



EASTER EXPLORER

AN INTERGENERATIONAL WORSHIP SERVICE FOR EASTER

This worship service is a celebration of the Good News of Jesus' resurrection.

It provides an opportunity for people to explore what they believe and it encourages interaction between children and older people.

The service can be used in large or small congregations, and can be easily adapted for home use.

NOTES

ALL-AGE WORSHIP

All-age (intergenerational) worship is, first and foremost, worship — an encounter between God and God's people; a dialogue in which God speaks and people respond, both in the worship service and in their lives.

Intentionally *intergenerational* worship

- allows this dialogue to take place in a variety of ways
- focuses on a clear theme and connects that theme with the lives of the worshipers
- provides worshipers (young and old) with an experience they can remember and talk about in their homes
- encourages interaction and dialogue among people of the various generations
- takes seriously the understanding that people of all ages worship together in the body of Christ. People of all ages can also plan worship, invite people to worship, and lead worship
- recognises and values the children present in the worshipping congregation and 'the child within' each adult.

USING THIS WORSHIP RESOURCE

These notes have been prepared by the Resource Centre for Children's and Family Ministry of the Uniting Church (SA) to help congregations plan Easter worship involving children and families. You may make as many copies of the notes as needed for your worship planners and leaders.

The use of music and other copyright elements is not covered in this permission.

Read through all the material. Discuss it as a planning team. You may use any of the ideas that are appropriate in your situation or the entire sample service.

If you use the resource, we would appreciate your letting us know what you do. Send a brief email to rccfm@bigpond.com

Bible quotations are from the New International Readers Version.

For other intergenerational worship ideas see www.sa.uca.org.au/goto/children_youth and click on 'All Age Worship'.

THEME

The Easter Explorer theme is suggested by the 2009 Easter postcard produced by the Uniting Church in SA.



For information about the postcards, contact the Communications and Public Relations Manager, (08) 8236 4249, sshort@sa.uca.org.au
Orders close Monday, 16 February.

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DORA AND OTHER EXPLORERS

What image do you have when you think of the word 'explorer'?

Do you think of Captain Cook and the first ships from Europe to see Australia?

Do you think of people in safari suits and pith helmets hacking their way through an African jungle?



For preschoolers (and their parents and carers) today, 'explorer' is seven-year-old Dora, who lives in a computer — and their television — and takes them on exploration adventures.

We can use this fascination with *Dora the Explorer* to attract the attention of young children and draw them into the worship experience.

There's more about Dora on the handout sheet, page 20.

GRANDPARENTS

Grandparents have a store of experience and wisdom that we sometimes overlook.

There's an employment and training organization for older workers in South Australia called 'DOME' for 'Don't Overlook Mature Expertise'. The *Easter Explorer* service draws on the experience and wisdom possessed by older members of the congregation and gives them the opportunity to share it with younger people.

Easter is traditionally a time when extended families get together. This service is designed to be an experience that grandparents can share with their grandchildren and great-grandchildren (and the children's parents), whether the children are age 2 or 22.

Members of your congregation can invite others in their extended families, or friends and neighbours. Children can invite older people. Older people can invite children — particularly those who do not worship regularly.

The service has the potential of helping people to re-connect with Jesus and his church.

EXPLORATION

The producers of the *Dora the Explorer* series understand the importance of active exploration and discovery in learning. This worship service is designed to involve people of all ages in a similar process.

The sample service consists of three sections.

1. Whole-congregation celebration of the Easter event
2. Small group exploration of what we believe
3. Whole-congregation celebration of what they have discovered in the exploration.

For the exploration, small groups move out of the worship space into a hall, a passageway or an outdoor area. Each group has an exploration leader. Ideally this is a Grandparent Explorer (ie 'Gran the Explorer' or 'Opa the Explorer') leading their own family. Other groups of 3-8 people can be formed with any youth or adult leader.

The exploration activity provides a safe, controlled environment in which families can begin discussing some faith issues that they may be reluctant to discuss in other settings.

Some people who are comfortable with more traditional worship may find such a radical departure from the normal unsettling. A truly intergenerational and inclusive planning approach considers this possibility and the people involved. You may choose to offer an optional 'in-pew' exploration talk, discussion, or study — based on the same theme as the exploration.

PLANNING

An all-age worship service is best planned by an intergenerational team, working with the pastor/minister/priest or lay ministry team. If possible the team should consist of at least three people: one representing the youngest third, one, the middle third and one, the oldest third of the congregation.

The team may also draw on people who have special abilities, eg in the areas of hospitality, music, drama, visual arts and technology.

Planning as an intergenerational team can be a valuable experience for all involved.

Suggested planning steps:

1. begin with prayer, and trust God's Spirit to guide your planning
2. look through these notes to see how they can help in planning the kind of service you want to hold

3. use these notes and other resources to develop a worship outline
4. flesh out the outline, consider your own people and facilities
5. work with worship leaders to plan details: who does what, when and how.

INVITATION AND ADVERTISING

The first people to notify about your service are the members of your congregation. Begin early to let them in on the excitement of what is being planned. Encourage them to catch the vision of exploring what they believe this Easter — with several generations of their family.

Use the UCA's Easter 'Believe' postcard in your promotion. Encourage members to use the back of the postcard to write a personal invitation to family members or others in the community.

Also consider using an enlargement of the postcard as a printed notice in a local gathering place (eg a shopping centre) or on a signboard in front of your church.

Be sure to include the date, time and location of the service in all your promotional material.

HOSPITALITY

Hospitality is the responsibility of all members of the congregation.

People who invite and bring people to the service have the primary responsibility for looking after their special guests.

A designated **HOSPITALITY TEAM** has responsibilities that include:

- being aware of the safety aspects of the worship space, eg location of alternate exits, location of first aid equipment, identity of people with first aid training
- greeting people as they arrive
- helping people to get settled
Pay special attention to the very young, the very old and people with physical disabilities. Seat them where they will be able to see/hear, but not feel conspicuous
- being alert to needs of people during the service, and assisting as required.

