

# Godparents Sunday – for a Service of the Word on 25th July.

## Welcome

## Getting ready prayer

Loving God

Be with us today in our worship, and our work,  
In our homes and in our hearts,  
And may we know your presence,  
As we give you thanks and praise,  
And hear your word. **Amen**

## Song – "Praise is rising"

Praise is rising  
eyes are turning to you,  
we turn to you.  
Hope is stirring,  
hearts are yearning for you,  
we long for you.  
The Lord be with you

Hear the sound of hearts  
returning to you,  
we turn to you.  
In your kingdom  
broken lives are made new,  
you make us new.

'Cause when we see you,  
we find strength  
to face the day,

in your presence  
all our fears  
are washed away,  
washed away.

Hosanna, hosanna,  
you are the God  
who saves us,  
worthy of all our praises.  
Hosanna, hosanna,  
come have your  
way among us,  
we welcome you here  
Lord Jesus.

Hosanna , Hosanna  
Hosanna , Hosanna

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*This service helps us to think about all the people who accompany us on our journey of faith – and especially about godparents and godchildren. Life is a series of hellos and goodbyes, some welcome, some unwelcome, and some a real mix.*

*The good: hello to a new child, a new relationship, an exciting new job or home...the bad: hello to a neighbour from hell, a bullying line manager, a debilitating illness...the mixed: hello to a new child, with a debilitating illness; a new relationship, with complications.*

*The good: Goodbye to the neighbours from hell, the relationship where we experienced abuse, the bullying boss...the bad: goodbye to a treasured loved one who dies, a beloved job, the energy of youth...the mixed: goodbye to the exhausting job that needed to end, but was very fulfilling; etc.*

*Today, we will celebrate and remember, knowing that we are growing together, in all the hellos and goodbyes, and we especially will remember the hellos of life today, with space to visit the church over the next 4 weeks, to say and pray our own goodbyes privately. We will pledge to continue supporting each other, and discovering more of God's love each day.*

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## The Journey of Faith

**We chat with long-standing godparents to several from our church community.**

### We say sorry

Minister: *God's love is great. God's grace is endless. Let us tell God the things we have done wrong and ask his forgiveness:*

*We look at our feet:*

We are sorry God, that we have not followed your ways.

Lord have mercy

**Lord have mercy**

*We look at our hands:*  
We are sorry God that we have not cared for the world.  
Christ have mercy  
**Christ have mercy**

*We place a hand over our heart:*  
We are sorry God that we have forgotten your love for us.  
Lord have mercy  
**Lord have mercy**

*Minister:*  
May the God of love bring us back to himself,  
Forgive us our sins,  
And assure us of his eternal love,  
In Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

**Hymn:** A new hymn for Godparents' Sunday (to the tune of 'Lord of all Hopefulness')

Thank you, O Lord, for the gift of this day:  
a time to count blessings, to think and to pray,  
support us, inspire us, and call us anew,  
help us to be faithful in following you.

Bless us in keeping our promise to care,  
our loving commitment to always be there,  
we'll smile at each moment of joy and success,  
and when life is bitter, our love is no less.

Bless us with patience, with care and with time  
to listen, to challenge, to open our mind,  
exploring life's questions in wonder and awe,  
and sharing the wisdom that loves to learn more.

Guide us, O Lord, as we walk on life's way,  
Discov'ring together fresh blessings each day,  
O Lord of our journey, we ask you to show  
the paths we might follow, the ways we may go.

(tune: 'Slane' aka "Lord of all hopefulness", words by the Revd Ally Barrett)

## Godparents Sunday prayer

Loving God, thank you for the joy of godparents and godchildren.  
Help us to reach out to each other with love  
And to grow in faith every day.  
*Amen.*

## Reading: Feeding of the 5000. John 6: 1-14

Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias), <sup>2</sup> and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the signs he had performed by healing the sick. <sup>3</sup> Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. <sup>4</sup> The Jewish Passover Festival was near.

<sup>5</sup> When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" <sup>6</sup> He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.

<sup>7</sup> Philip answered him, "It would take more than half a year's wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!"

<sup>8</sup> Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, <sup>9</sup> "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?"

<sup>10</sup> Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there). <sup>11</sup> Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish.

<sup>12</sup> When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted." <sup>13</sup> So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten.

<sup>14</sup> After the people saw the sign Jesus performed, they began to say, "Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world."

## Talk

- Ask people to share some memories of outdoor eating events – both good and bad. Sometimes when things go wrong, they change from being ordinary to extraordinary, and what feels like a disaster becomes a memory maker.
- **Story:** New Year's Day picnic in New Zealand, all the food was out, when a sudden hailstorm came. Even though everyone rushed to get in the cars, and collect up as much as possible, when the sun came out lots of things were ruined. Some of the young people present began to grumble about how the whole day would be ruined. But a wise older adult said that over a lifetime they would go to many picnics that would be forgotten – this one would remain in their memories. This is not a disaster, but a memory maker.
- That day long ago, when 500 were fed miraculously, when everyone was gathered, it might have felt like a disaster – but instead so many people went away with memories, memories of how Jesus changes things.

