

EXPRESS YOURSELF

**Theme Resource Pack
July-August 2026
(5 July - 5 September)**

Introduction

Becoming a Christian doesn't mean losing your identity. Becoming a Christian doesn't mean sanding off all the quirks and rough edges. Being a Christian doesn't mean 'fitting in'. Being a Christian means be 'fitted out'! Fitting out a new life with everything that you truly are.

God does not ask us to blend in and keep our heads down. God does not invite you to *lose* yourself in something bigger, but rather to *find* yourself as part of something bigger. Bringing all those quirks and rough edges to contribute to more than the sum of our parts. Through expressing our true selves to God and one another we uncover who we have always been at heart.

This summer as a community we are exploring the many different ways we express ourselves — through food, music, art, sport, festival and celebration.

God does not ask for conformity, God asks for generosity. God does not ask for timidity — God asks for tenacity. God does not call us to be insular — but urges us to look out. Expressing ourselves through the things we love is not a reward for being a Christian — it's what it IS to BE a Christian. The expression — of compassion, of kindness, of love, of imagination, of care, of art, of adventure, of effort, — are not incidental, they are a human being fully alive!

So this summer — all you've got to do is express yourself!

1. **You are what you eat! — Food**
2. **Gameface! — Team Sports**
3. **Secret Chords and a well known chorus — Music**
4. **A lamp to our feet — Running with God**
5. **Coming face to face with God — Art**
6. **A heavenly party — Festivals and celebrations**
7. **Unity through diversity**
8. **Everyday glory — Work**
9. **Expressing God's love in the world!**

Format

This theme will run 9 weeks taking us from 5 July to 5 September.

Our themes drawn from Revised Common Lectionary and additional readings shape our Daily Worship, live streams and all sorts of other creative things we get up to! Each week runs Sunday - Saturday and each has a series of daily Bible readings and prompts for reflection.

You are what you eat! — Food (Week 1, 5 July)

Introduction: Our theme begins at the breakfast table as we explore what we eat, what it says about us, and how food can be an important way of understanding theology.

Seeds to sow: How could you share food with someone who is hungry this week?

1. **John 6: 35 The bread of life!** We must continually eat to survive, we cannot eat once and then be full for the rest of our days. Explore the sustenance parallel here. **Write a prayer giving thanks for daily bread.**
2. **1 Corinthians 10: 14-33 Mouth open? Eyes open!** When we choose to eat something we are choosing to participate in the whole system that brought it to our plate. What are the modern demons and ideologies our food has been sacrificed to? **Write a prayer for guidance in eating well.**
3. **Romans 14: 1-23 'TLC': Tolerance, Love, Compassion.** Paul's instructions here are nuanced, how can we practice 'TLC' to use food to bring people together, rather than apart? **Write a prayer motivating us to hospitality.**
4. **Proverbs 16: 24 Honeycomb prayers.** What are our honeycomb prayers? How could we use food to bless and encourage someone this week? **Write a 'Honeycomb Prayer' to encourage someone.**
5. **Psalms 107: 8-9 Filled with good things.** God wants to feed the hungry. We live on a planet covered in food but there is so much structural inequality and waste. How can we express our love for God's creation by working towards a fairer 'fuller' world? **Write a prayer calling for food justice.**
6. **1 Timothy 6: 7-8 Snacking on the go.** What meal or recipe makes you feel content or blessed? **Write a prayer giving thanks for food.**
7. **Nehemiah 8: 10 Eat the fat!** Food sustains us, renews us, delights us, fuels us, and is a way of us showing love and care for others. Celebratory meals are theology in action. What is your choice food for a celebration? **Write a prayer for using food in celebration.**

Gameface! — Team Sports (Week 2, 12 July)

Introduction: This week millions of people are drawn together as the World Cup enters its final week. Throughout history and all over the world we have used sports and games for self-discovery, self-expression and learning vital life skills of cooperation, coordination and compassion. How does faith inspire our sport and how does sport inspire our faith?

Seeds to sow: There were enough disciples for a game of five-a-side! Picture the scene, Jesus and his rag-tag crew kicking a ball around.