In a service like this one with special emphasis on worshiping as family groups, your hospitality team (and your planning team) needs to be aware of the people who may be marginalised by this approach: some teens and young adults, singles, families with no children, people who are experiencing family problems and people who worship alone.

WORSHIP SPACE & VISUALS

A clean, tidy and attractive worship area can help guests and regular worshippers feel that this is an inviting place to be.

Visual arts can enhance various aspects of the service by illustrating what is presented and discussed. So involve people with artistic talent and your technology team (if you project images electronically) in creating memorable visual impact that will enhance the presentation of the Good News.

You may decorate the worship space with large decorated Easter eggs like those shown on the Easter postcard, eg:

- Cut egg shapes from bright, inexpensive gift wrap paper with large designs. Attach to walls or ends of pews with Blue Tack.
- A week or two before the service have children paint egg shapes cut from card. This is a way of helping children to be aware of and be part of plans for the special Easter worship.

You might ask members — particularly people with leadership roles in the service — to dress in 'explorer' gear of their choice so that people become part of the visual impact of the service.

MUSIC

Most of the music in the service is congregational singing that allows the participation of all worshippers. However, remember that visitors may not be familiar with — or comfortable with — the practice of congregational singing. Invite people to sing when they are comfortable doing so, or to just listen.

Your regular instrumentalists (organist, band) lead/accompany singing. Display song words in your usual manner.

Include traditional hymns as well as more contemporary songs and songs written with children in mind.

With more adult songs, explain or illustrate briefly any obscure images or language. Consider ways of involving children who are too young to read or sing the words, eg

- teach Auslan symbols or other actions for some key words in the song and ask everyone to do the actions when they come to the words in the song
- teach one or two lines that are repeated in the chorus and give a cue when everyone can sing the lines they know
- give children a percussion instrument they can play during some songs.

A plastic Easter egg with something inside (eg M&Ms) can make a good shaker. There are obvious cautions with this, eg children with chocolate allergies. Be sure to give clear instructions to both parents and children about keeping the egg intact for songs right through the service.

Small congregations, or congregations that do not have strong musical leadership, may choose to have the congregation sing with CDs or other electronic music.

SONG SUGGESTIONS

Use at least one of the stirring old Easter hymns such as:

- *He is risen, he is risen* (Alexander)
- *I know that my Redeemer lives* (Medley)
- *Jesus Christ is risen today, Alleluia* (Arnold)
- *Low in the grave he lay*
a great way to reflect the mood change from Good Friday to Easter Sunday
- *Now the green blade rises* (Crum)
- *Yours (Thine) is the glory* (Budry)

Some more contemporary Easter songs to consider:

- *Because he lives* (Gaither) ATA 127
- *He is Lord, he is Lord* (Mann) ATN 26
- *I know he rescued my soul / My redeemer lives* (Morgan) AWC2 34
- *Resurrection Shout* (Mann) ATA 160
- *The stone's been rolled away* (Bullock)
- *The victory dance* (Ylvisaker) ATN 35
- *You rescued me* (Bullock) AWC 136

Some Easter songs for children:

- *Don't you know that Jesus died?* ('Katie') sung to the tune *Do-Re-Mi* from 'The Sound of Music'. It's light-hearted, easy to sing, will appeal to the child within most worshippers — www.perputualpreschool.com
- *God's love (that he sent us his Son)* ATN 23
- *I'm happy on the inside* (Reichelt) ATN 28
- *Jesus is alive today* — could appeal to the very youngest worshippers (and the people who care about them), sung to the tune of 'Mary had a little lamb' — www.perputualpreschool.com

ATN – All Together Now

ATA = All Together Again

AWC = Australian Worship Collection

Most of these songs can be found in other collections

THEME SONG

The exploration segment of the sample worship plan uses the song 'Made to Worship', by Stephan Sharp, Ed Cash and Chris Tomlin. The song is recorded on Chris Tomlin's CD *See the Morning*. You can find the lyrics at

- www.hughchou.org/ccm/ct-mtw.html

Good versions on YouTube include:

- <http://au.youtube.com/watch?v=5XS-cc53vX0&feature=related>
- <http://au.youtube.com/watch?v=jkMd603NrM&feature=related>

The song was chosen because it includes several important faith themes that can be explored. You could choose another hymn or worship song (or a creed) to use in the exploration.

WORSHIP LEADERS

The whole-congregation parts service require:

- A **WORSHIP LEADER** who serves as host (or compere) leading worshippers through the service. The role of Worship Leader can be taken by a minister and/or lay person; an individual or two people.

Dora: If you have a young person who can emulate the Dora character from the TV series, give her a role to play in worship leading.

In the sample service, some parts of the **WORSHIP LEADER** script are designated 'Dora' for the second leader.

- **MUSIC TEAM/SONG LEADER** who encourage and lead congregational singing along with instrumentalists and other vocalists.
- A **BIBLE READER** (or several readers of different ages) who reads the texts directly from the Bible.

You may want to consider more visual ways of presenting the texts.

- A **PRAYER LEADER** (or several people of different ages) who prepares and leads prayers.

SMALL GROUP EXPLORATION LEADERS

The small group exploration part of the service requires a leader (Grandparent Explorer) for each family and other groups of three to eight people.

Dora the Explorer never goes anywhere without her trusty backpack.

Your Grandparent Explorers will also have backpacks. See instructions for making a backpack on page 13.

The Easter Explorer backpacks contain:

- A map (see page 19)
The map is rolled up and fastened with a rubber band — not to be opened until exploration time.
- An information sheet for the exploration group leader (see page 19.)
Worship hosts may share this with the leaders before they agree to their role
- An 'Introducing Dora' sheet (see page 20)
Worship hosts may share this with the leaders before they agree to their role
- A set of 16 Clue Cards (see p.16,17)
- Several sticky (Post-it) note papers.

You may also add:

- Crayons or textas and pencils.
Alternatively place these at each site
- A small bag of 'trail mixture' nibbles
- A toy compass or magnifying glass.
You may find these sold as inexpensive party favours.

SERMON

In the sample service the small group exploration takes the place of a sermon.