- Hospitality, especially over meals, creates a space where people do things, and perhaps discover their gifts and values. It's where we learn to live out our faith and our values, just like the boy did, as he offered his food to help feed the 5,000. He showed kindness and generosity, and Jesus valued that small offering, and it changed the day.
- Those who accompany us on our journey of faith – our family, but also our church family and our godparents can help to create the same kind of space, space where we are affirmed and can get to share our gifts and live out our values. There are many picnics along the way, some significant memory makers. Sharing life with others is core to our vision here, and core to what it means to be human.
- We often think of godparents as people who are generous to us with gifts – but they are also generous in their listening, in the way they affirm us, bless us and above all pray for us.
- It works both ways – most of those who are baptised are godchildren, many are also godparents. Remembering promises and praying for one another is important. And so we all have an opportunity to take part in this re-commitment.

## Re-commitment

*Invite those who are godparents to stand and recommit to this special relationship:*

**Minister:** In baptism your godchildren began their journey of faith. Today we continue to trust God that they will continue to grow in faith and love.

Will you carry on praying for them, caring for them and helping them to take their place in the life and worship of Christ's church?

**Godparents: With the help of God, we will**

*Invite everyone gathered to stand:*

When a child is baptised, we promise to welcome each child and support them in their new life of faith. Will you continue to pray for those who come to your church, their parents and godparents, encouraging them on their journey of faith?

**All: with the help of God, we will**

## We respond

**Creed or statement of faith**

*We've thought about being on a journey together, encouraging each other as we follow Jesus. Let's remind ourselves of the things we believe as we say:*

**We believe in God the Father,  
from whom every family  
in heaven and earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,  
who lives in our hearts through faith  
and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,  
who strengthens us  
with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

## Prayers:

*Invite four people to bring up candles. As each section of the prayers is read, each candle is lit.*

### *First candle:*

As we light this candle, we think of all those places in the world where being together with family and friends brings strength, and of all those places where families are struggling to find peace.

Loving God, you created us to be in families and communities and we give you thanks for the joy of being together. We pray for families in the world, especially those struggling to find peace, safety and security, and we ask that this day they may know your hope and joy.

Lord, hear our prayer

**All: Please**

### *Second candle:*

As we light this candle, we think of our own town, village, suburb, we think of the streets where we live, the places we work, the schools we go to. We think of all those who come in and out of our communities helping and supporting others, whether in their work or as volunteers, and as we think of them, so we pray:

Loving God, we give you thanks for the places where we live, and we pray for all those who show love and care for others: for doctors, nurses, social workers, teachers, police officers, care workers and so many others. Be with them in their daily work, and help them to know and to share the great love of God each day.

Lord, hear our prayer,

**All: Please**

*Third candle:*

As we light this candle, we think of those with whom we share a home or share a story; those who encourage and help us remembering our godparents and godchildren; those we take care of and those who take care of us, and so we pray:

Loving God, we give you thanks for the blessing of friends and family and we pray that you will be close to all whom we care about this day, especially praying for godparents and godchildren. We remember those who may be struggling this day especially.....

and ask that you would draw close with your healing love.

Lord, hear our prayer,

**All: Please**

*Fourth candle:*

As we light this candle, we remember our own journey of faith as we follow Jesus. We remember those who have supported and encouraged since our baptism and welcome into the church, and those we still see and those we see no longer, and so we pray:

Loving God, we thank you for calling us to be your friends and followers and for calling people to help and support us as we discover more of your love. We give you thanks for those who have encouraged us, but whom we see no longer, and ask that you will help us to keep following you more closely each day, so that one day we will be united in your presence for all eternity.

We offer all these prayers in the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour.

**All: Amen**

**The Lord's Prayer**

## Song – "Oceans"

You call me out  
upon the waters  
The great unknown  
Where feet may fail  
And there I find you  
in the mystery  
In oceans deep  
My faith will stand

And I will call  
upon Your name  
And keep my eyes  
above the waves  
When oceans rise  
My soul will rest  
in Your embrace  
For I am Yours  
and You are mine

Your grace abounds  
in deepest waters  
Your sovereign hand  
Will be my guide  
Where feet may fail  
and fear surrounds me  
You've never failed  
And You won't start now

And I will call  
upon Your name  
And keep my eyes  
above the waves  
When oceans rise  
My soul will rest  
in Your embrace  
For I am Yours  
and You are mine

Spirit lead me where  
my trust is without borders  
Let me walk upon the waters  
Wherever you would call me  
Take me deeper than  
my feet could ever wander  
And my faith will be  
made stronger  
in the presence of my Saviour.

I will call  
upon Your name  
Keep my eyes  
above the waves  
My soul will rest  
in Your embrace  
I am Yours  
and You are mine

We go out into the world.

### **Blessing**

May the God who calls us to live in his love be close to you;  
May the Son who showed us the way to God lead you;  
May the Spirit who strengthen us with joy encourage you;  
And the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
Be with you, this day and always. **Amen**

*[adapted from Festivals Together Sandra Millar SPCK 2012]*