

Creation in **CRISIS**

A time for prayer and action



LOAF Service

A service of worship based on the Christian Ecology Link's LOAF Principles
(a shared meal can be incorporated)

Photo: William.n

Written by Ellen Teague for Churches Together in Britain and Ireland

The following service is suitable for small Christian groups who would like to share prayer, discussion and, possibly, a simple meal. It could be particularly suitable for a local Churches Together event around Harvest/Creation Time.

The service includes the option of actually sharing a simple meal together, using food and drink based on Christian Ecology Link's LOAF principles, that is food which is:

Locally produced, Organically grown, Animal Friendly and Fairly traded.

There is an option of using images provided for a Powerpoint presentation which could serve as a backdrop.

The service can also be used by groups who would like to use the questions for quiet, individual reflection.

Possible hymns

*All creatures of our God and king
God in his love for us lent us this planet*

*You shall go out with joy
Jubilate Deo (Taize chant)*

Could play at beginning or end

*All Good Gifts from 'Godspell'
I will tread the earth lightly (Celtic chant from Lindisfarne)
Bread of Life by Boyce and Stanley*

Setup

It is recommended that participants sit in a circular arrangement and that all are encouraged to participate. While Leader 1 guides the group through the service as a whole, Leaders 2 and 3 lead reflections and prayers. The passages from scripture could be allocated to others present.

It is suggested that a small table with a colourful table cloth is placed centrally, and on it a lit candle and a loaf of bread. The first signifies the light of Christ and the second the fruitfulness of the earth which provides our food.

Credits

Ellen Teague is part of the Columban JPIC Team and writes on Justice, Peace and Ecology issues.
Thanks to CEL for its resources on the LOAF principles www.christian-ecology.org.uk.



Introduction

[Powerpoint: Image of woman at a UK allotment](#)

Leader 1:

Photo: Jeremy Keith 

At this time of year, when we celebrate the harvest, we thank God for the food which nourishes us. It is our food and drink that most immediately connect us with the natural world. But do we really acknowledge this and appreciate the gifts of God's creation?

Let us reflect, perhaps in twos or threes:

- What are our favourite foods?
- Are they 'healthy' foods? Where do they come from?
- How often do we buy local produce and/or buy ethically?
- Do we grow any of our own food?

Penitential

[Powerpoint: Image of chickens in cages](#)

Leader 2:

The LOAF principles urge us to eat what is Locally produced, Organically grown, Animal Friendly and Fairly traded. As we meet to worship God our Creator, we are conscious of the human and environmental costs of the great amount and variety of food available to us.

Let us acknowledge the sins of our society and our own involvement in plundering the earth's gifts without respecting God's Creation.

[Powerpoint: Image of bottle mountain](#)

Leader 3:

We want every kind of fruit and vegetable, in season or not and regardless of the food miles involved. Wasteful transportation of food, especially by air, contributes to greenhouse gas emissions and human-induced climate change. Excessive packaging and bottling consumes unnecessary energy and fills landfill sites.

For the times when we have failed to appreciate the environmental costs of our food and drink and not supported local food producers.

All: Lord, have mercy

[Powerpoint: Image of dead fish](#)

Leader 2:

Industrial agriculture has environmental costs which are often overlooked. Hedgerows have been torn up, soil has lost its fertility, land and rivers have been poisoned by chemicals and wildlife discarded. We are now in danger of changing the biology of food forever, reaping unforeseen consequences with patented genetically modified crops controlled by transnational corporations.

For the times when we have lacked humility in our relationship with creation.

All: Christ, have mercy

[Powerpoint: Image of pigs in cages](#)

Leader 3:

We have inflicted great cruelty on farm animals, particularly through widespread factory farming, and yet we hardly give it a thought as we purchase such things as packs of chicken breasts and special offer sausages at supermarkets.

For the times when we have been indifferent to the ill treatment of God's creatures in the cause of providing us with cheap food.

All: Lord, have mercy

[Powerpoint: Image of crop being sprayed](#)

Leader 2:

We have long benefitted from and tolerated unfair trade which has damaged the development prospects of low income countries and poor communities in the global south. In today's world millions still die of starvation every year.

For the times when we have turned a blind eye to exploitation and enjoyed food products from producers working in slave like conditions and receiving meager wages.

All: Christ, have mercy

[Powerpoint: Image of landfill site](#)

Leader 1:

Creation is groaning as the earth is plundered without thought to the well-being of future generations. For these sins, which have all contributed towards placing creation in crisis, we ask forgiveness from the Lord.

Amen

Readings from the Old Testament

[Powerpoint: Image of garden in Philippines](#)

Genesis 9.3

Every moving thing that lives shall be **food** for you; and just as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything.

