



SCHOOLS SUNDAY TAS

16 FEBRUARY
2020

churches celebrating and supporting local schools



SU 
TASMANIA

RESOURCE PACK

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... an annual opportunity to pray for and support young people at school

Schools Sunday is an initiative of the Tasmanian Council of Churches, supported by SU Tasmania. Schools Sunday provides an annual opportunity for churches to pray for and support young people and the local school community at the start of a new school year. We seek to encourage Christian students and staff in their daily life at school and to challenge them to live out their faith and connect with a Christian group that might be running in the school.

This year on Schools Sunday we encourage you to plan a specific Sunday focus on schools. If the date, **16 February 2020** is unsuitable for your church calendar, choose another day, early in the school year, that works better for you.

Schools Sunday is an excellent way to encourage Christian students and school staff members to remember that God is not confined to church, but goes with them to school.

This resource is full of ideas for either a complete Sunday service or a short segment within a regular service. Use what will best suit your congregation and your situation. Message, prayers and activities are included.

The theme '**Taste, See, Smell**' explores the Bible passages Matthew 5:13-16 and 2 Corinthians 2:14. As followers of Jesus we are called to make a difference to the lives of others, shine brightly for Jesus and attract others to him.

In this resource you will find:

- Schools Sunday Service Ideas
- Message outline
- Prayer



The Tasmanian Council of Churches (TCC) is a fellowship of Christian Churches in Tasmania committed to the promotion of Christian unity. The TCC is an autonomous body with policies decided by the six Member Churches.

www.tcctas.org.au/



SU Tas (Scripture Union Tasmania) is part of a worldwide Christian movement which operates in more than 130 countries. SU Tas has worked in Tasmania for over fifty years through camps, missions, outdoor programs, resources and school chaplaincy services.

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**SCHOOLS
SUNDAY** TAS

SCHOOLS SUNDAY SERVICE IDEAS 1

Use some of these ideas to plan your own Schools Sunday service.

ON THE DAY

- Find out which schools are represented by people in your congregation (children, grandchildren, staff) and make a list on a whiteboard.
- Break the ice by asking what people's favourite class was/is, one favourite project when at school/currently, talk about their favourite teacher and why.

USING TESTIMONY

- Invite someone who is actively involved in a school to share a ministry story (chaplain, lunchtime Christian club leader, Christian teacher, student leader).
- Invite a school chaplain to bring a message and share about their work in the school. You might like to interview them instead.
- Invite a school volunteer or a parent helper to share briefly about their role in the school.
- Invite a young person to share a personal story of their friendship with Jesus. How were they welcomed into that friendship and/or their church?

FELLOWSHIP TIME

- Share a morning tea or fellowship lunch afterwards to help make the day more special.
- Use this time to raise funds for schools work.
- If you have invited your principal, chaplain or school choir use this time to connect with them.

OFFERING

- Take up a special offering that will go toward your local ecumenical schools work, local chaplain or an organisation that works in schools.
- Invite children or teens to take up the offering and lead offering prayers.
- Take an offering and support an aid organisation working with children.

Here are some ways to pray for local schools in your church's district, town, or suburb and the children in your congregation who attend there.

SCHOOLS SUNDAY SERVICE IDEAS 2

PRAYING

What to Pray

- Invite a chaplain or people from the congregation who work or volunteer in schools to share prayer points for their school/s and pray for them.
- Invite children to write a prayer for their school and read these out on Schools Sunday or use the prayers on page 12.

How to Pray

- Invite young people to lead prayers or invite members of the congregation representing different age groups to lead prayers.
- Invite to the front those who work or volunteer in schools, lay hands on them and pray for them.
- Invite the congregation to list prayer points for schools/education then form small groups and spend some time praying through the different topics.
- Give different members of the congregation one of the topics below asking them to write a prayer to pray on Schools Sunday.

STUDENTS

- Beginning school for the first time
- Starting at a new school
- Experiencing learning or relationship difficulties
- Student leaders and Christian students

SCHOOL STAFF

- In your congregation
- Principals and teachers
- Support and administration staff

FAMILIES

- Wise parenting
- Christian families
- Those experiencing relationship difficulties
- Those serving the school as volunteers

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

- Federal Minister for Education
- Tasmanian Minister for Education
- Departmental staff, curriculum and policy makers
- National Schools Chaplaincy Program

MESSAGE OUTLINE

Use this outline
as a basis for
a message.
PowerPoint slides
are available
to enhance the
message.

INTRODUCTION

WELCOME

On this Schools Sunday we think about the new school year and getting ready for what lies ahead. We don't know what will happen this year, but one thing we can know for sure, whether we go to kinder, school, university, work, or anywhere is that God goes with us.

I am the Lord your God. I am holding your hand so don't be afraid. I am here to help you." Isaiah 41:13 (CEV)

We can know that God is with us, loves us and has promised to help us wherever we go.

Let's start by praising God for this as we ...

This would be a good time to pray or sing.

For those of us who are God's friends, it's important not only to believe that God is with us and helps us but to show we believe this by the way we live.

Jesus, God's Son, taught his disciples what being God's friend looks like, and with the help of the Holy Spirit we can do what he says and make a difference to those around us. Others will taste, see and smell the difference.

