

A Seasonal All Age Worship Service

(SAAW013)

**Easter Day:
“The Impossible
Happened!”**

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EASTER DAY: THE IMPOSSIBLE HAPPENED

Service Aim:

To celebrate that Jesus rose from the dead and to enable all ages to engage with some of the implications of the Resurrection in a multi-sensory way. If you used our Lent service, "Mission impossible" you can refer back to it as you celebrate "The impossible happened!"

Notes:

The service is built around a number of objects in a paper bag, which each worshipper is given on the way in. It therefore requires planning and preparing well ahead of time.

Biblical Reference(s):

John 20:1-18, Acts 10:34-43 and also John 16:22, Matthew 20:19, 1 Corinthians 15:6, Romans 6:16

Outline of Service:

On the door:	People given bags for the service
Welcome:	Introduce the theme
Opening Praise:	
Opening song(s):	<u>Song(s) celebrating Jesus' Resurrection</u> (See Appendix 1)
Drama:	"He's alive!" (Dramatized John 20:1-18)
Talk 1:	On the 1 st Easter morning the impossible happened. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The tomb was empty, death was defeated and Jesus had risen.
Song:	<u>Song celebrating Jesus' Resurrection</u> (See Appendix 1)
Link:	So what does Jesus' Resurrection mean for us?
Reading:	Acts 10:34-43
Talk 2:	We can be 1) Forgiven and Free .
Confession:	Take "Sins" to the cross + prayer of Confession
Song:	<u>Song thanking Jesus for the cross</u>
Talk 2 cont:	We can be 2) Friends with God. We are invited to 3) Follow Jesus on the path of life. We have a 4) Fantastic Hope for the future.
Songs:	<u>Song(s) celebrating Jesus' Resurrection</u>
Commitment:	Renewal of Baptism vows
Prayers:	Easter Egg prayers and The Lords' Prayer
Summary	
Final songs:	<u>Song(s) celebrating Jesus' Resurrection</u>
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.

.....

Before the service:

Before the service takes place white paper bags containing the various items needed during the service are prepared. Each member of the congregation ie, both adults and children, will need a filled bag. Stuck on the outside of the paper bag is an empty tomb sticker saying: "Christ is Risen!" (The template of the empty tomb sticker can be found in Appendix 2.) The white paper bags are sealed with a tiny sticker at the top of them.

Details of where to purchase the white paper bags and the stickers and all the various items needed for inside the bag are shown below:

- 1) White paper bag: One small paper bag (approximately 7"x9"x3.5") is needed for each person. These can be bought online at ebay¹. Simply put "White kraft paper carrier bags takeaway food" into the search button and a number of options will come up.
- 2) Stickers for bags: One tiny sticker (to seal the bags) and one larger sticker (with the empty tomb picture on it) is needed for each bag. A variety of "Avery labels" can be purchased on Amazon².
- 3) Black pipe cleaners: Three black pipe cleaners are needed for each bag. You can purchase these on ebay.
- 4) Smiley sticker: One smiley sticker is needed for each bag. These can be purchased cheaply on ebay by putting: "Yellow Smiley Face/Reward stickers" into the search bar.
- 5) Party blower: One party blower is needed for each bag. These can be purchased on ebay by putting: "Party blowers" into the search bar.
- 6) Seed: One sunflower seed is needed for each bag. These can be purchased on ebay by putting: "Sunflower Giant Yellow Single seeds" into the search bar
- 7) Easter egg: One small chocolate egg is needed for each bag. You can purchase these from most Supermarkets. Ensure you have a "free-from" alternative for those who can't eat chocolate.
- 8) Votive candle: One votive candle is needed for each bag. You can purchase these from Eden at: www.eden.co.uk, putting "Votive candles" in the search bar.

¹ www.ebay.co.uk

² www.amazon.co.uk

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- 9) Candle drip shield: One cardboard drip shield is needed for each bag. You can purchase these from Eden at: www.eden.co.uk, putting “cardboard drip shield” in the search bar.

On the door:

As people arrive they are presented with a white paper bag.

