

THE EUCHARIST ON EASTER MORNING

The Eucharist on Easter morning will always be a joyful occasion, but it may also be a challenge - regular church-people for whom their Easter communion is really important, alongside non-communicants, older people, but probably some children. What follows here are a number of suggestions for making the service both accessible and fit for the occasion and, at the end, there is one worked out example for an all-age Easter morning Communion.

Beyond the ideas and texts given here, there is a rich resource in the Easter section (pp 401ff) of the new Common Worship: Times and Seasons.

Beginning

A dramatic start to the service is either the lighting of the Easter candle or the bringing in of it already alight at the door, with one of these texts

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

The light of Christ.

Thanks be to God.

used three times, the first time in a whisper, then louder and then in a great shout. The candle is then brought through the church to its stand as "Jesus Christ is risen today" is sung.

It may be appropriate for everyone to have a lighted candle and for children to have the task of bringing the light from the Easter candle to the congregation.

Easter Greeting

The Easter Greeting

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

need not only be used at the beginning, but can punctuate the service - before and after the Gospel, at the Peace, before the Blessing, etc

Penitence

There is an Easter text for confession and absolution in the example service below. Another confession text is

Like Mary at the empty tomb,
we fail to grasp the wonder of your presence.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Like the disciples behind locked doors,
we are afraid to be seen as your followers.
Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

Like Thomas in the upper room,
we are slow to believe.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Gospel

Where possible, the gospel reading might be mimed or dramatised. Luke 24.1-12 is the shorter of those appointed, but John 20.1-18 lends itself more to this treatment.

Intercession

There are two texts in Common Worship: Times and Seasons

Eucharistic Prayer

Prayer D (as in the example service) has a good paschal flavour and is brief. But Prayers A, B and E (E is the shortest) can all be used with an Easter Preface. In addition to those in Common Worship, Times and Seasons gives this responsive preface for use with A, B or E.

We give you thanks and praise
for the gospel we have received.
Christ died for our sins. Alleluia.
He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Death comes to all through Adam,
and sin reigns for a time.
New life without end comes through Christ,
and he reigns for ever. Alleluia.
He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Death, where is your victory?
Death, where is your sting?
Death is swallowed up in victory,
the victory you give us in Christ. Alleluia.
He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

We have been crucified with Christ,
and live his risen life,
to praise you with angels and archangels.
Holy, holy, holy Lord ...

“Holy, holy, holy” is so much the song of heaven that it ought, if at all possible to be sung. This version goes to a familiar tune

**Holy, holy, holy is the Lord,
holy is the Lord God almighty:
Holy, holy, holy is the Lord,
holy is the Lord God almighty:
who was, and is, and is to come;
holy, holy, holy is the Lord.**

The Easter Garden

It is good if the Easter Garden is large enough to be a visual focus in the service.

At the beginning the stone might be rolled away and the Garden blessed and then the Prayers of Penitence said there.

Or later in the service (perhaps during the final hymn or song) the priest might lead the children to the Garden, perhaps light candles at it, certainly to pray at it. The Blessing and Easter Dismissal might be given at the Garden.

Either of these prayers is suitable for use at the Garden

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation,
the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
To you be glory now and for ever.
In your great mercy you have given us new birth into a living hope
through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
By your blessing,
may we who have prepared this garden in celebration of his victory
be strengthened in faith,
know the power of his presence,
and rejoice in the hope of eternal glory.
Blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
Blessed be God for ever.

Risen Lord Jesus,
as Mary Magdalene met you in the garden
on the morning of your resurrection,
so may we meet you today and every day:
speak to us as you spoke to her;
reveal yourself as the living Lord;
renew our hope and kindle our joy;
and send us to share the good news with others.
Amen.