

Rogation Resources

Agricultural Festivals Pack



The Church of England
in Essex and East London
Diocese of Chelmsford

Contents

Contents Page

Introduction to Rogation	3
Ideas for Worship	4-7
Primary School Visit	8-10
Youth Group Session	11-13



Rogation

Rogation comes from the Latin word, 'Rogare', meaning 'to ask'. At Rogationtide we ask for God's blessing on the activity of the land. Rogation falls in spring, the time of emerging crops and young animals. In the church calendar it sits between Easter and Ascension. Rogation offers a joyful link between the new life, renewal and resurrection in the natural world and the Christian Church.

Rogation Sunday provides the opportunity for connecting directly with agricultural activity in rural parishes. Rogation is observed in many ways but often the church service is preceded or followed by a Rogation walk. Attention is drawn to the agricultural activity observed on the walk, providing the focus for Rogation prayers and blessings en route. If farmers are able to participate, their explanations of the agricultural activity will enhance understanding of and respect for, the food grown in the fields of the parishes.

In multi-parish benefices Rogation walks between churches can provide a sense of prayerful unity and blessing on the activity of the benefice or deanery. In 2017, an early morning Rogation service was celebrated in a farm barn followed by a parish breakfast and Rogation walks between churches of two deaneries.

The tradition of Rogation procession has a rich history. George Herbert encouraged such processions, recognising that they brought blessing (through seeking God's blessing on the first fruits), justice (through preserving the parish boundaries in 'beating the bounds'), charity (through the fellowship of walking together) and mercy (through giving alms to the poor).

More recently, Graham Dow (2015) reminded us that we must never underestimate the power of blessing,

'A blessing is pure goodness. It is not just words: it has the power to accomplish good things in the lives of those who are blessed. It is part of our priestly calling as the people of God to bless. There is plenty of scope for imaginative initiatives in blessing rural life.'

'If a congregation prays regularly and specifically for the kingdom- in the schools, the farms, local businesses- and sees positive changes, faith in God and the power of the kingdom will be increased.'

The scope of Rogation has now widened to pray for the industry and activity which takes place in a parish. In an urban or suburban parish the Rogation walk could focus on prayers and blessings for places of industry or commerce. There is also a move to include the prayers for God's kingdom and justice throughout the world. Rogation usually coincides with Christian Aid week, providing a world-wide focus on justice.

Rogation

Ideas for Worship

The following liturgical resources are taken from *Common Worship: Times and Seasons*, 'The Agricultural Year'.

Invitation to Confession

Let us ask God to have mercy on our tired land,
and to prosper the work of our soiled hands.
Let us ask God to forgive our delusion of self-sufficiency
so that we may praise him for his provision and goodness.

Kyrie Confession

Lord, you give us this good earth,
yet we take your generous gifts for granted.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, you give us this good earth,
but we squander its rich resources.
Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

Lord, you give us this good earth,
but we fail to share your bounty with all of your children.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Gospel Acclamations

Alleluia, alleluia.
'Ask and you will receive,' says the Lord,
'so that your joy may be complete.' *John 16.24*
Alleluia.



Rogation

Ideas for Worship

Intercessions

Let us ask the God of creation to send a blessing upon us.
Upon the rich earth send a blessing, O Lord.
Let the earth be fruitful
and its resources be hallowed.
We ask in faith:
we ask you to hear us, good Lord.

Upon human labour send a blessing, O Lord.
Prosper the work of our hands;
may all find dignity and just reward in their work;
free the exploited and oppressed.
We ask in faith:
we ask you to hear us, good Lord.

Upon the produce of the earth send a blessing, O Lord.
Guide us into a sustainable future,
and give us the will to share the fruits of the world.
We ask in faith:
we ask you to hear us, good Lord.

Upon the seas and waters send a blessing, O Lord.
Teach us to cherish the water of the earth,
and to conserve the seas, lakes and rivers.
We ask in faith:
we ask you to hear us, good Lord.

Upon aid agencies send a blessing, O Lord.
Where the earth is parched and the well has run dry;
where war brings want, and children go hungry;
where the poor cry out for bread and for justice,
give hands to care and heal, and compel us to be generous.
We ask in faith:
we ask you to hear us, good Lord.

We ask you to hear us, good Lord,
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Introduction to the Peace

By prayer and supplication with thanksgiving,
let your requests be made known to God.
And the peace of God,
which passes all understanding,
will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. *Philippians 4.6,7*



Rogation

Ideas for Worship

Prayers at the Preparation of the Table

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation:
through your goodness we have this bread to set before you,
which earth has given and human hands have made.
It will become for us the bread of life.
Blessed be God for ever.

