



Inclusive Church Sunday

How to use these resources

These resources are designed to be flexible; to help you create a celebratory event in the way you feel is appropriate for your local context. We have made these sheets as simple as possible and in a format that will allow you to copy and paste material into your own service sheets etc.

The material here is based on Luke 15:1-10 but could be used on other occasions.

As well as liturgical material and hymns suggestions, we have included resources that can be used for adults, children and young people.

Additional material and resources from the Inclusive Church study resources may be helpful: <https://www.inclusive-church.org/resources/small-study-resources/>

Making the most of your event.

You may want to consider other ways of using Inclusive Church Sunday. Here are a few ideas:

- Why not give each member of the congregation their own Inclusive Church leaflet? These are a great way of introducing or reminding people about our work. You can download the leaflet and print it off yourself: <https://www.inclusive-church.org/ic-leaflets/>
- Inclusive Church Poster. Use this as an opportunity to freshen up how you present your membership of Inclusive Church. The posters contain the wording of the Inclusive Church statement and area available in A3 and A4 formats. We can also provide artwork for you to order a pull-up banner. Contact the IC office: office@inclusive-church.org
- Inclusive Church button badges are available for you to sell (or give) to your church members. Again, contact the IC office for these.
- If you'd like to display and sell IC books, you can buy them here: <https://www.inclusive-church.org/resources/inclusive-church-books/>
- Why not issue a press release about your event – to local radio and other media? This is a great way of raising issues of exclusion in the Church and what you're doing locally to offer an inclusive welcome.

- Consider using the occasion for your church to make a donation to Inclusive Church – this might be on top of your annual IC donation as a signed-up church or it might go towards it.
- Have someone take photographs and write up an account of how you celebrated Inclusive Church Sunday. We're always interested in knowing what member churches are up to. An account of your events can go in our monthly e-newsletter.

Let's celebrate!

Above all – enjoy celebrating Inclusive Church Sunday by being inclusive! We would love to know how you plan to celebrate Inclusive Church Sunday. If you need more information or help with any of your ideas, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Ruth Wilde, National Coordinator office@inclusive-church.org.uk

07935 374877



Collect, Confession and Eucharistic Prayer for Inclusive Church Sunday

Specially designed for Inclusive Church by Steven Shakespeare.

He is the author of *Prayers for an Inclusive Church* published by Canterbury Press.

Collect

Searching God:

To you

No one is lost

No one is left behind

No one is the price to be paid for the greater good.

Give us the same restless desire

The same fierce joy

Which finds grace in every child of earth

and makes a community open to all.

We ask this in the name of Jesus,

Who loved the world and did not count the cost.

Amen.

Confession

You are tireless in seeking out the lost;

We write them off.

Generous God

Share mercy with us.

You do not give up on a single one;

We give up even on ourselves.

Generous God

Share mercy with us.

You have a joy that is without measure

We accept limits to our compassion.

Generous God

Share mercy with us.

Eucharistic Prayer

God is here.

Her Spirit is with us.

Blessed be the names of Love.

They touch our hearts with grace.

We open our hands in thanks.

Our song is one of welcome.

We thank you, Holy God,

For being a fool in the eyes of the world.

We thank you for abandoning control,

For creating a universe, new and strange.

We thank you for nurturing life,

Diverse, evolving, surprising and strange.

We thank you for calling a people

who did not walk straight

or know their limits.

We thank you for different bodies and desires

For different ways of thinking and speaking
For different ways of belonging and believing.
May our thanks cut a path
Through dividing walls
To free the Spirit's song:

Holy, holy, holy One

God of life and love.

The world overflows with your glory.

One came who upset the rules:
Who accepted the grace of the outsider,
Who looked for wisdom in those who did not count,
Who took his food in the company of the rejected.
One came who walked a strange path:
Who did not think anyone was unclean,
Who did not look for scapegoats
Who refused to put a price on anyone's head.
The tables of the moneychangers he threw over.
The tables of liberation he threw open.
On the night before he gave himself up,
He ate and drank to the end of slavery.
He took the bread and broke it, and said:
'This is my body. Do this to remember me.'
He took the wine and poured it, and said:
'This is my blood. Do this to remember me.'
May the Spirit of creation
Take these earthly things

And show us in their brokenness,
The life-giving plenty
The end of all poverty,
The body and blood of Christ.