- 1. Galatians 6: 1-6 The 'I' in team.** Christianity is a team sport. We succeed by building each other up and carrying the load, not by being judgemental and tearing each other down. **Write a prayer for teamwork.**
- 2. Ephesians 4: 1-6 Coach Paul in the dugout!** Coach Paul launches into a halftime team talk and it's all about unity! Is this a message church leaders need to hear more often? **Write a prayer encouraging unity.**
- 3. Ephesians 4: 11-16 Building up the team!** Coach Paul wants us to be supporting ligaments — building one another up as we grow. A football team with 11 goalkeepers isn't scoring any goals, and one with 11 strikers isn't stopping any. **Write a prayer calling for cooperation.**
- 4. Ephesians 4: 25-32 Build a bridge... and get over it!** Coach Paul urges us to speak the truth to one another but also to forgive readily and let go! A team might survive through resentment, but it won't thrive! **Write a prayer for forgiveness.**
- 5. Philippians 2: 1-4 MVPs not VIPs.** In team sports MVPs is shorthand for 'Most Valued Players.' The Most Valued Players are the players who value their teammates the most. **Write a prayer about the value of humility.**
- 6. Galatians 6: 9-10 Re-Vive.** Sometimes teams start to fray not out of conflict or bitterness but just out of sheer exhaustion. What teams are we in that need revived and inspired again to continue doing good? **Write a prayer to revive and inspire teams.**
- 7. Ecclesiastes 4: 9-12 Threefold cord.** A beautiful picture of a team, a family, of the Trinity even — of separate things becoming more than the sum of their parts. How can the threefold cord of the Trinity inspire us to work closer together for the flourishing of all? **Write a prayer for our teams and communities to flourish.**

Secret Chords and a well known chorus — Music (Week 3, 19 July)

Introduction: New fingers tap on a crib, fresh ears turn to the sound of birds in the trees, loving adults sing existence into being around us as we learn to focus, to hear, to understand reality and the patterns of love and grace in our world. Music is a profound mode of expression that helps us to reach beyond words to God; from David's secret chord that he played that pleased the Lord, to that half-remembered song from childhood that suddenly bursts into your consciousness in the midst of a crisis

Seeds to sow: What song stops you in your tracks? And What song makes you have to move?!

1. **Psalm 71: 15-24 Uncontainable.** We cannot contain the music of our souls, it spills out of us! What are the songs and tunes spilling out of your life — offered to God? **Write a prayer calling us to sing praise.**
2. **Psalm 150 Gie it laldy!** What are the many and varied ways we can praise the Lord today! **Write a prayer for Worship leaders.**
3. **2 Samuel 6: 12-16 Dancing with all his might** What makes you throw shapes? When was the last time you danced with all your might? How does dancing help us express ourselves in way that words sometimes can't? **Write a prayer celebrating how dancing helps us to express ourselves.**
4. **Ezra 3: 10-13 A worship that can host weeping and wonder!** Music can allow us to express the gaps between words and between emotions — where feelings and ideas overlap and intermingle. What have been particularly meaningful times of sung worship for you? **Write prayer for honest worship.**
5. **Psalm 98 Join me!** How are we calling one another to worship, not just weekly, but in our daily lives? **Write a prayer calling one another to worship this day.**
6. **Mark 14: 26 The Last Hymn...** A small detail, easy to miss, of what must have been a poignant moment. Let's linger here in this verse. When has music stepped in to express something bittersweet in your life? **Write a prayer for the comfort of music to draw alongside people.**
7. **Psalm 95: 1-7 Sing for joy to the Lord!** Singing helps us to discover who we are and who God is. **Write a prayer of joy and thanksgiving.**

A lamp to our feet — Running with God (Week 4, 26 July)

Introduction: As the Commonwealth Games come to Scotland we return to the sports arena to consider how the determination, discipline, and diversity of sporting events can inspire us to think about our faith differently. At a time when much divides us — sport often transcends our divisions. How can sport be not just a *metaphor* but also a *means* of sharing our faith?

Seeds to sow: What athletes and sportspeople inspire you?

