

CTBI WPCU 2018

All-age supplementary materials to the Opening worship service

Preparation

Make a display which blends the Exodus story and the story of the Caribbean. Use blue sheeting or cloths to suggest the sea with some pictures of Moses leading the people of Israel across the water (e.g. from <http://freebibleimages.org/illustrations/moody-moses-red-sea/>) and some images of slavery in the Caribbean. Arrange some chains and padlocks on it.

You will also need:

- strips of paper to make paper chains;
- a large transparent bowl with water and a pile of small stones; the water will need to be sufficiently deep and the stones heavy enough to make a reasonable sound as they are dropped in.

Film and musical resources

Amazing Grace: the film story of William Wilberforce

<http://www.amazinggracemovie.com/> Download the clip entitled 'madagascar'.

Music: *Let my people go*. A well-known song of African slaves as they worked in the sugar cane plantations and thought of the people of Israel in slavery.

Hymns: *We are marching in the light of Christ, Amazing grace, Give me oil in my lamp*.

Alternative words of introduction

This service has been prepared by the people of the Caribbean. The Caribbean islands lie in the sea between North and South America. Some of them were badly damaged by Hurricane Irma in September last year. Two hundred years ago the people of the Caribbean were caught in the grip of slavery, which took away their dignity and freedom. Slaves were chained and harshly treated and sometimes taken miles away to England. Slavery like this ended in 1807 but the scars of slavery are still there. The people of the Caribbean are still paying money that they owe richer nations. Some of this was money that was borrowed to grow the crops to sell to those richer nations. Owing money puts pressure on the countries of the Caribbean which in turn makes family life very difficult. Families are split as people leave to find work elsewhere. People also turn to drugs and become violent. Though slavery as it was known in the past has ended in the Caribbean, people are still being abused by modern slavery in many places today. The people of the Caribbean Churches work together to heal the wounds of the past, and present, and they have a song to sing of freedom, freedom for themselves and for others.

Gathering

As people arrive invite them to make paper chains to add to the display (see *Preparation* above).

Proclamation of the word of god

The Old Testament reading can be read by the whole congregation. The script below could be projected or printed out in a service sheet. You will need one person as the Narrator. For parts A and B various options are possible: divide the congregation into two equal groups and ask one group to read A and one group to read B; or designate two smaller groups from the congregation to be A and B; or one person could read A and the rest of the congregation respond as B. Everyone reads out the parts for ALL.

During the reading a few people could drop stones into the water at the beginning of each section (see *Preparation* above). The sound might suggest the sinking of the horses and riders of Egypt.

Exodus 15: 1-17

Narrator: Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord:

A: 'I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.

B: The Lord is my strength and my might, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him.

ALL: **The Lord is a warrior; the Lord is his name.**

Narrator: 'Pharaoh's chariots and his army he cast into the sea; his picked officers were sunk in the Red Sea. The floods covered them; they went down into the depths like a stone. Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power— your right hand, O Lord, shattered the enemy. In the greatness of your majesty you overthrew your adversaries; you sent out your fury, it consumed them like stubble. At the blast of your nostrils the waters piled up, the floods stood up in a heap; the deeps congealed in the heart of the sea. The enemy said, "I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil, my desire shall have its fill of them. I will draw my sword; my hand shall destroy them." You blew with your wind, the sea covered them; they sank like lead in the mighty waters.'

ALL: **The Lord is a warrior; the Lord is his name.**

A: 'Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods?

B: Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in splendour, doing wonders? You stretched out your right hand, the earth swallowed them. 'In your steadfast love you led the people whom you redeemed; you guided them by your strength to your holy abode.'

ALL: **The Lord is a warrior; the Lord is his name.**

Narrator: Listen and you will be set free.

ALL: **Thanks be to God.**

The epistle reading lends itself to a mime.

Romans 8:12-27

The song, *Let my people go*, could be played or sung before the reading as one person leads a chain of people around the church until they are standing at the front. The chain of people represents the slavery chains of the Caribbean; the actions represent the freedom in Christ of which St Paul writes. These people can then complement the reading miming the specified actions. This will probably need some rehearsal. The congregation can be invited to copy the movements if they wish.

So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; (*put head on hands*) but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. (*open eyes, join hands and walk forwards one step*) For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’ (*lift hands towards ceiling*) it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, (*rock arms as if holding baby*) and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing (*cup hands over eyes as if looking out, cup hands behind ears as if listening out*) for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free (*open arms wide and lift heads up*) from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience (*fold hands together*).