Welcome:

Welcome everyone to the Easter Day service. Invite people to leave the things in the bags they have been given until the relevant part of the service.

Opening Praise:

You may choose to open the service with:

- an informal prayer of praise
- or the following Easter acclamation.

Alleluia, Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed, Alleluia!

Opening Songs:

Song(s) celebrating Jesus’ Resurrection as per Appendix 1

Drama:

The drama can be found in Appendix 3 and is a dramatized version of John 20:1-18.

Talk 1:

This talk would benefit from some Power Point slides of the main points with relevant pictures and words. You will also need the props of a couple of hollow wrapped Easter eggs, and a very large cardboard circle.....on one side is a smiley face and on the other side is a sad face.

On the first Easter morning **the impossible happened.**

- The massive stone that had been rolled in front of Jesus’ tomb had been moved away from the entrance.
- Inside the tomb where Jesus’ body had lain, there was now no sign of it.
- All that was left to see were the grave clothes.

To help us remember the empty tomb I have a couple of Easter eggs here. *(Show couple of hollow wrapped Easter eggs)*

- Who would like to come and unwrap them? *(Give an egg to each of your two volunteers)*

What is inside the egg? You need to break it to find out *(Volunteers break the eggs)*

- So what is inside your egg? Nothing.....that’s right.....nothing.

That’s what Jesus’ disciples found when they went to his tomb a couple of days after Jesus had been crucified.

- There was no body!
- Thanks for helping.....do take a piece of chocolate

On the first Easter morning **the impossible happened.**

- Not only was the tomb empty but Jesus was walking around meeting Mary and later on his disciples, two days after being dead and buried!
- Jesus had risen from the dead...and over the course of the next forty days over five hundred people saw him in his new resurrection body. (1Corinthians 15:6)

On the first Easter morning **the impossible happened.**

- Death could not hold Jesus in the grave.
- It was defeated.....and Jesus was raised to life.

One of the first people who saw Jesus alive again was Mary.

- On meeting the risen Jesus, Mary's life was transformed.

Instead of being really sad, *(Show large sad face)*

- Mary was now full of joy. *(Show large smiley face)*
- Instead of feeling confused about Jesus, *(Show large sad face)*
- Mary was now full of love for Jesus. *(Show large smiley face)*
- Instead of being in despair, *(Show large sad face)*
- Mary was now full of hope. *(Show large smiley face)*

The impossible happened on the first Easter day.

- Jesus was raised from the dead and as he met people, their lives were changed.

Song:

Song celebrating Jesus' Resurrection as per Appendix 1

Link:

So what does Jesus rising from the dead mean for us today?

I am going to give us four words beginning with the letter "F" to help us discover what Jesus' Resurrection has achieved.....and how our lives can be changed.

The first "F" is the word **Forgiveness.**

- Jesus' resurrection means that **the impossible happened.**
- We, who have rebelled against God, ignored his commands and deserved to be punished for our sins, can be forgiven.

Listen to what Peter said to Cornelius.

Reading:

The reading is Acts 10:34-43 and can be read by a child, young person or adult from a modern version of the Bible

Talk 2:

This talk would benefit from some Power Point slides of the main points with relevant pictures and words. You also need the prop of a large paper chain made out of black paper, which will be wrapped around someone during the talk and three black pipe cleaners. While people are allowing the Holy Spirit to show them any sin they need to confess have some quiet music playing, either from a CD or from your musicians.

Peter told Cornelius that: *“everyone who believes in Jesus receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”* (Acts 10:43)

Could I have a volunteer please to help me illustrate sin and forgiveness. *(Volunteer comes forward)*

- When we live to please ourselves and choose to ignore God’s ways (which we all do), the Bible tells us that we are like slaves; slaves to sin. (Romans 6:16)
- Although we might try to stop sinning, we find that we can’t stop.

Let me give you an example. Some of us might struggle with the sin of lying....