- 1 Corinthians 6: 19-20 Yes, your body too!** Your body is a temple! How do you honour God with your body? This doesn't have to be running a marathon or climbing a mountain! Simple breathing honours God! How do our very bodies express how we feel about God? **Write a prayer about movement and self-expression.**
- Habakkuk 2: 1-3 Starting blocks everyone!** The athlete is prepared, ears open, eyes front. Are we heralds ready to run awaiting the starting pistol? Or are we back in the athlete's village missing it? **Write a prayer of responsiveness and alertness to God.**
- Psalms 119: 105-112 Night running!** Our feet need a lamp when it's dark like the training athlete needs street lights, reflective clothing, perhaps a head torch. Metaphorically speaking are we only ever running in the light or as we ever going night running relying on God in the dark times as well as the bright times? **Write a prayer for guidance and direction through difficult times.**
- 1 Corinthians 9: 24-27 The wreathes that last.** Coach Paul is back and he's going hard on the sports analogies! Organised professional sports were 'a thing' in the first century when Paul was writing all his letters. **Write a prayer for self-discipline and focus.**
- 2 Timothy 4: 6-8 'I have run the race.'** We run, not only 'to God', but 'with God'. We run, not only 'to one another', but 'with one another'. As we run further and further along the track we are running to a fuller and fuller expression of who we are — loved into being as we fight the good fight. **Write a prayer of gratitude for those we have loved and lost.**
- Romans 12: 1-2 All in.** Training to compete in something like the Commonwealth Games or Olympics is a full body, mind, and soul effort. Living as a Christian is the same — it's not merely a mental exercise or spiritual effort. Do we forget our bodies and focus only on our minds and souls?
- Hebrews 12: 1 The race set before us!** We couldn't *not* have this verse could we? One of the most memorable sporting metaphors — not just in Christianity, but in the world. Running, walking, swimming, jumping, crawling, paddling — there is no race without effort and endurance, and there is no Christian life without perseverance. **Write a prayer for perseverance and endurance.**

Coming face to face with God — Art (Week 5, 2 August)

Introduction: This week we leave the stadium and hit the art gallery as we consider how art gives us ways of coming face to face with God as we strive to express ourselves and who God is to us. Art allows us to draw what we cannot speak, to paint what we can only glimpse, to sculpt a gesture we cannot hope to describe but can instantly recognise.

Seeds to sow: What artists or particular works of art have shaped and informed your faith?

- 1. Genesis 32: 22-31 Face to face with God.** This scene, often itself depicted in art, shows us a particularly bracing encounter of coming face to face with God. The wild and wayward Jacob is stopped in his tracks by God and made to confront who he is and who he is to become. What scenes and pictures stop you in your tracks as they express something of God to you? **Write a prayer for getting to know God.**
- 2. Psalm 17: 1-7, 15 Beholding your likeness.** Art across media gives us ways of imperfectly and partially seeing something of God's likeness. How has drawing, painting, sculpting or any other media helped you recognise God? **Write a prayer about how art can help us recognise God.**
- 3. Isaiah 55: 1-5 A series of words that give us pictures.** Isaiah paints us a vivid picture. It's thought-provoking to consider that despite the visual and vibrant language in much of the Bible it contains no images itself. Why do you think this is the case? Why do we draw the pictures anew each time? **Write a prayer for how art can bring the Bible alive for people.**
- 4. Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21 Abounding!** This psalm brings us to a holy place — to consider the very nature of God. If a picture paints a thousand words, what work of art has given us a 'thousand words' on the nature of God? **Write a prayer about encountering the nature of God.**
- 5. Matthew 14: 13-21 A living, breathing, munching, art installation.** One way of looking at this scene, again often depicted in paintings, is as a piece of performance art! An interactive exhibit that makes grace tangible and taste-able. **Write a prayer for the feeding of the hungry.**
- 6. Exodus 35: 30-35 CCC, Collaboration and Cooperation through Craftsmanship.** How does this reading inspire us to bring creatives of different disciplines together to create something more than the sum of their parts to praise God? **Write a prayer for creative collaboration.**
- 7. Daniel 5 Reading the writing on the wall.** Another intensely visual and atmospheric sequence in the Bible. Why does writing on the wall often challenge us more than the words we hear? (Note, Daily worship writer to choose specific verse range to focus on.) **Write a prayer asking for guidance and discernment.**

A heavenly party — Festivals and celebrations (Week 6, 9 August)

Introduction: Humanity is united across the world by a passion for using food, colour, music and dancing to celebrate who we are and what matters to us. Festivals give us opportunities to step out of the everyday; to remember, to discover, to imagine. Our faith is built on a long tradition of festivals. Are we living out the 'heavenly party' as Michelle Guinness memorably describes it!