BIBLE TEACHING 1 - TASTE

Let's hear what Jesus says about being 'Tasty' in Matthew 5:13.



You are like salt for everyone on earth. But if salt no longer tastes like salt, how can it make food salty? All it's good for is to be thrown out and walked on. Matthew 5:13 (CEV)

Jesus doesn't mean that people are salt. Jesus is using picture language here, using something that people use in everyday life – salt – to help us understand what he is teaching.

He is using salt, and what it is like, to help us understand what we should be like. So, what is salt like? What difference does it make? Let's find out!



ACTIVITY - Choose one of the following illustrations:

- Invite someone to wash their hands and then to dip a finger in a glass of plain water, then another finger in a glass of salt water. Invite them to lick their fingers. Can they tell which is which? What is the difference between them?
- Invite someone to taste an unsalted crisp and then try a ready salted one. What is the difference between them?

TASTE

MESSAGE OUTLINE

Salt is very important. We can't always see the salt, but when it is there we can tell – we notice the difference.

When Jesus said we are the salt of the earth, he meant that people like you and me can make a difference to the people around us. We might look like other people on the outside – but if we follow Jesus, we are different on the inside. People can see the difference Jesus makes, just like they can tell whether something has salt in it or not!

We do this by copying Jesus and the kind of things he did. Not like Morph...

Watch a clip from YouTube 'Morph Portable hole' in which Morph tricks his friend or a similar short clip that will appeal to all ages.

https://www.comedy.co.uk/online/videos/7799/morph_episode_2_portable_hole/

In the second part of the Bible verse, Jesus is giving us a bit of a warning. "...if the salt loses its salty taste, it cannot be made salty again. It is good for nothing. It must be thrown out for people to walk on." v13

What he is saying is that we need to pay attention. We need to keep reminding ourselves to make a difference, letting others see what Jesus is like. We do this by copying Jesus and the kind of things he did, rather than the kind of things people around us are doing!

But being salty means not just letting other people get a flavour of what Jesus is like by the way we speak, and the things we do. It is much more. It is about bringing out the best in other people and making their lives better.

For example, we might know someone who isn't confident. By getting alongside them we can encourage them with our words, help them see what they are good at, and give them the confidence to try new things.

DISCUSSION - You may like to break into small groups to discuss the following.

Questions to think about

- ▶ Do we think, speak and act differently because Jesus is our friend?
- ▶ Do we make a difference to the people around us? Are we good to be with? Do we cheer people up, and encourage them with kind words? Do we bless them, and point them to God?

In other words, can we be like Jesus? When we use kind words and actions and encourage others, we are being tasty – like salt.

**You are like salt
for everyone**

MESSAGE OUTLINE

SEE

Live so they will
see the good
things you do.

BIBLE TEACHING 2 - SEE

Jesus goes on to say, "You are the light that gives light to the world. A city that is built on a hill cannot be hidden. And people don't hide a light under a bowl. They put the light on a lampstand. Then the light shines for all the people in the house. In the same way, you should be a light for other people. Live so that they will see the good things you do. Live so that they will praise your Father in heaven." Matthew 5:14-16

Light is very powerful! (Turn on a strong beam of light, such as a powerful torch). Imagine if there was no sun, no moon, no street lights. The world would be a very dark place indeed. We need light – it is very important.

Light...

- ▶ Attracts (moths buzzing around a lamp)
- ▶ Shows the way (street light)
- ▶ Gives warmth and heat (blazing bonfire)
- ▶ Spreads and brings hope (dawn)



ACTIVITY - The Light Test

Before the service, place a number of items inside a bag. Suggested items: an apple, a mug, a watch, a ruler, a school hat, a sharpener, a sandwich box. Invite a child to feel inside the bag and guess an item. Give others a turn. One by one bring all the items out into the light to reveal them.

We can only really know what these things are when they are out in the light. In the same way the Bible tells us that if we follow Jesus, we shouldn't keep it a secret and keep it in the dark. Rather, we should be happy to bring that good news into the open, to share it with our friends.

Light is about being visible so others can see God: that means not hiding the good things we know about him and the great things he has done for us but sharing that with other people.

How brightly are you shining in your school, or where you work or live? Jesus says a city on a hill cannot be hidden. That can be a good thing. A city on a hill can be attractive. People want to go there. It's so bright on a dark night, everyone can see it, like the Emerald City in the Wizard of Oz.

But being like a city lit up on a hill is also a challenge, because a city on a hill can't be hidden. It is so bright, everyone can see it. When you shine brightly for Jesus, you stand out from the crowd. That can be scary! Sometimes sharing and doing what Jesus says is hard. It attracts attention. It might be embarrassing. It might even cause offence, because some people just won't want to know about Jesus! The Bible tells us to expect this.

Hold up a glowstick and break it open – or switch on a battery tealight.

SEE

MESSAGE OUTLINE

On its own, this one single light can be very lonely, and not very bright. However, if it is joined by others, the light increases.

Invite children to share out glowsticks or tealights with everyone. Break open the glowstick, or switch on the tealight and stand together as a group.