If you do include a sermon in an all-age service, it should be an all-age sermon.

This means it's short and simple — no more than three points. Stories, illustrations and dialogue can be helpful.

Any of the themes from the exploration activity/theme song could be used in a sermon.

UPSIZING & DOWNSIZING

The *Easter Explorer* service can be used in large or small congregations and can be adapted for use in a home setting.

Each planning group will need to adapt the ideas to suit their own particular situation: the number of people and the size and layout of the facilities.

The whole-congregation parts of the service can be handled as you ordinarily organize worship.

The exploration part of the sample service involves eight belief theme sites. Thinking roughly of two groups of 4-5 people at each site, the sample service would be suitable for a congregation of 60-80 people.

For larger congregations, you will need to allow table space for more groups at each site or add more sites.

For smaller congregations, you can cut down on the number of sites.

The sample service suggests using three spaces: an outdoor or foyer area, your worship space and a hall. If you do not have these spaces, use what you do have. Exploration sites could be in Sunday school rooms, tents outdoors, or around the walls of the worship space.

For a home group it could all be done around a table; or the worship could be done in a lounge or family room, with the exploration at the kitchen table.

REHEARSAL

God, whom you worship, and the families who worship with you deserve an Easter worship experience that is the best you can make it. This requires careful planning. It also requires rehearsal.

A complete walk-through will pinpoint any logistical problems, allow the worship leader/s to fine-tune instructions for the worshipers and ensure that the service itself runs smoothly.

If you expect your hospitality team to play an active role in the service (as in the sample service), be sure to include them in the rehearsal.

Use rehearsal time as an opportunity to pray together.

- Praise God for the amazing good news of Easter. That he demonstrated his love for us and his power through the death and resurrection of Jesus for us.
- Thank God that we are called to worship and that you, as a team, have the privilege of leading people in Easter worship.
- Ask God to bring people to worship who are eager to hear and share the good news of Easter — and people who may come reluctantly, but need to hear the good news.
- Ask God to accept your planning and worship leading as acts of love and service to him.
- Ask God to be with the grandparent explorers/small group leaders and to give them wisdom and openness.
- Ask God to bless your efforts and worth through what you do and say — for his glory and the benefit of all worshippers.

EASTER EXPLORER

SAMPLE WORSHIP PLAN

This service is comprised of three parts:

- (1) A whole-congregation celebration of the Easter event
- (2) Small group exploration of what we believe
- (3) A whole-congregation celebration of what they have discovered in the exploration.

Suggested wording for worship leaders is in *italic print*.

ARRIVAL

1. BEFORE WORSHIP

When people arrive the doors to the worship area are closed.

HOSPITALITY TEAM has a critical role to play as they welcome people to worship. Make sure they understand what they are to do. You may want to increase your normal team with some special **Exploration hosts**.

HOSPITALITY TEAM provides a hospitality table with an Easter morning tea (eg hot cross buns or large pretzels and drinks) outside the building or in a foyer area.

This will allow time for the **Exploration hosts** to circulate and do their special duty for the day: organizing small groups and leaders.

- When families arrive with a grandparent: greet them and give a grandparent an explorer backpack (see page 5). Briefly explain what Grandparent Explorers will be expected to do. You may look at the notes (page 19) and introduction to Dora (page 20) in the backpack. Confirm that the person is willing to take on this responsibility.
- When children arrive with no grandparent: attempt to link them with an older person/couple from your congregation who is there without young children. Use already established friendship relationships where possible. Give an older person an explorer backpack. Briefly explain what Grandparent Explorers will be expected to do. You may look at the notes (page 19) and introduction to Dora (page 20) in the backpack. Confirm that the person is willing to take on this responsibility.
- When people arrive with no children, attempt to form cross-generational groups of three to eight people. Give a reliable group member an explorer backpack.

Briefly explain what Explorer Leaders will be expected to do. You may look at the notes (page 19) and introduction to Dora (page 20) that will be in the backpack. Confirm that the person is willing to take on this responsibility.

PART 1

2. WELCOME /INVOCATION

When most groups are prepared — as soon after the announced start of worship time as possible — the worship leader greets people from the entrance to the worship area. Make sure you have amplification if required.

WORSHIP LEADER: *Happy Easter!*

Easter is a great day to be together as families and as our bigger church family.

Easter is a great day to celebrate that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is alive and with us.

[Dora:] *And today is going to be a great day of exploring what we believe about Jesus, and Easter, and our families.*

Let's go inside and worship Jesus, who died and came back to life for us; the Father, who sent Jesus and the Holy Spirit, who helps us believe this.

HOSPITALITY TEAM opens the doors: *Come in.*

3. OPENING SONG

As people move into the church, instrumentalists of the **MUSIC TEAM** play the first song.

When everyone is in place:

WORSHIP LEADER: *Let's begin our worship with a song.*

Dora: *This song is called 'The Victory Dance'. It's a dance, so why don't you kids move out into the aisle and dance with me.*

If any of you grown-ups can sing and dance at the same time please dance along with us.

MUSIC TEAM leads the congregation in singing 'The Victory Dance' or another Easter song.

Dora leads children in simple dance movement to the song.

4. BIBLE READING #1

WORSHIP LEADER: *Sometimes we believe things because we see them with our own eyes.*

Dora: *And sometimes we don't believe them even when we see them.*

Listen to what happened about seeing and believing on the first Easter:

Note: You may show a video version of the Bible text rather than reading it. Alternatively, show some illustrations of the story as it is read. Extra readers may read the dialogue portions.

BIBLE READER:

John 20:1-9 (NIRV)

Early on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb (where Jesus had been buried). It was still dark.

She saw that the stone had been moved away from the entrance.

So she ran to Simon Peter and another disciple. She said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb! We don't know where they have put him!"

So Peter and another disciple started out for the tomb. Both of them were running. The other disciple ran faster than Peter. He reached the tomb first.

Then Simon Peter arrived. He went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there. He also saw the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself. It was separate from the linen.

The disciple who had reached the tomb first also went inside. He saw and believed.

They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.