Seeds to sow: What celebrations, get-togethers, festivals or concerts have been meaningful to you?

- 1. Genesis 32: 22-31 Joseph's coat makes him 'festival ready'** The prompt here is tongue-in-cheek but it points to a truth about identity and the risks of self-expression. Jacob wears his dazzling multicoloured coat and is bullied, ostracised, beaten and stripped of his humanity as he is sold in to slavery. The world may not always accept who we are — but in the festival of God's love, our father does, and dresses us with honour. **Write a prayer for acceptance.**
- 2. Psalm 105: 1-6, 16-22, 45b Reliving the story.** Through festivals and celebrations we can re-live the stories that have shaped our faith. Joseph's story of multicoloured-rags to bright raiments is a dramatic tale full of twists and turns. **Write a prayer remembering the stories that have shaped our faith.**
- 3. 1 Kings 19: 9-18 Encountering God in the silence.** When all is fire and flood — festivals and retreats can give us new ways of hearing God through the quiet. **Write a prayer to meet God in silence.**
- 4. Psalm 85: 8-13 A meeting place.** Righteousness and peace is not maintained by keeping things apart — but by bringing them together. Like love and faithfulness meeting in a loving embrace. **Write a prayer calling for mutual love and respect.**
- 5. Romans 10: 5-15 A new kind of community.** The festivals and celebrations of the early church were marked by their diversity — crossing established gender, ethnic and cultural lines. Are the demographics of our festivals still surprising in their inclusivity? **Write a prayer celebrating diversity.**
- 6. Matthew 14: 22-33 Peter sinks in the waves.** As the proverb goes, "If you want to go fast travel alone, if you want to go far travel together." Peter walks steadily across the waves when he walks to Jesus, but he begins to sink when he walks alone. **Write a prayer for people travelling along together.**
- 7. Galatians 3: 26-29 All one.** International festivals and celebrations can sometimes give us brief glimpses of heaven in their diversity and unity. **Write a prayer giving thanks for festivals and large events that bring people together.**

Unity through diversity (Week 7, 16 August)

Introduction: Self-expression is not a 'zero sum game'. More 'you' doesn't make less 'me.' But so much of our life is lived with that assumption — that there is finite attention and we have to compete for it. We live in an attention economy that farms our eyeballs by keeping us stuck scrolling. But God has enough attention for all of us. What is more, the human heart has far more room and compassion than we give it credit for — God made it that way. The more we care the more capacity we have to care. The more we love the more we can love. The more we truly listen, the more we can truly speak.

Seeds to sow: What can we do to foster positive spaces online?

- 1. Genesis 45:1-15 What Would Joseph do? WWJD** — what would *Joseph* do? Face to face again with his brothers, who beat him and sold him into slavery? His life is unrecognisable from back then and yet the link is there living and breathing before him. **Write a prayer for reconciliation.**
- 2. Psalm 133 It stays with you.** What a picture, of the oil infusing Aaron's beard and his robes. A fragrance that lingers, for days afterwards. How is unity permeating our lives? **Write a prayer for unity to overcome conflict.**
- 3. Isaiah 56:1-8 A house of prayer for all people.** God's sanctuary is open to all but it is a restless sanctuary — a ship not to sit out the the storm but to sail through it. **Write a prayer to strengthen global connections.**
- 4. Psalm 67 One face — many features!** May all of humanity in all our diversity reflect back the shining face of God! **Write a prayer for harmony.**
- 5. Romans 15: 1-6 One voice — many accents!** In all our different languages and accents we can speak in Christ's voice when we build each other up with Christlike compassion. **Write a prayer for dialogue between hostile groups.**
- 6. Matthew 14: 22-33 A new way of living, inside out.** This new kind of people are not united by what they eat, but by what they say. **Write a prayer to guide us in speaking words from the heart.**
- 7. John 13: 34-35 "I ken, you're with Jesus aren't you?"** Knowing Jesus, kenning Jesus, we love one another, and by that we are kened. **Write a prayer for unity and collaboration between denominations and organisations.**