- You tell what you think is one small lie to someone and that then leads to another lie to cover up the first lie. *(Wrap black chain around the volunteer)*
- That lie leads to another lie *(keep wrapping black chain around the volunteer)*
- and another lie *(keep wrapping black chain around the volunteer)*
- and another lie *(keep wrapping black chain around the volunteer)*
- until you are bound up and cannot get free. *(Wrap black chain around the volunteer until they are really bound up)*
- You cannot see the chains of sin.....but they are there.

The sin you struggle with and which binds you up might not be lying.

- It might be speaking badly about other people, rather than loving them.
- It might be jealousy, or anger,
- gossip, or disobedience,
- hatred, greed, or something else altogether.

The good news is that Jesus came to set us free from sin.

- When he died on the cross, Jesus made payment for all of our sins.
- His resurrection from the dead proves that Jesus, the Son of God not only has authority to forgive our sins but also to set us free from them.

As Peter told Cornelius, our part is to choose to put our trust in what Jesus has done for us.

So if *N (name of volunteer)* turns to Jesus in faith and asks for his forgiveness, *N* will be forgiven and set free. *(Rip off the black chains from your volunteer)*

- Thank you *N*. Do sit down.

We all have an opportunity now to ask for Jesus' forgiveness.

- Please take the three black pipe-cleaners out of your bag and turn them into a chain with three links like this: *(make a chain out of three pipe-cleaners and show it to the congregation)*

While we have some quiet music playing, hold your chain and allow God to show you any sins that are binding you up and that you need forgiveness for.

- Let's pray.

Lord Jesus. Thank you that you went to the cross to pay for our sins.

On this Resurrection day, please search our hearts and show us the sins we need to confess and turn away from, so that we can be forgiven and set free.....thank you Jesus. Amen.

PAUSE.

Confession:

You will need a large cross for this part of the service. As people bring their pipe-cleaner chains to the cross, have a few people ready at the cross to join the chains together to form one large chain which is then draped all over the cross.

Let's turn from our sins and ask Jesus to forgive us as we pray together.

Lord Jesus,

We confess to you the wrong things we have thought, said and done.

We are sorry that we haven't loved you or loved other people.

Thank you that you died for us and rose again.

Please forgive us and set us free,

For the glory of your name. Amen.

As a sign that you have turned away from your sins, please bring your chains to the cross. *(People bring their chains to the cross where they are joined together to form one big chain that is then laid upon the cross)*

Let's receive the Lord's forgiveness.....you might like to hold your hands out in front of you.

Thank you Lord that when we confess our sins, you are faithful and just and forgive us our sins and set us free. We receive your forgiveness and freedom with thankful and grateful hearts. Come and fill us with your Holy Spirit so that we can say no to sinning. Amen.

Song:

Song thanking Jesus for the cross as per Appendix 1

Talk 2 continued:

This talk would benefit from some Power Point slides of the main points with relevant pictures and words. You will need the following props: smiley sticker, party blower, sunflower seed and a fully grown sunflower plant.

So the first “F” that Jesus achieved for us through his death and resurrection is **forgiveness**.

The second “F” is the word **Friends**.

- Jesus’ resurrection means that **the impossible happened**.
- We, who have rejected God and ignored Him can now be friends with God.
- That is possible because the sin that came between us has been dealt with.

You see Father God loves us.....He has always loved us, but now we can draw close to Him and know Him, like a friend.

- If you would like to open up your bags again and find a smiley sticker. *(People take out their smiley sticker)*

As you stick it onto your clothes, know that God smiles when He sees you....

- He loves you more than you could ever imagine.
- Receive that truth.

The third “F” is the word **Follow**.

- Jesus’ resurrection means that **the impossible happened**.
- We, who have lived aimlessly, wandering around, trying to find meaning in life, are invited to follow Jesus and be part of His mission in the world.

Following Jesus is exciting because He calls us to change the world with Him.

- One day he might involve us in His healing ministry.....
- As we pray for someone who is sick to get better, Jesus heals them.

Another day Jesus might involve us in his saving ministry.....

- where we have the opportunity to tell someone about Jesus’ love and they choose to put their trust in Him.

Another day Jesus might involve us in his ministry of justice....

- where we have the opportunity to stand up for someone in difficulty.