WORSHIP LEADER: *That's interesting, 'He saw and believed' but 'they did not understand.'*

Dora: *So, maybe believing isn't the same as understanding.*

The Easter story continues.

BIBLE READER:

John 20:10-18 (selected portions)

The disciples went back to their homes. But Mary stood outside the tomb crying. . . .

Then she turned around and saw Jesus standing there. But she didn't realize that it was Jesus.

"Woman," he said, "why are you crying? Who are you looking for?"

She thought he was the gardener. So she said, "Sir, did you carry him away? Tell me where you put him. Then I will go and get him."

Jesus said to her, "Mary".

She turned toward him. Then she cried out "Teacher".

Jesus said, ". . . Go to those who believe in me. Tell them, I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."

Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news. She said, "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

WORSHIP LEADER: *That's something else interesting about believing.*

Dora: *At first Mary believed that Jesus was dead, so she did not see him when he was right there in front of her — alive.*

Then when she recognized him, she believed that he was live!

Can you just hear how excitedly and joyfully she would have reported: 'I have seen the Lord. He is risen.'

5. EASTER HYMN:

WORSHIP LEADER: *Let's sing this Easter hymn 'He is risen' excitedly and joyfully.*

Dora: *Kids, I'm going to clap whenever the song talks about something great Jesus has done. You can clap along with me.*

MUSIC TEAM leads the congregation in singing 'He is risen, he is risen' (Alexander) or another Easter hymn.

Dora leads children in giving three overhead claps at each point in the hymn that celebrates what Jesus has done.

6. WHAT'S IN THE EGG?

WORSHIP LEADER: *Jesus' coming back to life is exciting. Really exciting.*

But this whole believing business can be a bit confusing. 'Seeing is believing'; 'believing is seeing'.

Maybe it would be easier just to think about Easter eggs.

FIVE ACTORS present the 'What's in the egg?' skit (see page 12).

7. BIBLE READING #2

WORSHIP LEADER: *Remember Peter, the disciple who saw Jesus' empty tomb. He became a preacher and told everybody he could about Jesus coming back to life.*

Dora: *I guess he could be called a reliable witness.*

Here's what he preached some time later:

BIBLE READER (or a costumed Peter actor):

Acts 10:37-43 (NIRV)

"You know what has happened all through Judea. It started in Galilee after John preached about baptism. You know how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. Jesus went around doing good. He healed all who were under the devil's power. God was with him.

"We are witnesses of everything he did in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by nailing him to a cross. But on the third day God raised him from the dead. God allowed Jesus to be seen. But he wasn't seen by all the people. He was seen only by us. We are witnesses whom God had already chosen. We ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.

"He commanded us to preach to the people. He told us to give witness that he is the one appointed by God to judge the living and the dead. All the prophets give witness about him. They say that all who believe in him have their sins forgiven through his name."

6. CONFESSION OF FAITH

WORSHIP LEADER: *Christians from that day on, heard the stories of reliable witnesses and believed what the witnesses said about all that Jesus had done and preached. They wrote down as much as they could, and some of it has been collected in the New Testament of the Bible.*

Christians also put together a brief statement that sums up what we believe. It's called a creed.

Dora: *Creed!? Aha. Did you know that in Spanish and Latin 'credo' means 'I believe'?*

Say it with me: 'credo', 'credo', 'credo'. Each time she says 'credo', Dora hits her chest/heart with her fist to indicate that

believing has more to do with the heart than the head.

WORSHIP LEADER: *Let's say the Apostle's Creed together.*

I believe [credo]
in God the Father, Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth.

I believe [credo]
in Jesus Christ,
his only begotten Son, our Lord:
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate;
was crucified, dead and buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God
the Father Almighty:
from thence he will come
to judge the living and the dead.

I believe [credo]
in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian church:
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body
and the life everlasting.
Amen

7. SONG

WORSHIP LEADER: *We're worshipping the risen Jesus today because you and I were made to worship.*

Listen to this song, and when you feel comfortable, sing along.

MUSIC TEAM leads the congregation in singing 'Made to Worship' or play an electronic version.

This song can be continued softly in the background throughout **Part 2**.

Note: Plan carefully how people will move around as they explore, particularly how to send groups out so there isn't a traffic jam.

PART 2

8. INTRODUCING THE EXPLORATION

WORSHIP LEADER: *Are you ready to do some exploring?*

You'll be moving out in small groups. Each group has an Explorer leader. Remember, it's important for you to stay together with your group, because you're going into new territory.

Dora: *And your leader has the map!*

WORSHIP LEADER *if anyone here does not want to go on an exploration, you are welcome to stay here in your seats. A worship host will bring you some notes to read and think about on your own or to discuss with another person.*

WORSHIP LEADER explains the small group procedure, eg

- take your maps from your backpacks and see what the map tells them to do
- take out your pack of clue cards. These will tell you how to explore each site
- group leaders, you may give one member of the group responsibility for the map and another person responsibility for the cards
- when it's time to return to the worship area you will hear this signal: (demonstrate the bell or musical clue that will call people back to the worship area).

WORSHIP LEADER dismisses groups. Begin with those groups with children then other groups. If people remain who would like to go exploring, form another group.

A **WORSHIP HOST** directs people first to a large cross and reminds them that the clue cards will tell them how to explore this site.

Another **WORSHIP HOST** then directs people to the entrance of the 'tomb' and reminds them that the clue cards will tell them how to explore this site.

A third **WORSHIP HOST** directs people from the tomb area into the main exploration area and invites them to look around, choose the theme they want to explore and then go to that site.

This host gives each group a sheet of poster paper (preferably A-3 size) with as large an egg outline on it as possible. Alternatively the paper can be pre-cut into an egg shape. Groups will record their discoveries on the egg posters as per instructions on their clue cards.

9. SMALL GROUP EXPLORATION ACTIVITY

Allow 20–25 minutes for small groups to work. **WORSHIP HOSTS** circulate to encourage and assist groups.

A **WORSHIP HOST** may stay in the worship area with people who choose not to participate in the exploration activity. Lead them through a Bible study based on the theme texts listed on page 17.