This is the mystery of faith:

Christ took the form of a slave

Christ took the cross of shame

Christ gives the free gift of life.

Into our hands he delivers himself,
Jesus, the Victim, the Excluded One,
Who is now a sign of hope for all.

So we celebrate

This event of love

This rising from death

Unpredictable and full of wonder.

We pray that we will be

a community defined

by what it is open to

not by what it fears;

by the excess of its love

not the walls along its borders.

May our prayer be welcome to you,

the God who is in all , and with all and for all. **Amen**



Adult Resources: Open the Word: Everyone matters

Ideas for sermon preparation

(with the kind permission of Roots)

Who might be today's equivalent of those whom society regards as 'outsiders' — a family seeking asylum, someone who is homeless and sleeping on the streets, a man with a different coloured skin, a girl addicted to drugs, a boy with HIV/AIDS? Jesus treated no one as an 'outsider'. Not only did Jesus tolerate these 'unacceptable' people — he actually welcomed their company and ate with them. The Pharisees strongly criticised him. Could their attitude be compared with that of some people today?

Recently one church opened its doors, allowing part of the building to be used as a night shelter for the homeless. There were complaints from people both inside and outside the church. What about the potential for crime, untidy queuing in the street, the smell of cooking or dirty socks left in the church hall? Human beings are the ones who create 'outsiders'. No one is excluded from God's love.

Some Jews thanked God every day for not having been born a Gentile, a slave or a woman. In many cultures today, women are treated as inferior. In India a female foetus may be aborted. Do we in the church feel and act as though we are superior?

Instead of a heated argument with his critics, Jesus told stories as exemplars. Perhaps it's more significant to show by example rather than trying to justify an opinion or belief with angry words. These stories show that God's love and forgiveness are always there waiting for everyone. The shepherd and the woman put a great deal of energy into recreating the completeness that was originally intended. They went out of their way to restore the wholeness. There are many examples where Jesus states his mission to bring good news to the poor, liberty to the captives and freedom for the oppressed (Luke 4.16-21). Who are the people today who actively work to make the world more inclusive — a world where everyone is valued equally and is entitled to basic human rights?

Archbishop Desmond Tutu says, 'Don't let anyone tell you that God doesn't take sides. I believe God is always on the side of the poor, the powerless, the marginalised, the outcast.' There's nothing 'other-worldly' about Jesus' ministry. He scandalised the religious establishment because he spent time with the social pariahs of his day. Jesus turned everything upside down and when challenged,

wasn't the slightest bit embarrassed. What would happen in your church if someone 'disreputable' burst into the service? Jesus revolutionised religion by showing that God is a 'disreputable' God — a God who accepts unconditionally and rejoices when everyone is included in a fair and just society. Do we feel the same? Are we reaching out to connect with each other? How might we choose?

The Gospel Luke 15.1-10

Jesus attracted the attention of tax collectors and sinners much to the disgust of the Pharisees and scribes. In response, Jesus tells three parables in Luke 15 which reflect the overwhelming joy in finding that which was lost. In each case the joy was expressed in celebrating with friends and neighbours. Fellowship round the meal table is a sign of the kingdom.

The lost sheep (vv. 3-7) was sought until it was found. The ninety-nine were not left in safety but in the wilderness or desert. That is the measure of love for the lost: a willingness to risk everything, even life. The woman sought the lost coin until she found it, there was no giving up. God is no less persistent than humans.

God takes the initiative for the restoration of wholeness. When we read the text, we should recognise that we are the ones who are sought out and the ones who are welcomed.

The Gospel Luke 15.1-10

The 'outsider' is important to Jesus. He is being hounded by the legal specialists of the religious establishment, the 'informed laity' of his day, namely the Pharisees and the scribes. The tense of the word 'grumbling' indicates that these people kept sniping away at Jesus' habit of dining with sinners and tax collectors. Note the word 'all' in 15.1. Luke mentions these socially despised taxmen 10 times in his Gospel. Jesus' practice of keeping 'bad company' in the eyes of the righteous is an important tradition.

