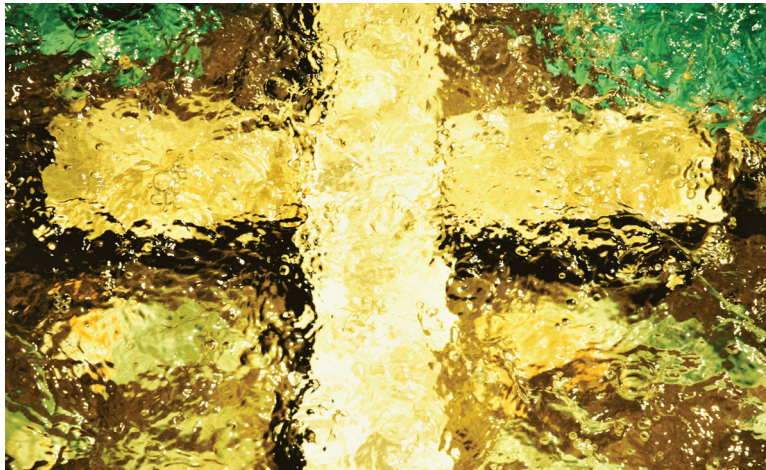


Leaders notes



Jesus deliberately chose to cross Samaria on his way to Judea in Galilee. His route passed by the well of the Samaritan woman who came there to draw water. The Brazilian ecumenical group that prepared the celebration invites us to use these two symbols of the route and water as images of the visible Christian unity for which we pray. The local group invites us to reflect on these initial questions that give shape to the celebration:

- Which is the path of unity, the route we should take, so that the world may drink from the source of life, Jesus Christ?
- Which is the path of unity that gives proper respect to our diversity?

On this path of unity, there is a well filled with water: both the water sought by Jesus, tired on the way, and also the water given by him, springing up to eternal life. The water drawn by the Samaritan woman in her daily task is the water that quenches thirst, the water that makes the desert bloom. The water that Jesus gives is the water over which the Spirit of God hovered, the living water in which we were baptized.

The liturgy has been prepared by members of different church traditions in Brazil. It is redolent with interconnected themes from their experience for praise, prayer and sorrow. There is an integrity to what has been prepared. These notes aim to help church groups from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales to use the Brazilian material well. A cut and paste approach to the text is not advised but some logistical adaptation to the worship space and local community may be required.

Preparation Notes

1. Planning Group

- Arrange for a local planning group to meet where the service will take place several weeks beforehand. Three or four people are sufficient. They should represent varied traditions, and ideally include the preacher and a musician.
- Walk through the service, reading aloud the spoken words as you go, considering the movements and actions. Particular attention should be given to include those with impaired hearing and people with disabilities so that they can fully participate in the celebration.
- Discuss how this service captures something of the unity, grace of God, and brokenness that you experience within and between your local churches.

2. Arranging the Space

- Consider the possibility of hosting this service not in a church building, but in a public space (community hall) which may be more accessible to those unfamiliar with church.
- In the worship space, a central path can be arranged with candles, flowers and colourful pieces of cloth, leading to the front of the assembly. The 'path' is laid to symbolise the path of life to the well. The path may be used in the



preparation of the confession of sins. People come from different parts of the assembly on the way to express petitions for forgiveness.

- In the centre of the path, or at the front of the worship space, a large basin is placed to contain the water.
- The celebrants may enter in procession along the path. Passing near the ‘well’, each water carrier will slowly pour the water from a jug into the bowl. This water, from different sources and/or in different styles of jugs, is a symbol of our unity, already present though incomplete and hidden from our eyes. This gesture should be introduced at the beginning of the celebration and may be commented upon in the preaching.
- If microphones are needed, work out the practicalities. If a hearing aid loop is in use make sure every participant is near a microphone.

3. Leaders

More or fewer voices than those suggested below can be used.

