

# Do not worry

## Opening hymn

All things bright and beautiful or For the beauty of the earth

## Welcome

## Words of preparation

Heavenly Father, in our worship today, help us to thank you for all the good things you have given us (*pause*); to learn from your Word about how to trust you and serve your kingdom; and to pray for others: particularly those living in the Amazon. Amen

## Journey to the Amazon

Show the short USPG film or PowerPoint or tell everyone about the people of Maria Ribeira living in the Amazon Rainforest. (Visit the Further Resources section for the film and PowerPoint.)

## Praise activity

This will work best if you have areas of your church where you can put up a display.

1. Cut out enough paper fish for each person in the congregation.
2. Provide several long thin sheets of blue paper to represent a river (they could be cut into a river shape to 'flow' around the walls of your worship space).
3. Divide the congregation into groups of about ten with two or three pens, a glue stick and a piece of 'river' per group.
4. Invite each person in the group to think of something good God has given them and to write or draw it on their fish.
5. Ask the groups to stick their fish onto their piece of the river.
6. Allow time for an appointed spokesperson from each group to read out what is on each fish within the group.
7. Sing together the refrain of the hymn 'We plough the fields and scatter' to finish this part of the time of praise.
8. Invite the congregation to sing the whole hymn while someone from each group brings each part of the river to the front. Perhaps they can stand in a line at the front or flow round the church.
9. The service leader may want to read out a few of the fish before you sing the final chorus again.
10. The rivers could be stuck up around the church as part of your harvest celebrations.

## Luke 12:22-32

Version One: Download the PowerPoint from the website

[http://www.uspg.org.uk/article.php?article\\_id=564](http://www.uspg.org.uk/article.php?article_id=564) to accompany the reading.

Version Two: Ask a selection of people to read the Gospel passage, each saying their part as they walk towards a central point. Ideally it should be read as if it is a series of ideas flowing freely:

- Introduced by Voice One saying: Then Jesus said to his disciples.....
- Voice Two: Verses 22-24
- Voice Three: Verses 25-26
- Voice Four: Verses 27-28
- Voice One: Verses 29-30
- All: Verses 31-32. (This needs to be read together with precision and authority so would need rehearsing beforehand.)

## Hymn

Seek ye first the kingdom of God

## All-age talk

*Prepare some bags of various shapes and sizes to represent the 'cares of the world'. It doesn't matter what they are filled with – as the contents will not be seen – but they should look heavy and cumbersome. Tie on labels that can be clearly read; label them food, clothing, image, money, work, school, friends, health. You will also need something cumbersome, such as a table, that will need to be moved during the talk. And you will need a volunteer (X), who should stand next to you during the talk.*

Leader: Worry. It's something we all do, some more so than others. And there are lots of things we worry about. What does Jesus mention in our reading?

*Expect the answers 'what you eat' and 'what you wear'. Hold up the bags labelled 'food' and 'clothing'. Hand the bags to X to hold onto.*

Leader: In Jesus' day, many people would not have been able to afford food and clothing. We are more likely to be worried about the effects of eating too much or whether our clothes are fashionable because we are concerned about our image: how we look.

*Hand the 'image' bag to X.*

Leader: We worry about other things: money, work, school, friends, our health, and so on.

*Hand the corresponding bags to X. By now X should look weighed down. During the next part of the talk, X struggles to stand up.*

Leader: Many people say we can't help worrying when we have serious concerns. What do you think, X?

X: Sorry, I was too busy trying to sort out my worries. I didn't hear what you said.

Leader: Sometimes we have valid things to worry about: a family member who is ill, a test at school, or something at work. When we worry, we only focus on that thing we are worrying about. We can't concentrate on anything else. Isn't that right X?

X: Sorry, I'm just trying to get this sorted. I'll be with you in a minute.

Leader: See what I mean? Jesus knows about our worries and wants us to talk to him about them. He doesn't want them to be the focus of our attention because they prevent us from enjoying life and concentrating on better things. Jesus knows what we need. He cares enough to make flowers beautiful, so how much more must he care about us? Jesus wants us to trust him with the things that concern us. To ask for his help, then to leave our worries with him. Jesus cares and he can help because he knows what we need. It's important to learn to trust that he means what he says.

*Walk over to your table/cumbersome object that needs moving.*

Leader: And talking of help, I need a bit of help here. X, can you give me a hand?

X *(trying to move)*: Um, no.

Leader: That's not very helpful. Why not?

X *(trying to move again and failing)*: Well, I can't actually move! These bags are so heavy...

Leader: That's another thing. We can become so weighed down by our worries that we become unable to help others. When we worry, our own needs become more important than needs around the world, in our town, or even in our church or family. But what did Jesus say? 'Seek first God's kingdom...' And that means serving others. *(Turn back to X.)* X, I really could do with a hand here.

X: I've told you, I can't help. I can't move.

Leader: You could, you know.

X: How?

Leader: By putting those bags down.

X: Um, oh, yes. *(Puts bags down. Stretches)*. Ah. That's better. What was it you wanted?

Leader: I need some help here.

*Both move the object together.*

Leader: Tell Jesus about your worries. Imagine them in bags. Imagine yourself putting the bags down beside Jesus. Trust him with your problems. He's better at sorting them out than we are! And then you will be freer to think about others and help change the world into the place of love and peace that God intended it to be. (*Turn to X.*) Thanks for your help.

X: I feel better for it.

### **Hymn/chorus**

Father God I wonder or Give thanks with a grateful heart

### **Confession**

This is antiphonal with leader and response from the congregation.

Leader: Heavenly Father, you created a beautiful world for us to live in. You have given us everything we need.

All: We are sorry for not trusting you.

Leader: Sometimes we forget how much you love us because we spend so much time thinking about what we have and what we want.

All: We are sorry for not trusting you.

Leader: When we worry we think about ourselves and forget about you.

All: We are sorry for not trusting you.

Leader: So often we think we know better than you. We do what we want instead of what you want.

All: We are sorry for not trusting you.

Leader: Forgive us for our worry, our selfishness and for going our way instead of your way.

All: Amen

### **Prayers**

Ideally read by a range of ages:

Dear God, we thank you for the beautiful world you have created and for all the good things you give us. We are surrounded by so many of these good things today. We thank you for our food and clothing, our homes, families and friends. Help us not to take these for granted but to live thankful lives.

Heavenly Father, we are aware that some people in your world have great wealth when others do not have enough. Help those of us who have plenty to be generous to those who have so little. Help us not to cling greedily onto our things but to be willing to share with others. Help us to recognise that all good things come from you and that giving to others is part of our worship.

Lord God, we thank you for the people of the Amazon. Their lives are so different from ours and yet we share so much in common: families, friends, the need for food and clothing. We pray especially for the people of Maria Ribeira. We thank you for the practical help they have received. Help us not to forget them, even though they are so far from us. Help them to know your love and care for them.

Father, forgive us that we are not caring for your beautiful world as we should. We know that this affects people like those in Maria Ribeira much more than it affects us. Give the leaders of the world the courage to fight against global warming so that the world becomes a safer, cleaner, better place to live for future generations.

### **Hymn/chorus**

Safe in the Father's hands (Ks 290) or When I needed a neighbour

### **Closing prayers/notices/blessing**

### **Final hymn**

Now thank we all our God