About five minutes before the time is finished, give the signal to finish work and begin moving back into the worship area.

As they return, groups bring their Easter egg poster with them and leave their prayers at the cross.

Note: when people are all back in the worship area, the **PRAYER LEADERS** — as inconspicuously as possible — take the sticky-note prayers from the cross and collate them into a prayer to use later in the service.

PART 3

10. SONG

As people return to the church **MUSIC TEAM** leads the congregation in singing 'Made to Worship' or play an electronic version.

11. REPORT ON THE EXPLORATION

WORSHIP LEADER: *Wow, that was a wonderful exploration experience. I heard people discovering lots of things from one another.*

It's time to share some of what you discovered.

If you have five or fewer groups, invite two representatives of each group to come forward. The youngest child brings their Easter egg poster. The **WORSHIP LEADER** interviews the other person, asking:

- Who was in your group?
- What did you explore?
- What's your symbol?
- What's the most important thing you discovered about what you believe?

If you have six or more groups, ask groups to form clusters of three groups and share the same information.

WORSHIP LEADER: *Thanks everyone. Those were amazing discoveries. And special thanks to all our Grandparent Explorers. We appreciate the experiences and insight you were able to share.*

Let's sing a song that reflects some of the things you discovered.

12. SONG

MUSIC TEAM leads the congregation in singing 'Don't you know that Jesus died' or another children's Easter song.

13. ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORSHIP LEADER makes any necessary brief announcements. Include

- invitation to after-service activities or refreshments
- invitation to further activities and services of the congregation, including prayers for individuals after the service
- suggestion that families who have made Easter egg posters take them home, display them as a reminder of their Easter experience and talk about what they explored and discovered.
- explanation of the way the offering will be used to spread the light of Christ.

14. OFFERING

The offering is collected in your usual manner.

15. PRAYER

PRAYER LEADER/S lead the congregation in a compilation of the prayers handed in by the exploration small groups.

They may add other concerns of the congregation, community, nation and world.

You may conclude with the Lord's Prayer.

16. SONG

Dora: *This last song is another dancing song. So, kids move out into the aisle and dance with me.*

MUSIC TEAM leads the congregation in singing *I know he rescued my soul/My redeemer lives* or another Easter song.

Dora leads children in simple dance movements to the song.

17. BENEDICTION

Use this benediction only if you use the song 'Made to worship'.

WORSHIP LEADER:

Please stand for a final blessing. You may huddle with your family or exploration group: hold hands or put your arms around one another's shoulders.

Repeat each phrase after me:

God has filled our hearts with wonder this Easter,

so that we will always remember:

You and I were made to worship

You and I are called to love

You and I are forgiven and free,

When you and I choose to believe

we will see who we were meant to be.

Go and be who you were meant to be.

Amen.

WHAT'S IN THE EGG?

A SKIT ABOUT BELIEVING

CHARACTERS:

A, B, C and D are people of different ages.
Use their own names.

E is 'Dora' or another Explorer who leads the discussion.

PROPS:

The Explorer has a decorated hard-boiled egg similar to those pictured on the UCA postcard. Have a spare egg — just in case.

INSTRUCTIONS:

This script is a guideline. Improvise the exact words, but keep to the written concept and use the boxed words.

If you use digital projection, show slides of the boxed words as they are spoken.

E (holds up the egg for the congregation to see): What's inside this egg?

Do you know for sure what's inside *this* egg?

The only way to know for sure would be to crack it open and see.

That's about **knowing**.

Believing is not quite the same.

Believing **is being sure without actually seeing**.

E (calls **A** from the congregation to come to look at the egg.): Can you see what's inside this egg?

A: No.

E: So, what's inside?

A: I suspect there's a baby chick just about ready to hatch.

E: Why do you suspect that?

A: Well, it's Easter time and we often see pictures of baby chicks at Easter time.

E: You're basing what you suspect on **tradition**.

Does tradition make you really sure of something? Are you absolutely sure there's a chick in this egg?

A: I guess not. I don't really *believe* it; I just suspect it.

E (calls **B** from the congregation to come to look at the egg.): Can you see what's inside this egg?

B: No.

E: What's in the egg?

B: I'm pretty sure there's a raw runny egg white and yolk inside.

E: Why are you pretty sure of that?

B: I've seen plenty of eggs, and that's what's inside.

E: So, you're pretty sure because of your **experience**.

Does experience make you really sure of something? Are you absolutely sure this is a raw egg inside this shell?

B: I'm pretty sure, but I don't really *believe* it.

E (calls **C** from the congregation to come to look at the egg.): What's in the egg?

C: I guess the egg's empty.

E: Why would you guess it's empty?

C: I guess you're going to break it, and you won't want to make a mess.

E: Do you really trust your **guess**?

Are you absolutely certain the egg is empty?

C: Not absolutely. No. I don't truly *believe* it.

E: Who else?

E (calls **D** from the congregation to come to look at the egg.): What's inside?

D: I believe there's a hard-boiled egg inside.

E: You sound fairly certain. Why do you believe that?

D: Because my mum boiled it and she told me.

E: You're basing your belief on a **reliable witness**.

You can't see inside the egg. Are you absolutely certain it's hard?

D: Yes.

E (to congregation) So:

We've looked at four reasons for believing something.

tradition, **experience**, **guess** and a **reliable witness**

It seems to me that — in the case of this egg, anyway — the best thing to base a belief on is a reliable witness.

Oh, and yes, this is a hard-boiled egg. See.

(**E** cracks the egg.)

MAKE A BACKPACK



Dora the Explorer never goes anywhere without her purple backpack. Your Easter Explorer group leaders will also need backpacks. You could use a large envelope, but it's worth the effort of making something that looks a bit more authentic.

Here's how to make a paper backpack.

See page 5 for a list of contents for your Easter Explorer backpack.