Following Jesus is exciting.....it certainly isn’t boring.

- So if you would like to open up your bags again and find a party blower. *(People take out their party blower)*

Let’s see what a loud joyful noise we can make as we blow them together to celebrate that following Jesus is exciting....and life-giving.....after three, 1,2,3, blow....*(People blow their party blowers)*

- And stop! And put them away for a couple of minutes until our next song.

And finally the fourth “F” is the word **Fantastic hope**

- I know it is two words really!

Jesus’ resurrection means that **the impossible happened.**

- Death is not the end for us.

We are offered a fantastic hope for the future.

- One day our bodies will be resurrected too and we will live forever with God in a place where there is no dying, suffering or pain.

Would you like to open up your bags again and find the sunflower seed? *(People take out their sunflower seed)*

- Seeds look dead don’t they?
- But what happens to this seed when you plant it in the ground?
- A few weeks later, a little shoot appears, and finally a fully grown plant like this. *(Show sunflower plant to the congregation)*

We will all die one day, like this seed.....however followers of Jesus have the fantastic hope that one day they will be raised from the dead and be given a beautiful new body.....a bit like this seed can become a beautiful plant.

- Take your seed home with you and plant it in the ground.
- When you see the plant appearing through the ground, praise Jesus for the hope of the resurrection!

So I have given you four words to help us discover what Jesus’ Resurrection has achieved for us. Can anyone remember them all? *(Receive answers)*

- We can be **forgiven** and **friends** with God.
- We are invited to **follow** Jesus and we have been given a **fantastic hope.**

Songs:

Songs celebrating Jesus’ Resurrection as per Appendix 1. You might invite the children to use their party blowers during this song!

Commitment:

If an Easter candle hasn’t already been lit at the beginning of the service, light a large candle.

We are going to give us all an opportunity now to respond to what Jesus has done for us by renewing our baptism vows.

- This is a way of saying that we are turning our hearts away from sin and turning them towards Jesus, allowing Him to come in and reign.
- If you have never been baptised, you might like to join in the responses and then talk to a Minister afterwards about being baptised.
- So please stand. Let’s be still for a moment as we think about how we are going to respond to Jesus.

Do you turn to Christ?

I turn to Christ

Do you repent of your sins?

I repent of my sins

Do you renounce evil?

I renounce evil

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, source of all being and life, the One for whom we exist?

I believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son, who took our human nature, died for us and rose again?

I believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ known in the world?

I believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church

This is our faith.

We believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Prayers:

You need the following props for the prayers: An Easter egg that is completely broken in pieces on a plate, an Easter egg in two halves on a plate, and an Easter egg in two halves that is overflowing with chocolates, sweets etc on a plate. Alternatively you could project pictures of the eggs. You could use the following prayers:

Lord Jesus as we look at this broken Easter egg, it reminds us of our world; broken by our sin and rebellion.

Thank you that you were willing to come and put things right by dying for us on the cross.

Help us to never forget what this cost you.

Risen Lord Jesus.

Hear our prayer

Lord Jesus as we look at this empty Easter egg, it reminds us of the empty tomb and that on the first Easter day, the impossible happened.

We ask that you would breathe your Resurrection life into each one of us so that we can serve you and bring hope to others.

Risen Lord Jesus.

Hear our prayer

Lord Jesus as we look at this Easter egg overflowing with chocolates, it reminds us of your goodness. Thank you for the many blessings that you pour into our lives every day of our lives.

Help us to go into your world and share the good news of your love with those we meet.

Risen Lord Jesus.

Hear our prayer

Finish by saying the Lord's Prayer together.

Summary:

You will need the following props: small chocolate Easter egg, votive candle and cardboard shield.

Today we have discovered that on the first Easter morning the impossible happened.

- The tomb was empty, Jesus had risen from the dead and death had been defeated.

Jesus' resurrection means that the impossible happened for us!

- We can be **forgiven** and **friends** with God.
- We are invited to **follow** Jesus and we have been given a **fantastic hope**.