Jesus doesn't attack the nagging laity; he tells a story – three stories in fact, all on the theme of being 'lost'. In today's reading we have the single lost sheep from the flock of one hundred and the woman with the lost coin (15.8-10) – was she miserly perhaps? Then there are the lost sons and their prodigal father (15.11-32). All these stories end with a joyful celebration. They seem to offer Jesus' vision of the perfect community, which rejoices in being restored to wholeness. He speaks about the round figure of ten coins instead of the nine, the restored family with the return of the wayward son, and here the completed flock of one hundred instead of the ninety-nine.

Traditionalists could argue that they had never done things that way. The scriptures told them not to associate with sinners (Psalm 1). Yet here was Jesus engaging in table-companionship with them! If we today think of table-companionship in terms of

Eucharist, as Luke's audience may have done, then the need for wholeness becomes painfully close to home. The lost sheep has to be carried – perhaps it is frightened, or wounded by some past experience, or simply bewildered at having lost the way. The climax to the story is the joyful shepherd calling the community together for a celebration of wholeness restored.



Children and Young People Resources

Specially prepared for Inclusive Church by The Rev'd Phil Greig

Phil trained for ministry at Ridley Hall Cambridge and is working in parish ministry in Canterbury Diocese. He was previously a Diocesan Youth and Children's Officer.

Phil is the co-author of *Moving Images, Changing Lives: Exploring the Christian Life and Confirmation with Young People Through Film* Published by Church House Publishing.

The Parable of the Lost Sheep and Coin

Bible Base: Luke 15.1-10

Session Aim: to explore together what God will do when something precious is found after being lost.

Welcome (All Ages):

Ask the members of the group what is their most precious possession and why.

Ask the group how they would feel if they lost their most precious possession.

Word:

Discussion:

Read the story of Jesus telling his disciples and the Pharisees the parable of the Lost Sheep and Coin. You can find it in Luke 15.1-10.

Ask the children and young people some questions about the passage:

Who was Jesus spending time with that the Pharisees and Teachers of the Law didn't like?

Answer: Tax Collectors and sinners

2. Why did Jesus tell a story about a sheep and coin being lost and then being found again?

Answer: to show the Pharisees and the Teachers of the Law that God will go looking for anyone who gets lost.

3. What do the angels and God do when someone is found (or a sinner repents)?

Answer: there is much rejoicing!

Activity:

Give each person a piece of paper with a blank comic strip (six boxes) on it and a felt pen. Ask the members of the group to draw a cartoon story about something special that they had lost and if they found it, what they did when they found it (in the last box).

Share the stories when they are done.

Story Time:

If you can read *Lost and Found* by Oliver Jeffers. This is available also as a 23 minute film which if you have time you could show.

The story is of a boy who finds a penguin at his house and considers it lost. So he decides to row the penguin back to the South Pole.

After reading the story or watching the film ask the group, to what lengths would you go to find something that you lost?

Reflection:

Explain to the children/young people that God would go to extreme lengths to find people who are lost. In fact God did go to enormous lengths by sending Jesus, God's Son to tell us about God and that God is looking for us. No matter who we are or where we come from God loves us so much that we are worth searching for - every single one of us.

Worship:

On the other side of the comic strips depicting the stories of lost and found things invite the children and young people to write or draw a prayer thanking God that God came looking for us.



Hymns

Choosing hymns that reflect a more inclusive image of God may be something that would help mark Inclusive Church Sunday.

The following are only suggestions. You may want to choose songs or hymns that are familiar in your own setting – but being aware of the use of language especially with reference to God and Jesus. This might be an appropriate occasion to choose material that refers to God in ways other than traditional male imagery and language.

We would recommend Wild Goose music and worship resources from the Iona Community and June Boyce-Tillman's A rainbow to Heaven – hymns, songs and chants. Published by Stainer & Bell.

If hymns are unfamiliar you may find it helpful to use YouTube where a number of these are available.

AMAZING GRACE! how sweet the sound

That saved a wretch like me;
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was bound, but now I'm free.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear,
The hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come;
'Tis grace that brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me,
His word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures.