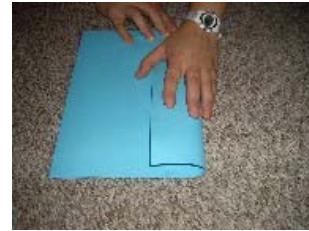
What you need for each backpack:

- An A-3 size sheet of sturdy coloured craft paper or card
- Gift wrap ribbon
- Masking tape (or other strong tape), sticky tape, glue, stapler and staples
- Scissors and a craft blade

You may glue an Easter 'Believe' postcard onto the backpack.

What you do.

1. Fold the ends of the paper to the centre so that they overlap 2–3 cm. The two folds are the sides of the backpack.
2. Open out the paper. Using the fold marks as guides, cut away portions of the paper as shown. This will form the flap at the top of the backpack.
3. On what will be the inside of the backpack, use masking tape to reinforce four spots for threading through ribbon straps. Cut slots with a blade.
4. Cut two lengths of ribbon (Use a 5 or 6 year-old child as a model to help you cut the ribbon to the right length). Thread the ribbon through the slots and tie with a knot on the inside of the backpack.
5. Refold the sides. Glue or tape the ends of the paper together where they overlap.
6. Turn up about 1cm at the bottom of the backpack and staple or tape the bottom closed.
7. Glue on an Easter 'Believe' postcard.
8. Fold down the top flap.



See www.nickjr.co.uk for more information and downloadable backpack and map song sheets.

See www.nickjr.com/parenting/activity_finder/crafts for instructions for making a backpack like Dora's from craft foam.

www.danielsplace.com/html/backtoschoolcrafts.html has a pattern for making a backpack from a paper bag.

EXPLORATION SETUP

All explorers will stop at exploration Site 1 and Site 2.

SITE 1: THE CROSS

This site is located between the worship area and the exploration area. It could be right at the door people will go through as they leave the church.

At the site is a large wooden cross.

SITE 2: THE TOMB

This site is also located between the worship area and the exploration area. It could be right at the door people will go through as they enter the exploration area.

Use your imagination in creating the tomb site. You could use a tent as the basic structure and decorate it to resemble a tomb. Inside the tomb there is a camp bed or low table with linens folded on it.

If possible

- the 'tomb' should have both an entrance and a way out to avoid a bottleneck of people going in and out the same opening
- the front entrance should require adults to bend over to enter
- there could be an entrance-size 'stone' beside the entrance

From the tomb, people move into the main exploration site area where small/family groups can select the theme site they want to explore further.

The number of sites in your exploration area depends on the number of people you expect to have participating.

Each site should be clearly marked with its site theme (see page 15). The site signs should be large enough and placed high enough that people can easily see them from a central area.

The sites should be scattered as widely as possible to allow groups to have discussions without being distracted by other groups.

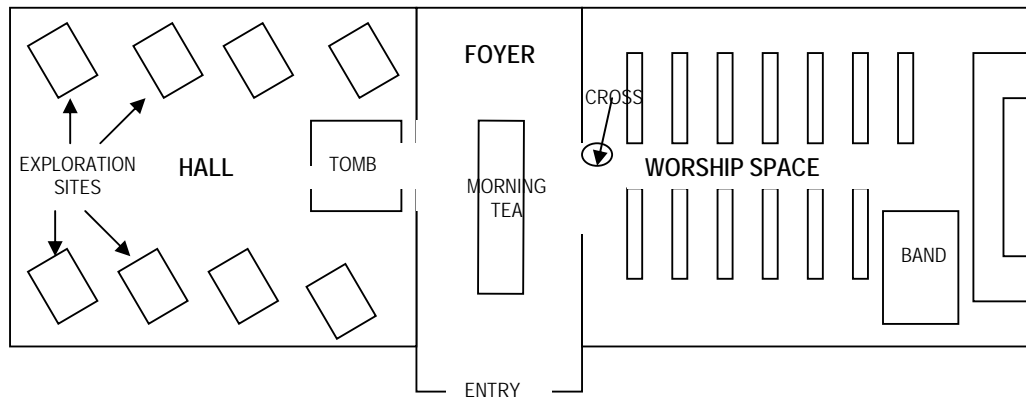
THEME SITES

In addition to its identifying sign, each site should have:

- A table (a card table would accommodate one family/group; a trestle table would accommodate two family groups, add more tables/trestles if necessary).
- One chair per group.
- A poster or large card with selected Bible verses. A Bible per group or the Bible passages printed out on the card.
- Writing materials, unless they are in the leaders' backpacks.

When explorers return to the worship area, they may bypass the tomb, but they will need to go past the cross to leave their prayer papers there.

SAMPLE SET UP



EXPLORATION SITE THEMES

These themes are taken from the song *'Made to Worship'*. You may choose other themes.

Mark each site in your exploration area with a site sign identifying the theme.

Make the signs as large as possible. Display them well above eye level so people can spot them easily as they enter the room.

YOU AND I WERE MADE TO WORSHIP

YOU AND I ARE CALLED TO LOVE

YOU AND I ARE FORGIVEN AND FREE

YOU AND I CAN CHOOSE TO BELIEVE

**ALL WE ARE AND ALL WE HAVE
IS A GIFT FROM GOD**

GOD IS WORTHY OF OUR PRAISE

**GOD HAS FILLED OUR HEARTS
WITH WONDER**

**GOD WROTE THE STORY OF HIS LOVE
FOR YOU AND ME IN THE BIBLE**

EXPLORATION SITE CLUES

Make a copy of these two sheet for each group; cut the cards apart, collate each set of 15 cards with a cover card, fasten with a rubber band and put them in the leaders' backpacks.