Voices 1 and 2: these voices focus on the theme of the water, which is why they will say most of their words from in front of the large bowl of water at the front. Voice 1 will begin at the back of the church, with Voice 2 beginning at the front.

Voices 3 and 4: these voices will lead prayers from one or more microphones.

Voice 5: if the Gospel text is being read by one voice, this is Voice 5.

Candle lighters: one or more people can light the candles. These should be set out along a ‘path’ from the back to the front of the worship space. If a single candle is lit at the front, the candle lighter can move from the back to light a taper, then return to the back of the space and light the candles from the back. Make sure you comply with any local health and safety regulations. When the time comes, candles should be lit progressively from the back. Silence is held as the candles are lit.

Water Pourers: water pourers begin at the back of the worship space and, once the water is poured, take their seats in the congregation.

Once all the above roles have been allocated, ensure that scripts are marked up for each one, highlighting their words, describing their movements and clarifying from where they will speak.

4. Use of Language

We have maintained translations from the original Portuguese. We have attempted to use gender non-specific language in the order of service, except where we have quoted traditional prayers. We acknowledge the pain and misunderstanding that the use of language can cause.

5. Sermon/Meditation

There are several options depending on the size of the celebrating group:

- A sharing based on the initial questions in small groups, followed by returning to the assembly.
- A homily or sermon that focusses on the gospel and takes into account the initial questions.

6. Bible Reading

The passage from John 4: 1-42, which is rarely read in its entirety in worship, is at the heart of this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. There are many ways in which this passage could be ‘read’:

- By one voice.
- By two or three voices from different parts of the worship space.
- Enacted as a dramatization.

- Read as a 'Remembered Bible': for this, the leader would simply invite members of the congregation to share what they remember of the story of the woman at the well. This is not a test, but rather an invitation to share together our wisdom, what stands out for us in the story, what we remember and what we don't remember. This could be followed by a brief summary of the reading. See 'Word of Mouth' by Janet Lees:
www.ionabooks.com/word-of-mouth-downloadable-book.html

7. Additional Prayers

During the prayers of intercession there is an invitation to the local community to add other prayers, after which the chant may be sung.

8. Offering

Local communities are invited to organise the offerings according to local tradition. We suggest that offerings be brought and placed on top of a colourful cloth at the front of the worship space. While the offertory takes place, a song is sung, chosen by the local organising team. It may be particularly appropriate to give towards the relief of need and poverty in the light of the various activities in the 'Go and Do' section on the CTBI website (www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo)

9. Music

Brazilian worship songs are included in the booklet, reminding us of the origin of this material. They are easy to learn and sing - we would encourage congregations to have a go. However, other songs may be substituted. The hymns and songs at the beginning and end of the service should be chosen to be familiar to the congregation. The opening hymn should be of a gathering nature and the closing hymn should be missional.

10. Orders of Service

Pre-printed versions of the order of service are available at reasonable cost from www.ctbi.org.uk/wpcuresources. The service can also be downloaded from here. Arrange for photocopying of the order of service as necessary. All the text of the congregational order of service is available on a PowerPoint also from www.ctbi.org.uk/wpcuresources.

11. Rehearsal

Arrange a rehearsal shortly before the service. Leaders and participants are likely to be unsure of what is expected of them if they are away from their usual worship venue.

12. Hospitality

On the day of the service, hospitality will be important. Ecumenism means nothing if people do not feel welcomed. The Gospel at the heart of this service is about the hospitality offered to Jesus by a Samaritan woman and his offer of living water to her. Sharing of food and drink is a particularly appropriate response to follow this act of worship.

Structure of the Celebration

The celebration has five parts:

- I. Prelude/preparation
- II. Opening
Welcome and introduction to the Week of Prayer theme
Confession of sins and Kyrie
- III. Gospel proclamation
Meditation or sermon
- IV. We respond in faith and unity
Affirmation of faith
Intercessory prayer
Offering
The Lord's Prayer (said or sung)
- V. Benediction, peace and sending forth
Postlude