Proverbs 12.11

Those who till their land will have plenty of **food**, but those who follow worthless pursuits have no sense.

Proverbs 13.23

The field of the poor may yield much **food**, but it is swept away through injustice

Isaiah 25.6

On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich **food**, a feast of well-matured wines, of rich **food** filled with marrow.

Ezekiel 47.12

On the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for **food**. Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail.

Pause – Time for quiet reflection and then sharing insights from these readings

Readings from the New Testament

[Powerpoint: Image of bread](#)

Matthew 14.19

Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five **loaves** and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the **loaves**, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.

Matthew 26.26

While they were eating, Jesus took a **loaf** of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, ‘Take, eat; this is my body.’

Acts of the Apostles 2.46

Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their **food** with glad and generous hearts.

Pause – Time for quiet reflection and then sharing insights from these readings

Shared meal

At this point a simple meal could be shared, after the following prayer:

Leader 1:

Lord, thank you for the opportunity to share this meal together.
Send your Spirit to bless these gifts which you give us to sustain our lives.

We thank you for them, and for all your blessings,
in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Bring forward an organic wholemeal loaf and other simple food which follows, as far as possible, the LOAF principles and then share them.

Let us reflect during the meal, perhaps in twos or threes:

- Consider memorable meals from your past. What made them special?
- How far was it the food or the people you shared the food with?
- Consider how often Jesus shared meals with his friends.
- How important is it to sit round a table for a meal?

Gratitude for God's gift of food

[Powerpoint: Image of allotment produce](#)

Leader 1:

Let us show gratitude for God's gifts.

The rich soil, the smell of the fresh-turned earth

All: come from God

The sounds of animals and birds who share our world

All: come from God

The touch of fresh apples picked in the orchard

All: come from God

The sight of vegetables of all shapes and colours laid out on a market stall

All: come from God

The taste of fresh grilled fish

All: come from God

(Other gifts can be added in, followed by

All: come from God)

Leader 1:

Blessed be God in all the gifts of Creation

All: Amen

Let us say together the Lord's Prayer, which refers to "Our Daily Bread"

The Lord's Prayer is said.

Intercessions

Leader 1:

Let us pray to God.

[Powerpoint: Image of Live Simply event](#)

Leader 2:

We pray for your people, that we may learn to share and conserve your gifts, live in reverence for creation and in harmony with one another. Let us take this opportunity to review our lives, to recycle more and to try and live more simply.

Lord of Creation

All: Hear our prayer

[Powerpoint: Image of poor child living off rubbish dump](#)

Leader 3:

We pray for the strength to tackle injustice, that all may one day come to share lives of wholeness and plenty. Give us hope and faith in your presence in the world.

Lord of Creation

All: Hear our prayer

[Powerpoint: Image of Sr Dorothy Stang](#)

Leader 2:

We pray for those prophets among the Christian community who have even put their lives at risk to protect sustainable livelihoods and the well-being of small farmers worldwide.

[People such as Sr Dorothy Stang, who was murdered in Brazil's Amazon rainforest in 2005 for trying to protect the forest and sustainable livelihoods for communities there]¹

Lord of Creation

All: Hear our prayer

[Powerpoint: Image of cleaning up the environment](#)

Leader 3:

Show us how to treat the natural world with care and respect, as we live in anticipation of the world as it could be, when your kingdom comes and your will is done.

Lord of Creation

All: Hear our prayer

¹ Include if using Powerpoint

Closing prayer

[Powerpoint: Image of women collecting water](#)

Leader 2:

Most gracious God, who gives the fruits of the earth for the benefit of all your creatures, we give thanks to you for abundant harvests and plentiful food. We pray for those who are denied these gifts, and we seek your forgiveness for our complicity in their want. We pray for those whose voices are not heard and for those who do not hear. Forgive us when our choices are selfish ones, and when we ignore the need for sustainability in human relations with the natural world.

[Powerpoint: Image of African woman with crop](#)

Leader 3:

Most of all, God, we give you thanks for the revelation of your love in Jesus Christ, who loved this world and came that everyone might have abundant life in a life-sustaining environment.

We pray in Jesus' name.

All: Amen

Blessing

[Powerpoint: Image of green countryside](#)

Leader 1:

May the hopes of farmers here and overseas be fulfilled in a plentiful harvest.

May sufficient food reach those who are hungry today.

May the hearts of those who are destroying the environment be moved to reconcile with Creation.

May young people everywhere be taught to appreciate the gifts of God's Creation.

May you be fed with wholesome food and have the sensitivity to love that small part of creation entrusted to you.

All: Amen

Conclude with the Sharing of Peace

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Dried mud texture: Ioan Sameli 