Yes, when this heart and flesh shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess within the veil
A life of joy and peace.

When we've been there a thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we first begun.

Words: John Newton – with first verse amended by Professor John Hull

An army of ordinary people,

A witness that love is the key,
A city, a light to the nations,
Heirs to the promise are we.
A people whose life is in Jesus,
A nation together we stand.
Only through grace are we worthy,
Inheritors of the land.

*A new day is dawning,
A new age to come,
When the children of promise
Shall flow together as one.
A truth long neglected,
But the time has now come
When the children of promise
Shall flow together as one.*

A people without recognition,
But with God a destiny sealed,
Called to a heavenly vision,
God's purpose shall be fulfilled.
Come, let us stand strong together,
Abandon ourselves to the Son,
God's love shall be ours forever,
This victory song we shall sing.

Dave Bilbrough.
Thankyou Music.

As tranquil streams that meet and merge

and flow as one to seek the sea,
Our kindred fellowships unite
to build a church that shall be free.

Free from the bonds that bind the mind
to narrow thought and lifeless creed;
Free from a social code that fails

to serve the cause of human need.

A freedom that reveres the past,
but trusts the dawning future more;
And bids the soul, in search of truth,
adventure boldly and explore.

Prophetic church, the future waits
the liberating ministry;
Go forward in the power of love,
proclaim the truth that makes us free.

Marion Ham
Tune: Ride on Ride on in Majesty

Bring 'em all in, bring'em all in, bring 'em all in,

bring 'em all in, bring 'em all into my heart
Bring 'em all in, bring 'em all in, bring 'em all in
bring 'em all in, bring 'em all into my heart

Bring the little fishes
bring the sharks
bring 'em from the brightness
bring 'em from the dark

Bring 'em from the caverns
bring 'em from the heights
bring 'em from the shadows
stand 'em in the light
Bring the unforgiven
bring the unredeemed
bring the lost, the nameless
let 'em all be seen

bring 'em out of exile
bring 'em out of sleep
bring 'em to the table
bring 'em to the feast

Bring 'em all in, bring 'em all in, bring 'em all in,
bring 'em all in, bring 'em all into my heart
Bring 'em all in, bring 'em all in, bring 'em all in
bring 'em all in, bring 'em all in to my heart

Mike Scott

For the healing of the nations,

Lord, we pray with one accord,
for a just and equal sharing
of the things that earth affords.
To a life of love in action
help us rise and pledge our word.

Lead us forward into freedom,
from despair your world release,
that, redeemed from war and hatred,
all may come and go in peace.
Show us how through care and goodness
fear will die and hope increase.

All that kills abundant living,
let it from the earth be banned:
pride of status, race or schooling,
dogmas that obscure your plan.
In our common quest for justice
may we hallow brief life's span.

You, Creator God, have written
your great name on humankind;
for our growing in your likeness
bring the life of Christ to mind;
that by our response and service
earth its destiny may find.

Fred Kaan

Tunes: Alleluia dulce carmen, Westminster Abbey, Picardy, Wolvesey

God, who stretched the spangled heavens

Infinite in time and place,
Flung the suns in burning radiance
Through the silent fields of space:
We, Your children in Your likeness,
Share inventive powers with You;
Great Creator, still creating,
Show us what we yet may do.

We have ventured worlds undreamed of
Since the childhood of our race;
Known the ecstasy of winging

Through untraveled realms of space;
Probed the secrets of the atom,
Yielding unimagined power,
Facing us with life's destruction
Or our most triumphant hour.

As each far horizon beckons,
May it challenge us anew:
Children of creative purpose,
Serving others, honouring You.
May our dreams prove rich with promise,
East endeavour well begun;
Great Creator, give us guidance
Till our goals and Yours are one.

Catherine Cameron (b.1927)
Tune RUSTINGTON

Here in this place, new light is streaming,

now is the darkness vanished away.
See, in this space, our fears and our dreamings,
brought here to you in the light of this day.
Gather us in - the lost and forsaken,
gather us in - the blind and the lame.
Call to us now, and we shall awaken,
we shall arise at the sound of our name.