<p>EXPLORATION CLUE CARDS</p>	<p>CROSS CLUE 1</p> <p>As you pass the cross, touch it.</p> <p>THEN MOVE TO A SPACE WHERE YOUR GROUP CAN STAND TOGETHER AND LOOK AT THE NEXT TWO CLUES.</p>
<p>CROSS CLUE 2</p> <p>Each person, say one word that describes what the wooden cross felt like or how you felt when you touched the cross.</p>	<p>CROSS CLUE 3</p> <p>One person, tell the rest of the group what you believe the cross has to do with Easter.</p> <p>MOVE ON TO THE TOMB.</p>
<p>TOMB CLUE 1</p> <p>As you pass through the tomb, touch the 'linen' cloths.</p> <p>THEN MOVE TO A SPACE WHERE YOUR GROUP CAN STAND TOGETHER AND LOOK AT THE NEXT TWO CLUES.</p>	<p>TOMB CLUE 2</p> <p>Each person, say one word that describes what the linen felt like or how you felt when you touch the linen.</p>
<p>TOMB CLUE 3</p> <p>One person, tell the rest of the group what you believe the tomb has to do with Easter.</p> <p>WHEN YOU HAVE COMPLETED THIS CLUE GIVE YOURSELVES A HIGH FIVE AND SAY 'HAPPY EASTER! MOVE ON TO CHOOSE A THEME SITE TO EXPLORE.</p>	<p>THEME SITE CLUE 1</p> <p>Write the names of the people in your group around the outside of your Easter egg poster.</p> <p>Each person, tell something special about one other person in the group.</p> <p>WHEN YOU HAVE COMPLETED THIS CLUE GIVE YOURSELVES A HIGH FIVE AND SAY 'HAPPY EASTER!'</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">THEME SITE CLUE 2</p> <p>Say the belief theme on your site sign together three times. Each person, tell which word you think is the most important. Write all your 'most important words' on your Easter egg poster.</p> <p>WHEN YOU HAVE COMPLETED THIS CLUE GIVE YOURSELVES A HIGH FIVE AND SAY 'HAPPY EASTER!'</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">THEME SITE CLUE 3</p> <p>Think of a simple picture or symbol that shows what this belief means to you. Draw your symbol in the middle of your Easter egg poster. If you can't agree on one symbol, you can draw more than one.</p> <p>WHEN YOU HAVE COMPLETED THIS CLUE GIVE YOURSELVES A HIGH FIVE AND SAY 'HAPPY EASTER!'</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">THEME SITE CLUE 4</p> <p>Check one or more of the Bible references at your site. One person, write the Bible reference on your Easter egg poster. Another, find and read the Bible verse. Another, tell — in their own words — what it means to you.</p> <p>WHEN YOU HAVE COMPLETED THIS CLUE GIVE YOURSELVES A HIGH FIVE AND SAY 'HAPPY EASTER!'</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">THEME SITE CLUE 5</p> <p>Talk about the swipers — things in life that might steal away this belief in your life. Draw an X on your Easter egg poster for each swiper you identify.</p> <p>WHEN YOU HAVE COMPLETED THIS CLUE GIVE YOURSELVES A HIGH FIVE AND SAY 'HAPPY EASTER!'</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">THEME SITE CLUE 6</p> <p>Find a storyteller's chair. Gather around it. The oldest person in the group, sit on the chair and tell a story about how this belief has influenced your life. Any other member of the group can also share their story.</p> <p>WHEN YOU HAVE COMPLETED THIS CLUE GIVE YOURSELVES A HIGH FIVE AND SAY 'HAPPY EASTER!'</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">THEME SITE CLUE 7</p> <p>Gather around a storyteller's chair. Each person, try to think of something this belief has to do with Easter. Sit in the chair to tell what you have discovered about this theme and Easter.</p> <p>WHEN YOU HAVE COMPLETED THIS CLUE GIVE YOURSELVES A HIGH FIVE AND SAY 'HAPPY EASTER!'</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">THEME SITE CLUE 8</p> <p>Use a sticky note to write a praise prayer to God about this belief and/or about Easter and/or about your group/family. Later, when you go back into the church, put the prayer on the cross.</p> <p>WHEN YOU HAVE COMPLETED THIS CLUE GIVE YOURSELVES A HIGH FIVE AND SAY 'HAPPY EASTER!'</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">THEME SITE CLUE 9</p> <p>Use a sticky note to write a petition (asking prayer) to God about this belief and/or about Easter and/or about your group/family. Later, when you go back into the church, put the prayer on the cross.</p> <p>WHEN YOU HAVE COMPLETED THIS CLUE GIVE YOURSELVES A HIGH FIVE AND SAY 'HAPPY EASTER!'</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">THEME SITE CLUE 10</p> <p>Reread your site theme. Each person, think about the theme. Do you believe? If you believe, draw a heart beside your name on your team's egg poster.</p> <p>WHEN YOU HAVE COMPLETED THIS CLUE GIVE YOURSELVES A HIGH FIVE AND SAY 'HAPPY EASTER!'</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">THEME SITE CLUE 11</p> <p>Make up a secret sign — gestures, not words — that your group can use to remind yourselves of this belief. Practice your secret sign.</p>

THEME SITE BIBLE PASSAGES

These Bible references relate to themes from the song 'Made to worship'. If you are exploring other themes, you will need to find other Bible passages.

Looking at one or two Bible 'proof texts' is not an in-depth exploration of a faith theme, but it is a good starting point. In the limited time of a single service it is all that can be managed effectively.

Have a posters or large card with the related Bible references at each theme site.