Everyday glory — the work of our hands (Week 8, 23 August)

Introduction: This week we explore how our work gives us opportunities to express who we are and who God is day by day. When we complete ordinary important tasks, slog at backlogs, serve each other, care sensitively, look for improvements, choose compassion, give our time generously, support colleagues, act with grace, go the extra mile... we can bring glory to God. God's glory is not only heard in a pulpit or sung in the pews; it is at the bottom of the laundry basket, in the midst of the to-do list, attached to an email, and in the operating theatre.

Seeds to sow: How might God surprise you in the midst of your work this week?

- 1. Isaiah 51:1-6 You're made of strong stuff!** Work, in all its various forms, can be stressful and exhausting. Taking time to remember the rock from which you were hewn — the strong stuff from which you were made, the lineage of courageous and characterful humans that have gone before you — can be grounding. **Write a prayer for God's help and encouragement through stress.**
- 2. Ephesians 2: 8-10 Working it out.** We don't work to earn God's love and respect — we work because we are already loved and respected! **Write a prayer for a good day's work.**
- 3. Exodus 1: 8-21 Under pressure.** Shiphrah and Puah save an entire generation through their courage and creativity. **Write a prayer for healthcare workers around the world saving lives in awful circumstances.**
- 4. Psalm 138 God's outstretched hand.** We ourselves are the work of God's hands! Our handiwork is held in the hands of God. **Write a prayer for renewal and refocus in work.**
- 5. Romans 12: 1-8 True worship is how we live!** Not for an hour on a Sunday, but also 9-5 Monday to Friday, and indeed 24/7! **Write a prayer for people working shifts, on call, overtime, or working rotation.**
- 6. Matthew 16: 13-20 A new way of living, inside out.** This new kind of people are not united by what they eat, but by what they say. **Write a prayer to guide us in speaking words from the heart.**
- 7. John 13: 34-35 Vocation, Vocation, Vocation.** What can we learn about our own vocation in life from this encounter between Jesus and Peter? **Write a prayer asking for clarity in our vocation.**

God's love in the world — Express yourself! (Week 9, 30 August)

Introduction: In our final week we think about how our entire lives broadcast who we are and what we care about. How are we demonstrating, describing and delivering God's love in the world? How are we expressing ourselves, our faith and our love?

Seeds to sow: How does God delight in you this week?

- 1. Exodus 3: 1-15 The far side of the wilderness.** Perhaps in order to hear God's call we sometimes have to roam to the far side of the wilderness. When has God spoken to us unexpectedly and vividly? **Write a prayer for revelation and guidance.**
- 2. Psalm 105: 1-6 Making it known.** How are we ourselves making known among the nations what God has done? **Write a prayer for mission.**
- 3. Jeremiah 15: 15-21 Worth.** Reaching out to God and discovering worth instead of worthlessness. **Write a prayer calling for restoration and renewal.**
- 4. Psalm 26: 1-8 Walking the walk.** How are we expressing God's love as we faithfully walk through the world? **Write a prayer for evangelism**
- 5. Romans 12: 9-21 Genuine love.** Evil is not overcome by evil and hate is not overcome by hate! How can we advocate love and compassion in all walks of life? **Write a prayer for overcoming evil with good.**
- 6. 1 John 1 Following in the footsteps of light.** What steps are we taking in the light today? **Write a prayer for graciousness.**
- 7. 1 Thessalonians 5: 12-28 The Express Yourself Manifesto.** Two months of expressing ourselves this summer and this is our manifesto. Let us live in peace, live on peace, and live out peace! **Write a prayer inviting one another to live out peace.**