We are the young - our lives are a mystery,
we are the old - who yearn for your face.
We have been sung throughout all of history,
called to be light to the whole human race.
Gather us in - the rich and the haughty,
gather us in - the proud and the strong.
Give us a heart so meek and so lowly,
give us the courage to enter the song.

Here we will take the wine and the water,
here we will take the bread of new birth.
Here you shall call your sons and your daughters,
call us anew to be salt for the earth.
Give us to drink the wine of compassion,
give us to eat the bread that is you.
Nourish us well, and teach us to fashion
lives that are holy and hearts that are true.

Not in the dark of buildings confining,
not in some heaven, light years away,
but here in this place, the new light is shining;
now is the Kingdom, now is the day.
Gather us in - and hold us forever,
gather us in - and make us your own.
Gather us in - all peoples together,
fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

Marty Haugen
Tune: Gather us in

Lord for the years.

Timothy Dudley-Smith.
Tune O perfect love, Barnby
(available in most hymn books)

Now let us from this table rise

Fred Kaan
(available in most hymn books)

Praise to you, our great Creator,

You rejoice when we are strong;
Fill our hearts with loving power;
Bring us Wisdom with your song.
Alleluia, alleluia,
It's to you that we belong.

Praise to you, the Christ, Transformer,
You have shared our wilderness;
Lead us to the streams of mercy,
Purify our bitterness
Alleluia, alleluia,
Human God of gentleness.

Praise to you, the Holy Spirit,
You can scorch us with your flame;
Forge our love within your furnace,
Burning guilt, destroying shame.
Alleluia, alleluia,
Dancing fire we cannot tame.

June Boyce-Tillman
God the Strengtheners
Tune: Praise my soul the King of Heaven

Praise with joy the world's Creator,

God of justice, love, and peace,
source and end of human knowledge,
Force of greatness without cease.

Celebrate the Maker's glory,
power to rescue and release.

Praise to Christ who feeds the hungry,
frees the captive, finds the lost,
heals the sick, up-sets religion,
fearless both of fate and cost.

Celebrate Christ's constant presence:
friend and stranger, guest and host.

Praise the Spirit sent among us,
liberating truth from pride,
forging bonds where race or gender,
age or nation dare divide.

Celebrate the Spirit's treasure:
foolishness none dare deride.

Praise the Maker, Christ, and Spirit,
one God in community,
calling Christians to embody
oneness and diversity.
Thus the world shall yet believe, when
Shown Christ's vibrant unity.

John L. Bell & Graham Maule

Tune: Praise my soul the king of heaven

She sits like a bird, brooding on the waters,

Hovering on the chaos of the world's first day;
She sighs and she sings, mothering creation,
Waiting to give birth to all the Word will say.

She wings over earth, resting where she wishes,
Lighting close at hand or soaring through the skies;
She nests in the womb, welcoming each wonder,
Nourishing potential hidden to our eyes.

She dances in fire, startling her spectators,
Waking tongues of ecstasy where dumbness reigned;

She weans and inspires all whose hearts are open,
Nor can she be captured, silenced or restrained.

For she is the Spirit, one with God in essence,
Gifted by the Saviour in eternal love;
She is the key opening the scriptures,
Enemy of apathy and heavenly dove.

*John Bell
Wild Goose Publications*

Spirit of justice,
Move in the world's heart,
Making oases,
Binding up wounds.
In you the lame walk,
through you the blind see,
With you the deaf talk,
All is set free.

Spirit of justice,
Move in our own hearts.
Bring us catharsis,
Set us on fire.
Let others' needing
Temper our freedom;
Shape all our hoping,
Colour our dreams.

Spirit of Justice,
We act within you:
In your forgiveness.
We claim your strength.
Join in creation's
Urge for completeness;
Dance liberation's
Powerful song.

June Boyce-Tillman
Tune: Bunesan. (Morning has Broken)

The world needs love; so many hearts are hurting.

Work through us all, and help us spread your peace,
bringing to all - through your forgiving spirit -
freedom from guilt, from bitterness release.

Reconcile us; help us share tranquil calmness,
'till anger stills and all our conflicts cease.

