As a sign of receiving God’s forgiveness, please rip up your paper and come and put the bits into the bin at the foot of the cross during the next songs. Once everyone has put their papers in we will tie up the bin liner and dispose of it!

Songs:

Lead straight into a song of Repentance as per Appendix 1

Talk 3:

This talk needs the prop of the large cardboard cross you used earlier. During this talk you will be writing down “acts of love” on the front of the cross, so you will need a thick marker pen.

If we are going to succeed in our mission of changing the world with the love of Jesus,

- we not only need to say “No” to sin, but we also need to say “Yes” to love, by sharing Jesus’ love with those we meet each day.

At the heart of love is giving; giving of our time and our resources to other people.

- So what acts of love do you think we can do to share Jesus’ love? *(Receive answers and make sure that they include, “Sharing the good news of Jesus,” “Praying” and “Serving.” As people give you answers write them on the side of the cross that says, “SAY YES TO LOVE”)*
- What are we going to say to the path of love? *(Receive answers)*
- That’s right, we are going to “SAY YES”

Now who would like to come and carry this cross?

- As *N (name of volunteer)* walks down the centre of the church carrying the cross, I am going to shout out “What are we going to say to the path of sin?” and you will shout out, “SAY NO”.
- I will also shout out, “What are we going to say to the path of love?” and you will shout out “SAY YES”
- *N (name of volunteer)* would you like to start walking down the centre of the church carrying the cross *(With the “SAY YES TO LOVE” side facing the congregation)*

What are we going to say to the path of sin?

- SAY NO *(Congregation shout)*

What are we going to say to the path of love?

- SAY YES *(Congregation shout)*

What are we going to say to the path of sin?

- SAY NO *(Congregation shout)*

What are we going to say to the path of love?

- SAY YES *(Congregation shout)*

Challenge:

During this challenge you might like to mention the website called 40acts.org.uk.⁴ This website gives ideas of acts of love and you could put the website details on your bulletin sheet.

In our final song today, we are going to pass around a cross card for each of you (See page 12 of this document for a template you can copy).

- During Lent I want to challenge you to see how many acts of love you can do which you can then write on your cross.

⁴ The 40acts website can be found here: <http://www.40acts.org.uk/>

There is a website called 40acts, which you might like to have a look at to give you some more ideas.

- Bring your completed crosses to church on Easter Sunday and we will exchange them for an Easter egg!

Prayers:

Use a simple litany prayer like the one below for your time of prayer.

In our families Lord,
Help us to love

In our places of work Lord,
Help us to love

In our church Lord,
Help us to love

In our neighbourhoods Lord,
Help us to love

In our places of relaxation Lord,
Help us to love

Wherever we meet other people Lord,
Help us to love, for the glory of your name. Amen.

End the prayers with the Lord's Prayer.

Notices:

If your church gives out verbal notices my suggestion is that you do that after the prayers. That way the flow of worship is unbroken. After the notices, hand out the Cross templates.

Final Song:

Final song of commitment as per Appendix 1

Blessing:

Pray a simple prayer to end the service something like:

As we leave here to enter our Mission field, help us walk the path that says "No" to sin and "Yes" to love,

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

Appendix 1 - Ideas for Songs and Hymns:

i) A couple of songs praising God. Ideas include:

- Blessed be your name in the land (Matt & Beth Redman © 2002 Thankyou Music)
- Give thanks to the Lord our God and King (Chris Tomlin © 2000 worshiptogether.com songs)
- My God is so big (traditional)
- O my soul, arise and bless your maker (Stuart Townend © 1999 Thankyou Music)
- Our God is a great big God (Jo & Nigel Hemming © 2001 Vineyard Songs)
- Praise Him your heavens (Russell Fragar © 1998 Russell Fragar / Hillsong Publishing)
- The splendour of the King (Chris Tomlin, Jesses Reeves & Ed Cash © 2004 Sixsteps Music)
- Through all the changing scenes of life (N.Tate)

ii) A song praising Jesus. Ideas include:

- Be lifted up (Paul Oakley © 2001 Thankyou Music)
- From heaven you came (Graham Kendrick © 1983 Thankyou Music)
- God so loved that He gave (Ben Cantelon © 2010 Thankyou Music)
- He walked where I walk (Graham Kendrick © 1988 Make Way Music)
- Jesus hope of the nations (Brian Doerksen © 2002 Integrity's Hosanna! Music)
- Lord I lift your name on high (Rick Founds © 1989 Maranatha! Praise Inc)
- Love the Lord with all your heart (Nick & Becky Drake © 2011 Thankyou Music)

iii) Songs worshipping Jesus for his great love. Ideas include:

- All of my heart (Doug Marks-Smircich © 1991 Right on the Mark)
- Before the throne of God (Charitie Lees Bancroft, Vikki Cook © 1997 Sovereign Grace Worship)
- He was pierced for our transgressions (Maggi Dawn © 1987 Thankyou Music)
- Jesus Christ I think upon your sacrifice (Matt Redman © 1995 Thankyou Music)
- Light of the world (Tim Hughes © 2000 Thankyou Music)
- Name above all names (Neil Bennetts © 2000 Daybreak Music Ltd)
- This is my desire (Reuben Morgan © 1995 Reuben Morgan / Hillsong Publishing)
- You chose the cross (Martyn Layzell © 2002 Thankyou Music)

iv) A song of repentance. Ideas include:

- Change my heart O God (Eddie Espinosa © 1982 Mercy/Vineyard Publishing)
- Don't let my love grow cold (Brian Doerksen © 1994 Mercy/Vineyard Publishing)
- I will offer up my life (Matt Redman © 1994 Thankyou Music)
- Jesus be the centre (Michael Frye © 1999 Vineyard Songs)
- Only by grace can we enter (Gerrit Gustafson © 1980 Integrity's Hosanna Music)
- Purify my heart (Brian Doerksen © 1990 Mercy/Vineyard Publishing)
- Thank you for saving me (Martin Smith © 1993 Curious? Music UK)

v) Final song of commitment. Ideas include:

- All I once held dear (Graham Kendrick © 1993 Make Way Music)
- Father hear the prayer we offer (Love Maria Willis)
- Lead us heavenly Father lead us (James Edmeston)
- Over all the earth (Brenton Brown © 1998 Vineyard Song)
- We are heirs of God Almighty (Stuart Townend © 2002 Thankyou Music)

Appendix 2 – Dramatised Reading: Luke 4:1-13

Cast: Narrator, Jesus (dressed in a white robe), Devil (dressed in a dark robe)

Props: Large piece of sand coloured material to cover the “drama area,” 2 large stones, 2 bread rolls, a crown (for a King), a chair and a set of step ladders.

.....
(Enter Narrator)

Narrator: After Jesus had been baptised in the River Jordan, the Holy Spirit led him into the wilderness.

(Someone runs on and lays out the sandy coloured material across the front of the church. On that material they place the 6 large stones. When they run off, Jesus walks on and faces the congregation)

There he was tempted by the devil for forty days.

(Devil comes on dramatically, makes his way over to Jesus, stands behind him and leans over to whisper in Jesus' right ear, then leans over to whisper in Jesus' left ear then stands back)

Jesus ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.

(Jesus picks up a couple of the stones and stands holding a stone in each hand and looking at them. He faces the congregation)

Devil: If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.

(Devil stays behind Jesus and waves a couple of bread rolls in front of Jesus' nose. Jesus sniffs them, pushes them away and deliberately puts the stones back down on the floor. Jesus stays facing the congregation)

Jesus: It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone.'

Narrator: The devil led Jesus up to a high place

(Devil places a chair in front of Jesus and Jesus climbs onto it.)

He showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world.

(Jesus looks around as if surveying all the kingdoms of the world. Devil stays on the ground to speak)

Devil: I will give you all their authority and splendour; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to.

(Devil hands Jesus a crown to put on his head. Jesus takes the crown and puts it on)

If you worship me, it will all be yours.

(Jesus quickly takes the crown off, throws it onto the floor, jumps off the chair and faces the congregation)

Jesus: It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'

Narrator: The devil led Jesus to Jerusalem & had him stand on the highest point of the temple.

(Jesus follows the devil to where the ladders are set up. He climbs up the ladders until he is at the top)

Devil: If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here. For it is written: 'He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'

(Jesus quickly comes down the ladders and faces the congregation)

Jesus: It is said: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'

Narrator: When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.
(Exit Devil with a dramatic flourish! Jesus exits in the opposite direction)

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SAY "NO" TO SIN AND "YES" TO LOVE

Write on the cross things you can do to say "yes" to love