The wonderful thing about being part of a church family is that we can get together to share the light of Jesus. When there are lots of us together, the light spreads!

And suddenly the thought of letting others see the difference he makes isn't quite as scary. That's why we should get together as Christians as often as we can – to support and encourage one another at school or here at church. And that's why it is important we all pray for those who are at school, asking God to shine his light through them.

We can shine more brightly when we shine together.

If space allows, invite children to bring their lights to the front and stand in a group. Then invite school staff, parents, and adults associated with schools to come forward to join them. If they are associated with a few local schools you may like to ask them to group themselves according to the school community they belong to, holding up the name of their school, so there is a visible image of light shining in each of these places.



PRAYER

Before the service identify children, teenagers and adults who might take part in the following prayer. Ask those taking part to come forward and invite the whole congregation to join in by saying together the phrase "Help me to shine brightly" after each person has spoken.

(pupil) When I stop and help someone in the playground...

(all) help me to shine brightly.

(pupil) When I do the right thing and include people that others leave out...

(all) help me to shine brightly.

(pupil) When people laugh because I am the only one who doesn't swear...

(all) help me to shine brightly.

(pupil) When others mock me for going to church...

(all) help me to shine brightly.

(pupil) When I am brave enough to invite friends along to church...

(all) help me to shine brightly.

(staff) When I treat my pupils with love and respect...

(all) help me to shine brightly.

(staff) When I chat to others in the staffroom...

(all) help me to shine brightly.

(adult) When I talk to parents and grandparents at the school gate...

(all) help me to shine brightly.

(adult) When I faithfully pray for my school...

(all) help me to shine brightly.

ALL AMEN.

MESSAGE OUTLINE

SMELL

**We are the sweet
smell of Christ.**

PRAISE

For younger children:

This Little Light of Mine (Lifetree Kids, ©2016)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=ty9bZXN4uWA

For older children and teenagers:

This Little Light (LZ7, ©2010) is a good rap video to watch.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=ByngJjnhKb4&list=PLynpFt68hA-elHQMxFK6jqyRCuyozl_h

BIBLE TEACHING 3 - SMELL

The Bible tells us that we are smelly – but in a good way!



We are the sweet smell of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are being lost. 2 Corinthians 2:14 (ICB)

Let's think about what that might mean.



ACTIVITY - The Sniff Test

(For this activity you will need to pre-purchase Scratch 'n' Sniff stickers).

Invite children to smell some stickers. What are they smelling? What item does each sticker make them think of?

We are the sweet smell of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are being lost. 2 Corinthians 2:14 (ICB)

As followers of Jesus, we are the sweet smell of Jesus to others who don't know him. We remind people of Jesus, and what he is like.

When we smell something nice, we want to find out more. We are attracted towards it – like freshly made bread, flowers, chocolate, or roasted coffee. If we want other people to be attracted to Jesus, then we need to spend time with him. The more we read of him in the Bible, the more we will want to get to know him better. The closer we become friends with Jesus, the more like him we will become. People will be attracted, not to who we are, but to who Jesus is.

CONCLUSION



So, as we finish. The Bible calls us as Jesus' followers to:

- ▶ Make a difference to the lives of others
- ▶ Shine brightly for Jesus
- ▶ Attract others to Jesus.

In other words, to be Tasty, Bright and Smelly!



PRAYER

Our loving Heavenly Father, send us out from here with a desire to let others see the difference you make to our lives. Shine brightly in our hearts, so that others might be attracted to Jesus. Give us courage. Give us the help of your Holy Spirit. And may all the glory be given to you.

Amen.

PRAYER

Use the prayers below for your church service.



SCHOOL PUPIL: Lord God, we thank you for our schools. Thank you for all the teachers, the school staff, every pupil and family who belong to our schools.

Thank you that schools are where we can learn, grow bigger and wiser and develop to our full potential, becoming the best we can be.

Thank you that we go back to school with you, Lord God, for you are always with us. Make us aware of your presence – in the classroom, in the play-ground, wherever we go.



PARENT/GRANDPARENT: Thank you, Lord God, for every Christian who is part of a local school – pupils, teachers, parents, helpers, volunteers who come in to encourage, support and enrich the school life.

As a church we pray that each Christian will be salt and light where you have placed them. Help all of us to encourage, support, value, and pray for our schools.

Bring your influence to bear in the education and nurture of our children and young people. We pray for the school leadership and management, that you will bless them with wisdom, integrity and vision.

Protect and guide key areas of Christian witness: particularly our school chaplains. Make your light to shine in (name your local schools).



YOUNG PERSON: Lord God, we ask you to help Christian students and staff to live out their faith day by day in their school community, and that their words, thoughts and actions will point to you.

Help us, as students, to work hard, give our best to learning and to be a positive influence on school life. Help us, as your children, to give our minds, hearts and wills to you.

Thank you for everyone who encourages, strengthens and challenges us to live for you. Thank you that your Holy Spirit is with us day by day, giving us your peace and your power.

Thank you that we can trust you to be with us each day, wherever we are: in school, at work, at home, with friends and family, when we are on our own.

We thank SU Scotland for much of this content.

