



TASMANIAN
COUNCIL OF
CHURCHES

SCHOOLS SUNDAY TAS



14 MARCH
2021

churches celebrating and supporting local schools



RESOURCE PACK

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I will watch over you



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



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.tctas.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 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.

This year on Schools Sunday we encourage you to plan a specific Sunday focus on schools. If the date, **14 March 2021** 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 intergenerational Sunday service or a short segment within a regular service. Use what will best suit your congregation and your situation. Message and prayer ideas and activities are included.

In this resource you will find:

- ▶ Schools Sunday Service Ideas
- ▶ Message outline
- ▶ Prayer

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

SCHOOLS SUNDAY SERVICE IDEAS 1

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.

SINGING

- Invite your school choir to present several items.
- Ask your Children's Ministry group and/or youth group to present an item/s.
- Revive some old Sunday School songs.

BIBLE READING

MARK 4:35-41 (see message ideas on pages 6-8)

- Invite teens or children to read the Bible.
- Dramatise the reading with different people reading the different parts.
- Download the animated story from <https://www.max7.org/en/resource/wild-mark-4-35to41> and watch.
- Spontaneous Drama: as you read the story from the Bible invite everyone to join in with actions for certain words. Indicate what these are, miming the actions. (NB: If you choose to read from a version other than the Contemporary English Version, you will need to check that the words below are in the version that you are using.)
 - **water/waves** – make a wave motion;
 - **Jesus** – point upwards;
 - **boat** – pretend to row a boat;
 - **asleep** – rest head on hands;
 - **wind** – wave arms;
 - **afraid** – pretend to bite fingernails;

SCHOOLS SUNDAY SERVICE IDEAS 2

Use these further ideas to plan your own Schools Sunday service.

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.
- 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 young people in your congregation who attend there.

SCHOOLS SUNDAY SERVICE IDEAS 3

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.

How to Pray

- Invite the children 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

I will watch over you ...

MESSAGE OUTLINE

Use this outline
as a basis for a
message.

in times of CHANGE

WELCOME

As we gather together we would like to assure those of you involved in the life of a school - whether as a student or an adult - that we, as your church family, are praying for you. We have an amazing God who is with us no matter where we go and what we do. But more than that: if we are a friend of Jesus then he is not only with us, but helping us as we go about our daily life.

Genesis 28:15 says: 'Wherever you go, I will watch over you, then later I will bring you back to this land. I won't leave you - I will do all I have promised.'

Talk about the types of changes that individuals in your congregation are facing:

- Going to a new school
- Starting a new school year with a different teacher and classmates
- Moving to a new home
- Changing jobs
- Welcoming a new family member

Invite some to share about these changes.



ACTIVITY IN SMALL GROUPS

Gather in small groups or family groups. Make sure that the children are included. Invite each person to name a change that is happening or likely to happen in their lives. Take turns to toss a coin.

- **Heads** - name one thing that you are looking forward to with the change (or what makes you happy?)
- **Tails** - name one thing about the change that you will have to leave behind (or what makes you sad/mad?)

Life is full of challenges and changes. From starting a new school to coping with a pandemic, the way we adapt and move forward with change makes a difference. And God is with us through that change

Read Genesis 28:15 again.

Pray Give praise and thanks that God is always with us. Give thanks also that family and friends are there to support us through change.

This would be a good time to sing.

I will watch over you ...

in times of FEAR

MESSAGE OUTLINE

Show some pictures or video footage of severe weather events or share a personal story of your involvement in such an event.



BIBLE READING

Mark 4:35-41 Use one of the suggestions from page 3.

Which do you think concerned Jesus more: the storm or the screaming disciples? If you were Jesus, what do you think you would have said to the disciples?

You could also read the story from Matthew 8 and Luke 8.

In each version, Jesus is trying to take some time away from a large crowd. Jesus is looking for some quiet space and yet the disciples wake him in a terrified state.

Consider and expand on the following. Or discuss in small groups and share.

- ▶ What does it mean that Jesus can speak to the weather and calm it down?
- ▶ How does your response to a worry or a change make it better or worse?
- ▶ How do you think Jesus would want to respond to your worry or change?
- ▶ Where in your life do you need to hear Jesus say, 'Peace, be still!'
- ▶ What person or activity helps you calm down in the midst of chaos?
- ▶ Where in the lives of friends and family does Jesus call you to say, 'Peace, be still!'
- ▶ Where is the church called to speak, 'Peace, be still!' in our world today?

MESSAGE OUTLINE

I will watch over you ...

*in times of **WORRY***

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

Either in small groups or as a large group, talk about what it means to worry.

- ▶ Why do we worry?
- ▶ How do you know when you are worried?
- ▶ Who do you tell when you are worried?
- ▶ What is your greatest worry?



BIBLE READING

Matthew 6:25-34. Use one of the suggestions from page 3.

Jesus gives some clear reasons why we should not worry. The answer is more than simply saying, 'Don't worry.' Instead, 'Put God's work first and do what he wants.' (v.33)

Consider and expand on the following. Or discuss in small groups and share.

- ▶ What types of things do you worry about?
- ▶ Jesus clearly says that we should not worry. What reasons does he give?
- ▶ What are the promises/statements that Jesus gives about God's care for us?
- ▶ How can we claim these things for ourselves and keep them in our minds;
 1. Aren't you worth more than the birds? (v.26)
 2. God will do even more for you (v.30)
 3. Your Father in heaven knows that you need all of these (v.32)
 4. Put God's work first (v.33)



ACTIVITY - WORRY KNOT

Give each person (or family) a short length (<1m) of rope/cord. Invite them to tie one knot in their worry rope for each worry that was identified in their group/family. Take the rope home and revisit the list of worries later in the week and after they have prayed about them. Untie a knot when a worry ends.

Use the prayers below as a guide for integrating prayer into your church service.

PRAYER



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

Thank you that schools are where we can learn 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. Guide our footsteps. Help us to put you first and do what you would want us to do.



PARENT/GRANDPARENT: Thank you, Lord God, for every Christian who is part of a local school – students, 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. Lead schools to be places of positive learning. We pray for the school leadership and management, that you will bless them with wisdom, integrity and vision.

Protect and guide our school chaplains in (name your local schools where chaplains are employed).



YOUNG PERSON: Lord, 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. May the truth and reality of you and your ways be evident in the lives of your people.

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. Most of all, thank you that you sent your son Jesus as Saviour of the world to live, die on the cross, and rise from the dead. Thank you that your Holy Spirit is with us each 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.

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