

A Fast Food Family-Friendly Breakfast Service



This short service outline is designed as a family-friendly service, so it uses simple language. But please feel free to adapt the outline for use with different age groups.

You might find it helpful to use a simple Bible version, or even a children's Bible if it has the relevant passages.

We'd recommend that you go outside – at least for some of this. It can be great to meet round a fire. Or perhaps you can carry candles.

Also, there are downloadable pictures of persecuted Christians in the Fast Food section of the Open Doors website. You could give out one to each person for use in the time of open prayer.

Gathering

LEADER: Thank you, Lord God, for new life,
For the life we see all around us in the world you created,
And for the brand new life of a brand new day.
Most of all, today, we remember
That Jesus was raised from death.
Everyone thought that He was dead,
But He came back to life!
And that means that we can have new life, too.
Thank you.

Bible reading: Mark 16.1–8

Reflection

In Mark's story about Jesus, the women go to the tomb to find an angel telling them that Jesus is no longer there.

They are amazed at this news - and full of wonder. But Mark also says that they are a bit scared. Verse 16 says that the women 'said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid'.

Christians who are persecuted because of their faith understand this feeling only too well – although for different reasons.

For them, Easter is a time of joy and celebration, but it can also be a time of danger - because some people choose this time – the most important Christian celebration of the year - to attack churches.

In 2016, for example, over 70 Pakistani Christians were killed, and hundreds more were injured, when a bomb went off near a crowded park in Lahore. The bomb was specifically intended to target Christians celebrating Easter.

It's that kind of attack which makes many Christians around the world nervous. They are not going to stop celebrating Easter, but it makes them an 'easy target'. Like the women, 'they feel afraid'.

There are other countries, of course, where Christians cannot meet openly at all. Yet they, too, celebrate Easter. In places like North Korea or Somalia, they have their Easter celebrations quietly, in houses and apartments, in prison camps and underground churches. Just like those women, they say 'nothing to anyone'.

For us, the good news is that we do not have to be quiet at all! We live in a country where we can celebrate as loudly as we like.

But before we do that, let's take a little bit of time to think about those who have to keep quiet, and those who are worried in case their celebrations bring trouble.

Response

A short period of silence.

LEADER: Lord Jesus, we pray that you will be with all those
Who want to celebrate your resurrection
But who are scared, or anxious,
Or who are not allowed to worship openly.
Be with them we pray,
Help them to know that you are there,
Help them to be brave
And keep them safe.
Amen.

Voices of the persecuted church

Here is a short series of statements about Easter from the persecuted church. It is best if different people read out each statement.

LEADER: Now let us hear the voices of the persecuted church.

READER: An Algerian believer says this:
“I remember what the death of Jesus brought me. I remember the cross, the bloodshed,
His broken body. But it is also about freedom. If the Son makes you free, you are free
indeed.”

READER: A church leader from Mosul, Iraq, says this:
“We could close our churches to protect ourselves... Or we can hold all the
celebrations and maybe we will receive some bombs or attacks. We try to stay here
and love like Jesus Christ. We try to give this meaning of Christianity: that love and life
are better than death and killing.”

READER: A church leader in Aleppo, Syria says this:
“We looked forward to greeting each other with ‘Christ has risen’. We live in hope that
God will raise us from the tough situation the city is now in.”

READER: A believer in East Jerusalem says this:
“We remember that God showed His love for us by sending his Son to die for our sins.
He brought down the walls between us and Himself. He made our relationship with
Him complete. By being raised from the dead, Jesus conquered death. He reassures us
that we don’t have to fear death anymore.”

Prayer

*You could allow a moment here for an open time of prayer for the persecuted church.
If you have downloaded the portraits of persecuted Christians from the website, you could raise them
here to help people to pray for the different countries.*

Song

*An Easter song of praise could be sung simply or unaccompanied.
Worship song suggestions that are relevant to the persecuted church are on the Fast Food page of the
Open Doors website.*

Bible reading: John 21.1-14

*Jesus prepares breakfast for his disciples.
If you are sharing breakfast together, then this reading is especially appropriate!*

LEADER: Thank you Jesus,

Because you love us and look after us,
Because you invite us to eat with you,
Because you are with us when we are at work and at play.
Be with all your followers around the world today
As we celebrate the fact that you are not dead.
You are alive!
And you are with us always.

LEADER: And so, with Christians in Syria, in Iraq, in Algeria, in Jerusalem
and throughout the world, wherever they are gathered this Easter morning, we say
'Christ is risen'.

ALL: He is risen indeed.