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, (*put hands together as in prayer*) but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, (*cross hands over heart*) knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

Listen, that all may be free.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel reading Mark 5:21-43

If PowerPoint is possible, MAFA pictures could be projected to show Jesus walking and talking and then healing Jairus’ daughter. The MAFA paintings of the Life of Christ were painted in the 1970s showing Jesus as an African living in an African context. It was a project by the French catholic Missionary, François Vidil, with Mafa Christian communities in north eastern Cameroon. The pictures were staged in African villages, photographed and then painted by artist Bénédicte de la Roncière. Using these pictures can show the ethnic diversity of Christians and remind us of the freedom promised to all God’s people. You can find some on the Vanderbilt Library website: <http://www.library.vanderbilt.edu/>

Homily / sermon / reflection

Alternative informal talk for all ages

Unlocking the gift

Preparation

Fill four boxes with the following:

Box 1 – a pair of old fashioned balance scales

Box 2 – bandages, plasters, medicine bottles and spoon, or a first aid kit

Box 3 – an anchor or picture of an anchor cut out and stuck on card, or laminated

Box 4 – a chain of hands cut from paper folded into a concertina.

Secure each box with either a real padlock and key, e.g. a bicycle chain and padlock, or pretend ones. Attach a card to each of the four keys. The cards have a word written on clearly: box 1 Justice, box 2 Healing, box 3 Hope, box 4 Community. If you use pretend locks and keys, make up a system, e.g. matching colours, so that the 'right' key can be found for each padlock.

Today we remember those people of the Caribbean whose ancestors were owned by other people as slaves. They were locked up in chains, unable to move either fast or very far. They longed to be free. In our Old Testament story, in the time of Moses, over three thousand years ago, the people of Israel were slaves to the Egyptian Pharaoh. They were also kept in chains and were unable to go home.

This morning I have four boxes, and they are all locked. The chains and the locks on these boxes remind us of all people who long for freedom and to know the good gifts which God brings. Inside these boxes are things to remind us of those good gifts which bring freedom. Ask, 'What do you think might be in them? What can bring freedom to people?'

Invite someone to come and find the right key to a box. Use the following scripts depending on the order the boxes are opened. After each section someone is invited to come and open the next box.

The scales of justice

Our readings have shown us people in slavery. The Israelites were slaves in Egypt until God called Moses to bring them out of Egypt. The people of the Caribbean were made slaves to those who wanted cheap goods, and showed no care for the people they made slaves. They bought and sold them taking away their self-respect and dignity. People are still trapped in places where they are treated badly, prevented from going home, treated like slaves. The people of the Caribbean today are showing justice and mercy to their neighbours in Haiti. The prophet Micah reminds us all that we should, 'act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God'. Justice brings freedom.

The bandages or first aid kit

In the Bible we hear that Jesus healed a young girl and an older woman. Both were slaves in a different way. They were trapped and lonely. The parents of the little girl were trapped, afraid of the future without their daughter. The woman was afraid because of her bleeding no one would come

near her. The slaves in the Caribbean were badly treated and often needed someone to bathe their wounds, to care for them when they were beaten and sick.

Jesus healed the woman, and the bleeding stopped, so she could go back to her friends and family. The little girl was brought back from life and her family were not afraid. The slaves felt so much better when they were treated with kindness and compassion and their wounds were healed. Healing brings freedom.

The anchor

Our God is faithful and unchanging. He is a God who brought hope to the Israelites, hope to the slaves, hope through his death and resurrection. So many people long for hope today. The anchor is a symbol of hope. In the film, *Amazing Grace*, set in the 18th century, some people were shown a slave ship called the Madagascar. It was hanging with the chains used to chain the slaves, it smelt of death and disease and sickness. When the people saw the Madagascar anchored in the river Thames they knew that the slave trade had to be abolished. When we feel trapped, lonely or afraid, God brings us hope. We can be people who bring hope to others. The God of hope brings us joy and peace. Hope brings freedom.

The chain of hands

Many different people brought about the end of slavery. Changes can be made when people work together to help others. Today the people of the Caribbean are helping the people on the island of Haiti who are still suffering the effects of a massive earthquake in 2010. There are people and families in many countries who struggle to find enough food to eat, and safe places to live. Together we can reach out to care for others and change our world. Here the chains of slavery have changed into chains of hands, chains which brought fear are now chains which bring hope. Caring communities bring freedom.

The boxes are all unlocked; let us pray that in God's love we can bring freedom to all.

Prayers of the people

The Taizé chant, *The Kingdom of God is justice and peace*, could be sung as a response between each prayer.

During the final song the paper chains made at the beginning of the service are taken from the display and distributed amongst the congregation.

Commissioning

The commissioning words are said and at the final words, *Amen! Alleluia!*, the chains are broken to represent freedom.

These resources have been written by the Revd Canon Ruth Pyke, on behalf of ROOTS for Churches Ltd, www.rootsontheweb.com.