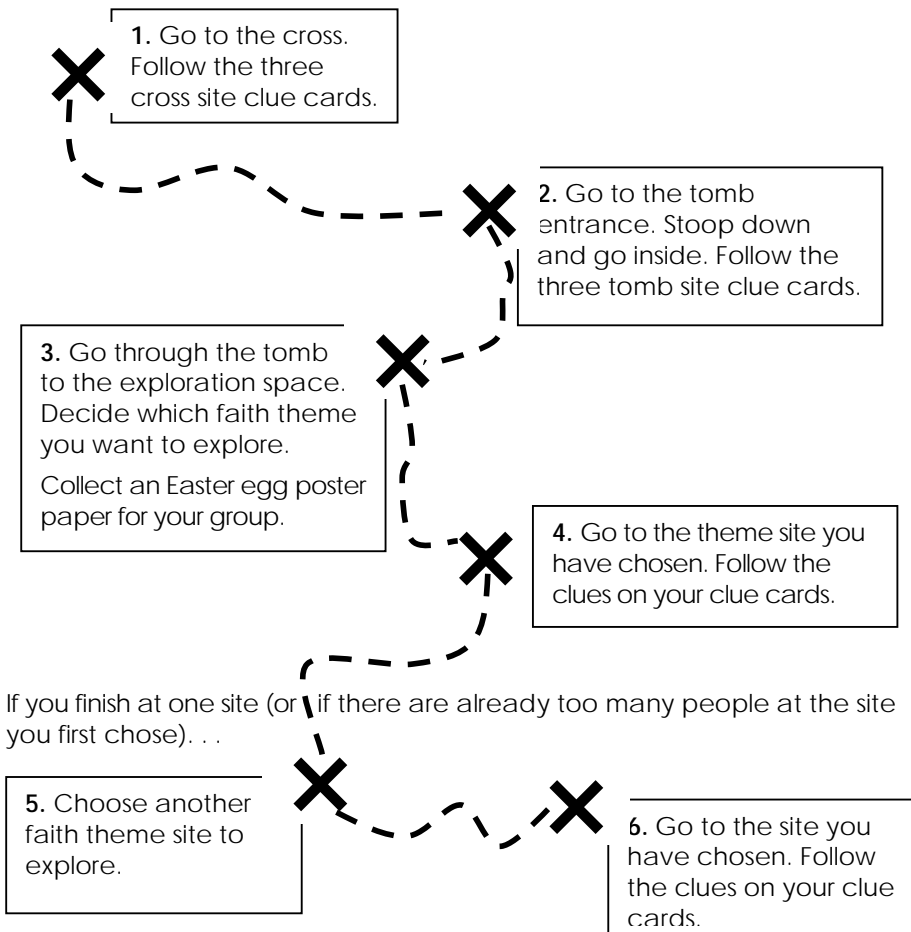
← *Romans 12:9,10*

Mark Bibles with a sticky note bookmark (like the sample) showing the location of each of the passages. Alternatively, you could print out the texts.

<p>YOU AND I WERE MADE TO WORSHIP</p> <p>John 4:23,24 (see 21–24) Deuteronomy 6:13 (see 12–18) Acts 17:23 (see 22–31)</p>	<p>YOU AND I ARE CALLED TO LOVE</p> <p>Romans 12:9,10 1 John 4:19 (see 7–21) 1 Corinthians 13:1 (see 1–7)</p>
<p>YOU AND I ARE FORGIVEN AND FREE</p> <p>Psalms 32:5 Psalm 103:3 (see 1–13) Revelation 1:5 John 8:34–36 Acts 10:43</p>	<p>YOU AND I CAN CHOOSE TO BELIEVE</p> <p>Joshua 24:14,15 1 John 5:1 (see 1–4) Hebrews 11:1 Acts 15:9 (see 6–9)</p>
<p>ALL WE ARE AND ALL WE HAVE IS A GIFT FROM GOD</p> <p>John 1:3 (see 1–3) Psalm 139:13,14 Hebrews 11:3 Psalm 145:15,16</p>	<p>GOD IS WORTHY OF OUR PRAISE</p> <p>Psalm 18:3 Psalm 147:1 (see 1–5) Deuteronomy 10:21 (see 1–21)</p>
<p>GOD HAS FILLED OUR HEARTS WITH WONDER</p> <p>Psalm 145:5 (see 1–7) Revelation 15:3,4 Job 5:9 Psalm 139:6 (see 1–6, 17)</p>	<p>GOD WROTE THE STORY OF HIS LOVE FOR YOU AND ME IN THE BIBLE</p> <p>John 3:16,17 John 20:30,31 2 Timothy 3:16 (see 15–17) Romans 15:4 Luke 1:1,2</p>

EASTER EXPLORER

YOUR MAP FOR EXPLORING WHAT YOU BELIEVE AT EASTER



EASTER EXPLORER

NOTES FOR EXPLORATION LEADERS

Thank you for agreeing to be an exploration leader.

Our service today has three parts.

1) When we go into the church we will worship together as a whole congregation — in much the same way as we do every week. Your responsibility in this part of the service is to sit with your group and encourage everyone to participate as they are able.

2) In the middle part of the service we will break into small groups to explore what we believe at Easter.

You will be the leader of your group. You will have the backpack and the map, but you may ask another member of your group to hold them for you.

The map is your guide for the exploration. Follow the map, first to a cross, then to an empty tomb, then to your choice of theme sites to explore.

At the sites you use your clue cards for exploring what you believe.

You will use an egg-shaped poster for recording your discoveries.

You will have about half an hour for this exploration. There will be a signal about 5 minutes before the end of the time.

Select two people to share your findings during the third part of the service: one of the youngest to show your poster, one of the oldest to tell briefly about what you have discovered.

3) After the exploration we will come together again to report on our explorations and to finish our worship.

EXPLORE × SHARE × DO × TALK × ENJOY × BELIEVE

INTRODUCING DORA THE EXPLORER

(for those who haven't met her yet)

Dora the Explorer is an animated television program that airs in Adelaide weekends early in the morning on Chanel 9. It is a favourite of 2-5 year old children.

The show is designed to actively engage preschoolers in a play-along, CD ROM-style quest. In every episode Dora invites viewers to participate in an exciting adventure to find something or help somebody.

Some things Easter Explorer Leaders can learn from Dora.

- Dora tells the viewer how they can help her on the quest.
- She treats everyone equally and mainly sees the good in each person — even **Swiper the Fox** who regularly attempts to steal items that help Dora on her adventures.
- Dora encourages compromise rather than conflict.
- Dora is very kind and will always give others a chance to try their hands at certain tasks even when she herself could do it faster and/or more accurately.
- Dora expresses her beliefs and traditions but does not force them on others.
- Dora openly loves her family.
- **Boots the Monkey** is Dora's best friend and accompanies her on her adventures. Boots tends to react quickly to situations, while Dora helps viewers think things through.
- Whenever Dora and Boots are successful in a portion of their quest the **Fiesta Trio** (a snail, a grasshopper, and a frog) congratulate them.
- Dora's purple **Backpack** contains whatever Dora needs to complete her quests.
- The **Map** provides travel guidance and advice.

