

Sample service based on the Guild motto

Omit or include the rededication section as required
All age talk suggestion included

Welcome and Intimations

Call to Worship

The Psalmist wrote,

Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights above.
Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his heavenly hosts. (Psalm 148:1-2)

Hymn suggestions

- Ye servants of God, your Master proclaim CH4 130, MP 784
- Sing to God new songs of worship CH4 173, MP 600
- Lord of creation, to you be all praise! CH4 500

Opening Prayer and The Lord's Prayer

God our Creator,
we are here to worship you,
to offer this time and ourselves to you.
Though you are beyond our understanding
you call us by name and know each one of us through and through.

Jesus Christ, Living Lord,
we praise you for your love
which is offered to everyone who seeks you,
regardless of who they are
or where they are from.

Spirit of God,
who equips and guides us day by day,
we invite you to move among us and within us
as we join together in worship.

Holy God, Father, Son and Spirit,
we know that we are called to love you
with all our heart and soul, with all our mind and strength
and yet our efforts are so often weak or misguided.

We are sorry for the times that we put ourselves ahead of you,
when our priorities in life do not match yours,
for the times that our giving has been limited,
even though we know that you call us to give our all to you.

Lord have mercy.

Christ have mercy.

Lord have mercy... (*Silence for @30 seconds*)

The Lord says,

"I will bring my people back to me; I will love them with all my heart".
This is the promise of God.

So Lord, help us, we pray,
to serve you and follow you faithfully
wherever you lead,
for you are the Way and the Truth and the Life.

We say the Lord's Prayer together...

All-age talk: Fan or Follower?

Intention:

To encourage us to think about our commitment as disciples

Preparation:

- Recording or YouTube video of Chris Tomlin's 'I will follow' ([Chris Tomlin - I Will Follow \(Lyrics\) - YouTube](#))
- Have items of allegiance/membership ready to hold up or to put on (e.g. football scarf or match programme, clothing associated with a club...Brownies, Scouts, Sports club, military tie or medals, musical instrument, poster of favourite band/concert etc) – items that are relevant to the local congregation

PLAY: 'I will follow'

The Talk:

1. Question

- How do we show our loyalty/membership of a particular organisation, club or group?
 - i. What we wear?
 - ii. What we attend/go along to on a regular basis?
 - iii. Souvenirs/tokens that we keep?

2. Another question

- How do we feel when things are going well?
- How easy is it to keep attending?

3. Another question

- What about when things aren't so good?
 - Your favourite football team is doing REALLY badly
 - You're struggling to learn the chanter/bagpipes
 - Your favourite band has lost a key member and changed their style of music?
 - You're struggling to get as many badges as others in your pack?
 - You feel like you don't 'belong' or aren't 'accepted'?

4. Explain that we all have a choice to make

- We stick with it and remain loyal → follower
- Or we give up and walk away → fan

5. Explain...

That in one of our readings today, a young woman called Ruth had a choice to make... to stick with it or to give up and go home... **To be a fan or to be a follower.**

Ruth decided to stick with it and follow her mentor and the God she had come to love and trust, even though it would take her into the unknown.

Listen to the Bible reading: Ruth 1: 6-17 (see below)

Bible Reading

(The NIVUK translation has been used, but this can be changed)

Ruth 1: 6-17

Naomi and Ruth return to Bethlehem

⁶When Naomi heard in Moab that the Lord had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them, she and her daughters-in-law prepared to return home from there. ⁷With her two daughters-in-law she left the place where she had been living and set out on the road that would take them back to the land of Judah.

⁸Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, 'Go back, each of you, to your mother's home. May the Lord show you kindness, as you have shown kindness to your dead husbands and to me. ⁹May the Lord grant that each of you will find rest in the home of another husband.'

Then she kissed them goodbye and they wept aloud ¹⁰and said to her, 'We will go back with you to your people.'

¹¹But Naomi said, 'Return home, my daughters. Why would you come with me? Am I going to have any more sons, who could become your husbands? ¹²Return home, my daughters; I am too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me – even if I had a husband tonight and then gave birth to sons – ¹³would you wait until they grew up? Would you remain unmarried for them? No, my daughters. It is more bitter for me than for you, because the Lord's hand has turned against me!'

¹⁴At this they wept aloud again. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law goodbye, but Ruth clung to her.

¹⁵'Look,' said Naomi, 'your sister-in-law is going back to her people and her gods. Go back with her.'

¹⁶But Ruth replied, 'Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. ¹⁷Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me.'

John 12: 1-8

Jesus anointed at Bethany

Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. ²Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honour. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. ³Then Mary took about half a litre of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

⁴But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, ⁵'Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages' ⁶He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.

⁷ 'Leave her alone,' Jesus replied. 'It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. ⁸ You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me.'

Hymn suggestions

- Lord, speak to me, that I may speak CH4 542, MP 444
- As the deer pants CH4 550, MP 37

Reflection

Whose we are and whom we serve

Loyalty – how important is it these days?

Once upon a time someone might start work for a company on leaving school and stay until retirement. How often does that happen these days?

And even if an employee remains faithful to the company for years, what is the reward? Times have changed haven't they?

Loyalty doesn't always seem to be as important as it once was, but it surely still matters... in relation to our lives at work, at home and to matters of faith.

Back in the Old Testament, the story of Ruth and Naomi is one of great loyalty. Ruth remains faithful to Naomi even when she could have returned to her home and her own people. But Naomi has cared for Ruth over the years and so Ruth feels a loyalty towards her mother-in-law.