So as we celebrate God's goodness to us.....would you like to open your bags and take out the Easter egg? (*Offer a "freedom" egg to those who need them*)

- As you eat it, what do you want to say to Jesus?
- Shall we shout it out?
- THANK YOU!!

Before we sing our final song please take out the candle and the cardboard drip shield from your bags and put them together like this. (*Put your candle and drip shield together and show people*)

- Jesus sends us out into the world to change it with his love.
- As we sing our final songs, we will light our candles to remind us that we are to go and let our light shine before others.

Final Songs:

Songs celebrating Jesus' Resurrection as per Appendix 1.

As the final songs are sung people light their candles, taking the first one from the Easter candle at the front and passing it around.

Blessing:

As we leave today, with our hearts rejoicing in Jesus' resurrection, and all that this means for us, let us go into the world to shine for his glory.

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) Song(s) celebrating Jesus' Resurrection. Ideas include:

- Come on let's celebrate (John Hardwick © 1995 Hardwick, John)
- Come people of the risen king (Keith & Kristyn Getty & Stuart Townend © 2007 ThankyouMusic)
- Crown him with many crowns (Matthew Bridges & Godfrey Thring)
- Here's a song bursting out (Matt Redman and Alan Price © 1998 Kingsway's Thankyou Music)
- Jesus Christ is risen today (Samuel Arnold)
- Jesus we celebrate your victory (John Gibson © 1987 Thankyou Music)
- Let everything that, everything that (Matt Redman © 1997 Thankyou Music)

ii) Song(s) celebrating Jesus' Resurrection. Ideas include:

- All heaven declares (Noel & Tricia Richards © 1987 Thankyou Music)
- God's not dead (Greg Leavers, Peter Horrobin © 1986 Leavers, Greg, Horrobin, Peter)
- Hallelujah, hallelujah (Ben Cantelon © 2007 Thankyou Music)
- He has risen, he has risen (Gerald Coates, Noel & Tricia Richards © 1993 Thankyou Music)
- In Christ alone (Stuart Townend & Keith Getty © 2001 Thankyou Music)
- In the tomb so cold (Graham Kendrick © 1986 Thankyou Music)
- The splendour of the King (Chris Tomlin, Jesse Reeves, Ed Cash © sixsteps Music)

iii) A song thanking Jesus for the cross. Ideas include:

- I will worship (David Ruis © 1991 Shade Tree Music)
- Salvation belongs to our God (Adrian Howard & Pat Turner © 1985 Restoration Music Ltd)
- Thank you for saving me (Martin Smith © 1883 Curious? Music UK)
- Thank you for the cross (Graham Kendrick © 1985 Thankyou Music)
- Thank you for the cross (Darlene Zschech © 2000 Darlene Zschech / Hillsong Publishing)
- Thank you Jesus

iv) Song(s) celebrating Jesus' Resurrection. Ideas include:

- Bless the Lord O my soul (Jonas Myrin, Matt Redman © 2011 Thankyou Music)
- He is Lord, he is Lord
- How wonderful, how glorious (Dave Bilbrough © 1994 Thankyou Music)
- In him I have believed (Kate Simmonds © 2005 Thankyou Music)
- Jesus isn't dead anymore (Alan Price © 1994 Song Solutions Daybreak)
- Sing a song of celebration (David Ruis © 1993 Mercy/Vineyard Publishing)
- There's a place where the streets shine (Paul Oakley © 1995 Thankyou Music)

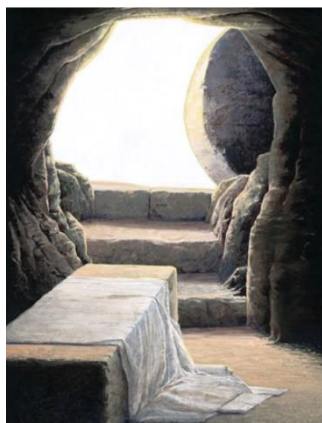
v) Song(s) celebrating Jesus' Resurrection. Ideas include:

- And he shall reign (Graham Kendrick © 1993 Make Way Music)
- Everyone needs compassion (Reuben Morgan & Ben Fielding © 2006 Hillsong Publishing)
- Our God is alive (Becky Drake © 2007 Song Solutions Daybreak)
- Shine from the inside out (Nick Jackson © 2007 Powerpack)
- The greatest day in history (Ben Cantelon, Tim Hughes © 2006 Thankyou Music)
- Thine be the glory (Edmond Louis Budry, George Frideric Handel, Richard Birch Hoyle)
- We want to see Jesus lifted high (Doug Horley © 1993 Thankyou Music)

Appendix 2 – Empty Tomb “Stickers” for bags

Make stickers using “Avery” labels L7166 (Shipping labels 99,1 x 93,1 white) with the image and words below.

“Jesus is Risen!”



Appendix 3 – Drama - “He is alive!” (John 20:1-18)

Cast: Mary, Peter, John, Philip, Matthew

.....
(Enter the four disciples who stand around the front of church murmuring to one another. Suddenly Mary appears from the back of church. She runs to the front shouting at the top of her voice!)

Mary: He’s alive, he’s alive.....I can’t believe it. He’s alive. I’ve got to tell them.

(Mary arrives at the front and rushes into the group of disciples)

I’m so glad I’ve found you. He’s alive. I’ve seen him....

Peter: Slow down Mary. What are you talking about? Who’s alive?

Mary: Jesus is alive. I’ve seen him and I have spoken with him.

Philip: That’s not possible. We all saw him crucified just a couple of days ago and his dead body placed in Joseph’s tomb.

Mary: Philip, hadn’t you heard that when Peter, John and I went to the tomb this morning, the stone had been moved away from the entrance?

Philip: Yes, Peter did say that the stone had been moved.

Mary: I thought that someone had taken Jesus out of the tomb. I was so upset that I didn’t know where our Lord’s body had gone.

Matthew: Is Mary telling the truth Peter?

Peter: Yes she is Philip. I did see that the stone had been moved and when John and I looked closer the tomb was empty except for the strips of linen that had been wrapped around Jesus’ body.

John: It was very strange. The burial cloth that had been around Jesus’ head was neatly wrapped up by itself, separate from the linen.

Matthew: So grave robbers didn’t steal the body then. They wouldn’t have left all the linen behind.

John: Jesus did say that He would see us again.....

Mary: And I have seen him.....just a few minutes ago. Why won’t you believe me?

Peter: We want to believe you Mary....but you have to admit that if what you are saying is true, it is.....impossible!

Mary: I know.....but the impossible happens with Jesus!

John: So tell us Mary how did you come to meet Jesus?

- Mary: After you and Peter had left me, I stood outside the tomb crying. Then I thought I would have one last look inside the tomb just to check once more that his body was really not there when I saw two angels in white, sitting where Jesus' body had been. One was sitting at the head and the other at the foot.
- Philip: Did they say anything to you?
- Mary: They asked me why I was crying.
- Matthew: So what did you tell them?
- Mary: I told them that they had taken my Lord away and that I didn't know where they had put him. As I turned round to leave the tomb I saw a man standing in the entrance. He also asked me why I was crying and what I was looking for.
- Philip: I knew there had to be an explanation for all of this. You saw the gardener Mary and in your grief you thought it was Jesus.
- Mary: You are right in one thing Philip. I did think the man was a gardener. I said to him that if he had carried Jesus' body away then to please tell me where he had put him.
- Peter: So did he tell you?
- Mary: He wasn't the gardener Peter.....Ohhh.....will you believe me if I tell you?
- John: Yes we will Mary.....what did this man say to you?
- Mary: He said: *(pauses for a while)* "Mary".....and suddenly I realised....it was Jesus.....and I said, "Rabboni"
- John: Did Jesus say anything else to you Mary?
- Mary: He told me to come and tell you that He is returning to His Father and my Father, to His God and my God.
- Matthew: So what Jesus said is true.
- Philip: That in Jerusalem he would be mocked, flogged and crucified....
- Peter: But on the third day he will be raised to life.
- John: Jesus is alive.....I believe.
- Mary: Jesus is alive. I have seen the Lord!

(Exit all together)

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