

Easter 2007 Worship Resources from Feed The Children UK

For churches which follow the lectionary, the seven Sundays of Easter are rich in thought provoking material from John's gospel, and a remembrance of Feed The Children's work among vulnerable children could fit into any of them.

The climax of the Christian year, the celebration of new life in Jesus Christ, gives way to challenge and reflection in the Sundays leading up to Pentecost. The question is posed anew; do we believe that new life is for us and for all today? And if so, how does that affect the way we live?

With Thomas, we must face our doubts and learn to believe. With Peter, we must face our failures, receive forgiveness, and accept anew the responsibility for feeding Jesus' little ones. The promise of the Holy Spirit reminds us we are not alone in our challenges; Jesus' intense prayer for the unity of his followers prepares us for the birthday celebration of the church, Pentecost.

Liberation Theology's concept of the 'crucified people' can help us bring a practical edge to our belief that new life is for today. The crucified people are the lowest in society, who bear the brunt when the economy, in which they are already powerless, takes a downturn. It is the people of the third world who suffer most from the environmental changes caused by pollution of more prosperous countries. The poor, like Jesus, suffer unjustly because of the sins of others; this is why the poor can be aware of a special sense of solidarity with Jesus (Jon Sobrino, *The Principle of Mercy*, 1994).

The teaching of Jesus certainly presents a radical challenge to those of us living in prosperous communities; his kingdom is where the first are last, and the last first; where the poor are blessed, and the rich sent empty away; where the invitation into his kingdom is extended to those who clothe the naked, feed the hungry, and visit the sick.

Feed The Children takes its inspiration from Matthew 25:35 – "I was hungry and you fed me" – and works amongst the poorest of the poor. Community projects are aimed at helping people to lift themselves out of poverty; a water bore-hole, a school feeding programme, de-worming tablets, help to start a farming co-operative, a clinic for children with special needs. These are all small projects that make an unimaginable difference.

A new lease of life for Leah

Six year old Leah Wanjiru lives at Dagoretti Children's Centre, Feed The Children's residential school for children with special needs in Nairobi, Kenya. When she was a toddler, she and her older brother and sister were found wandering the streets of Nairobi. The three children had walked for 300 km from the country, because both their parents had died from Aids. They thought their eldest brother was in Nairobi, and they were looking for him. Sadly, the brother could not be found. Leah's brother and sister eventually went back to relatives in the country, but Leah was in a very poor state; undernourished and ill, she was found to be HIV positive, and her development was delayed.

Leah today is happy, and doing well. She is catching up with other children her age, and is receiving the medication she needs. Feed The Children will care for Leah until her extended family in the country are able to take care of her.

Children who are HIV-positive can live full and happy lives; but the drugs they need to stay healthy are available to only a lucky few.



Elias (in white pants) and his friends at Te Tegu camp, Uganda. A de-worming tablet twice a year will make a significant improvement to their health.



Kutea is learning skills to care for herself and her baby at this shelter for former street girls in Uganda.



School lunch at Kaberamaido, Uganda. Children fed at school can concentrate on their studies and stand more of a chance of lifting themselves out of poverty.



By supporting Feed The Children, you are giving children like Leah a new lease of life.

These pictures in PowerPoint format can be found on Feed The Children's website, in the Resources section.

Prayers for the Sundays after Easter

Confession

Lord Jesus, in your resurrection life we look at ourselves anew;

With Thomas, we confess our doubts, and we believe you are alive.

With Peter, we confess our failures, and we accept your commission to feed your sheep.

We accept our weaknesses as you accept and forgive us;

We await the coming of your spirit to cleanse us, heal us, to make us one and to send us into the world as your body.

Amen.



Thanksgiving for all ages

God, we love you and we love everything you have made.

We are glad for our good food, and our warm homes.

We are glad for new life in the spring;

We love the colours of new plants growing,

The song of the birds

And the young animals in the fields.

All this new life reminds us how much you love us,

And we are thankful.

Amen

Intercessions

God and Father of all, in your creating power, may we examine our world anew.

Where human beings, created in your image, have become bitter and angry,

May your people bring healing and forgiveness.

We pray for the work of Feed The Children UK, as they work to provide for the poorest of children; the abandoned, the homeless, the orphans.

Lord Jesus, in your resurrection power, may we examine our world anew.

Where your little ones are crushed by poverty,

May your people bring liberation and love.

We pray for Feed The Children's work to bring food, water and life skills to needy communities.

Holy Spirit, in your sustaining power, may we examine our world anew.

Where communities and families have been divided by conflict,

May your people bring reconciliation and peace.

We pray for Feed The Children's work in communities displaced by war, as they help people to return and resettle their land.

God of unity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you have made us one with our brothers and sisters throughout the earth; may your name be glorified as we obey your command to love one another as we have been loved.

In the name of Jesus our Lord and Saviour, Amen.

A new life of independence for Roselidia

Roselidia Muwanguzi is part of a self-help co-operative in northern Uganda, where just a few years ago, the population were being terrorised by the Lord's Resistance Army, a rebel group. For many years, thousands in internally displaced families lived in makeshift villages, too afraid to go back to their land and dependent on aid.

Today, many communities are starting again. With support from Feed The Children UK, families are returning to their overgrown lands; FTC is providing seeds, tools and agricultural training such as pest control, use of fertilisers and water management.

Roselidia's group are raising chickens and pigs, and learning to farm mushrooms for their families, and to take to market.

By supporting Feed The Children UK, you are helping women like Roselidia to gain skills and confidence to support themselves and their families.

Pictures in this resource can be found on Feed The Children's website, in the Resources section.



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