The world needs hope, a vision for the future,
what life might be, what we are striving to.
May we all lead - through the transforming spirit -
lives that fulfil what we know to be true,
to share our gifts, show forth all loving kindness,
encourage all to find great joy anew.

The world needs faith, a willing dedication
of all we are and all we might yet be.
May we all serve - through the empowering spirit -
an active faith in our community.
Love for each soul, respecting and upholding,
declares the worth of all humanity.

The world needs joy, a sense of celebration
that human lives have such diversity.
May we all see - through the dynamic spirit -
each person's part in life's vitality.
Sharing our joys, supporting others' sorrows
make our small world a better place to be.

© Philip Sudworth (adapted)
Tune: Finlandia

There is a line of women, extending back to Eve

Whose role in shaping history God only could conceive
And though, through endless ages, their witness was repressed
God valued and encouraged then through whom the world was blessed

So sing a song of Sarah to laughter she gave birth
And sing a song of Tamar who stood for women's worth
And sing a song of Hannah who bargained with her Lord
And sing a song of Mary who bore and bred God's Word

There is a line of women who took on powerful men
Defying laws and scruples to let life live again
And though, despite their triumph, their stories stayed untold
God kept their number growing, creative strong and bold

So sing a song of Shiphrah with Puah in her hand
Engaged to kill male children they foiled the king's command
And sing a song of Rahab who sheltered spies and lied
And sing a song of Esther, preventing genocide

There is a line of women who stood by Jesus' side
Who housed him while he ministered and held him when he died
And though they claimed he'd risen their news was deemed suspect
Till Jesus stood among them, his womanly elect

So sing a song of Anna who saw Christ's infant face
And sing a song of Martha who gave him food and space
And sing of all the Marys who heeded his requests
And now at heaven's banquet are Jesus' fondest guests.

John L Bell

Tune: Stand up, stand up for Jesus

There is a longing in our hearts, O Lord,

for you to reveal yourself to us.
There is a longing in our hearts
for love we only find in you, our God.

For justice, for freedom,
for mercy: hear our prayer.
In sorrow, in grief:
be near, hear our prayer, O God.

For wisdom, for courage,
for comfort: hear our prayer.
In weakness, in fear:
be near, hear our prayer, O God.

For healing, for wholeness,
for new life: hear our prayer.
In sickness, in death:
be near, hear our prayer, O God.

Lord save us, take pity,
light in our darkness.
We call you, we wait:
be near, hear our prayer, O God.

Anne Quigley Tune: Longing

We shall go out with hope of resurrection;

we shall go out, from strength to strength go on;
we shall go out and tell our stories boldly;
tales of a love that will not let us go.

We'll sing our songs of wrongs that can be righted;
we'll dream our dream of hurts that can be healed;
we'll weave a cloth of all the world united
within the vision of new life who sets us free.

We'll give a voice to those who have not spoken;
we'll find the words for those whose lips are sealed;
we'll make the tunes for those who sing no longer,
expressive love alive in every heart.

We'll share our joy with those who are still weeping,
raise hymns of strength for hearts that break in grief,
we'll leap and dance the resurrection story
including all in circles of our love.

June Boyce-Tillman
Tune: Londonderry Air



Thank you

Inclusive Church is grateful to those who have helped draw this material together, and have been generous in their time and expertise.

Collect, Confession and Eucharistic Prayer for Inclusive Church Sunday are used with kind permission of Steven Shakespeare

Steven is Lecturer in Philosophy at Liverpool Hope University. He is the author of *Prayers for an Inclusive Church* published by Canterbury Press. As well as an excellent introduction with helpful suggestions, this book provides a rich resource for use through the 3 year cycle.

Adult Resources: Open the Word: Everyone matters Ideas for sermon preparation are used with permission from Roots - worship and learning resources for the whole church

<http://www.rootsontheweb.com/>

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Phil is the co-author of *Moving Images, Changing Lives: Exploring the Christian Life and Confirmation with Young People Through Film* Published by Church House Publishing. A resource that offers an entirely fresh approach to an introductory course on the Christian faith based on popular films available on DVD.

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