And more than that, Ruth has another very important reason to travel on with Naomi, because Naomi introduced Ruth to her God, the God of Abraham, and Ruth doesn't want to walk away from the God that she has learned to place her trust in.

And so, when Naomi suggests that Ruth would be better to leave, we recall Ruth's reply: Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. (Ruth 1:16)

Such faithfulness to God. Such loyalty. Ruth wanted to follow wherever God led her and that meant travelling on rather than heading home.

PAUSE

We can turn to much more recent times to find other examples of people who have demonstrated their commitment to God very directly:

- Eric Liddell famously said, "the Sabbath is His, and I for one intend to keep it that way".
- The (now retired) Scottish rugby union player Euan Murray refused to play on Sunday, saying, "Ultimately, rugby's not what fuels my happiness in life".

For both, Sunday was a time to be set aside for God and we all recognize how important it is to find the time to do that. But what we'd like to do and what honours God can involve some serious heart-searching and some big decisions being made.

It really can be tough can't it? Other demands crowd in on us and sometimes we are pulled away from the time that we would normally spend with God.

Sundays can be really busy days, especially for families, but whenever and wherever it is, we DO need to find time to be with God, to worship him, to rest in him and to hear his Word for us in our lives.

PAUSE

In our reading from John's gospel we meet up with Martha and Mary – and it is the third time that we've encountered this family. We know about the two sisters, with their very different characters, and we often compare them to ourselves and our attitude towards Jesus.

The first encounter takes place in Luke's gospel (chapter 10), when Jesus visits their home. Martha busies around and Mary sits at Jesus' feet to listen to what he is saying. Perhaps for today we can simply recall how they **welcome Jesus into their home**.

Their second encounter is under very different circumstances. Their brother Lazarus is dead and they send for Jesus to come to the house. In this encounter they **turn to Jesus for help in their time of need**.

And then we have the encounter that is recorded in John 12. Martha is busy again, but Mary is totally focussed on Jesus. Judas complains bitterly that Mary is wasting precious perfume, but she is not listening and not affected by his attitude towards her. All she wants to do is to **give of her very best to Jesus, regardless of the cost**.

PAUSE

So often we have all sorts of demands placed upon us and our loyalties can be divided, sometimes in trivial ways but sometimes in ways that might have implications for the rest of our lives. As we worship today, we recall our motto: 'Whose we are and whom we serve'.

Perhaps we should do what Martha and Mary did?

- Welcome Christ into our homes and lives
- Turn to him in our need
- And give him the very best of all that we have AMEN

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OMIT OR INCLUDE THIS SECTION AS REQUIRED

Guild Prayer of Dedication

(Invite members of the Guild to please stand as they are able and say the words of dedication together. These will need to be included in a printed order of service, on a screen or on a sheet of paper given to each member before the start of the service)

In faith,
we now dedicate ourselves,
through our worship, prayer and action,
to serve you faithfully,
to love you with all our heart,
all our soul and all our mind,
and to love one another
as your Son, Jesus Christ, has shown his love for us.

Renew us, refresh us,

as members of the Guild,
as we continue on our journey through life.
Guide our thinking and bless all that we do you in your name,
whose we are and whom we serve,
and in whose name we pray. Amen

Hymn suggestions

(Dedication)

- From heaven you came CH4 374, MP 162
- Says Jesus, 'Come, and gather round' CH4 342

Prayers of thanksgiving, prayers for others

Let's pray, and we begin by singing...

Be still and know that I am God CH4 755 VERSE 1 (remain seated)

Living God,
we thank you and praise you for your very real presence in our lives,
for the assurance that we face nothing alone,
for the certainty that you love and care for us every single day.
We thank you and praise you for your faithfulness to us
whoever and wherever we are in life
and for your promise of eternal life with you.

As we are blessed, Lord,
so too we pray for your blessing on others...

We pray for all whose lives are too busy for you,
for all who crowd you out with the things of this life,
for all who do not recognize that you and your ways are all that matter.

We pray for all who have heard you but chosen to walk a different path,
not fully recognizing that you alone hold the key to a full life,
to wholeness of body, mind and spirit.

We pray for all who love you but cannot live their faith openly,
for fear of persecution or worse.
Protect them, Lord, and give them the strength to hold on.

We pray for people and places where life is a struggle,
but where others reach out to help
and we pray especially for our current Guild projects...
(name each and allow a moment of quiet between each one)

And at this time, we remember especially the Guild and affiliated groups,
the projects they support at home and abroad.

Guide and inspire all who plan for the future,
and encourage those who deal with the day to day tasks
which make it all possible.

Faithful God,
we pray that we will always be mindful
of whose we are and whom we serve,
turning to you and following wherever you may lead
with thankful hearts.

We offer our prayer in the name of Jesus Christ
our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

Offering with Prayer

(You may include this at a different point in the service, according to you custom)

Faithful God,
accept and bless these our gifts of money
that they may be used to further
your kingdom here on earth,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hymn suggestions

(Sending)

- Forth in thy name CH4 529, MP 159
- Lord, for the years CH4 159, MP 428

Benediction

We go now, in peace
to love and serve the Lord
with all our heart and with all our soul,
with all our mind and with all our strength,
and to love our neighbour as ourself.

Either:

And we share the Grace, one with another:
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
And the love of God
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
Be with us all now and for ever. Amen

Or:

Sing the Guild Blessing