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation:
through your goodness we have this wine to set before you,
fruit of the vine and work of human hands.
It will become for us the cup of salvation.
Blessed be God for ever.

Short Preface

And now we give you thanks
for your ancient promise
that while the earth endures,
seedtime and harvest, cold and heat,
summer and winter, day and night,
will never cease.

Extended Preface

It is indeed right and good
to give you thanks and praise,
almighty God and Father,
through Jesus Christ your Son.
Through him you have created us in your own image,
and made us stewards of your good creation.
Through him you teach us to exult in the birds of the air,
the lilies of the field, the precious and life-giving crops of the earth.
Through him you free us from the slavery of sin,
giving him to die upon the cross
and to rise again for our salvation.
Through him, you begin your work of new creation,
as we look for a new heaven and a new earth
in which your righteousness dwells.
Therefore, we join with angels and archangels,
and give voice to every creature under heaven,
for ever praising you and saying:



Rogation

Rogation - Additional Resources

Resources in this pack

Please find in this pack the following prepared resources for you to use.

- Material for talk/activity with children for use in church group or primary school
- Youth group session

Additional resources can be found at:

A short introduction and a sample order of service from *Common Worship: Times and Seasons*, 'The Agricultural Year' can be found under Worship on the Church of England Website . This can be downloaded as a pdf

www.churchofengland.org or purchased from Church House Publishing.

In *New Patterns of Worship* (Church House Publishing 2002) there is a section headed 'All creation worships' (page 458 onwards) which contains a series of text and liturgical resources. This includes a celebration of Holy Communion, a one-off service and a fully worked leader's order of service.

www.germinate.net (The Arthur Rank Centre)

Look under worship services for a number of downloadable orders of service, including some where a walk is included.

Wild Goose Publications (The Iona Community) has a downloadable E-book by Mary Low: *Two Rogation Liturgies*.

Seasonal Worship from the Countryside (SPCK 2003) has a section on Rogationtide (pages 69-94) including prayers which can be used at 12 different locations as part of a procession or walk around the parish.

Christian Aid Week usually coincides with Rogation www.caweek.org. This would enable exploration of some of the themes of Rogation, such as community, caring for others, and caring for the environment. For example, 2017 has links to Climate Change and to Refugees.



Primary School Visit

Rogation

Preparation: *This session is about helping children understand the meaning of Rogation Sunday and will give them a chance to think about their local area and those who work in it. This session links back to the Plough Sunday session so may work best with the same year group.*

For this session you will need: *A map of the parish, a planned route around the school grounds with planned 'pit stops' (we've given you some ideas for these within the session), some potato seeds, photos of a Rogation service/beating of the bounds.
(Download this at: <https://goo.gl/J8zyY8>)*

Note: *This session requires some planting. If you've had dry weather you might need to loosen the ground before this session to make it easier for the children.*

Introduction: Introduce yourself to the children and say which church you've come from.

Explain that throughout the year in the church there are lots of special days and that back in January they thought about one special day. Ask the children if they can remember which agricultural day they thought about (Plough Sunday).

Explain that today we're thinking about another special time in the church and agricultural calendar called Rogationtide. Explain that Rogation days generally happen the Monday to Wednesday before Ascension Day in the Christian calendar and that they are about praying for the land as the first crops are planted.

Photos: Show the children some of the photos of Bishop Stephen (Bishop of Chelmsford) involved in a Rogation service including the beating of the bounds and ask the children to think about what might be happening in the photos.

After the children have had time to guess and think about the photos explain that Rogationtide usually has 2 parts. One part involves a service, often on the Sunday before where the land is prayed for and we ask God to bless the crops. (*Can they remember what bless means?*) The second part often involves something called 'beating of the bounds' which includes walking around the parish boundary and praying for the land.

Ask: Ask the children if they know what a parish is? (You could prompt them by saying that your church is the parish church.) After they've guessed, explain what a parish is and show them a big map of your parish. (You could put this on a PowerPoint and project it onto a whiteboard.)

Primary School Visit

Activity: Ask the children to look at the map and point out to them some of the key places on the map in your locality (the church, school, post office, park etc.).

Invite the children to see if they can spot their favourite places on the map (maybe places they walk pets or their homes). If you're projecting this onto a white board you could invite children to put 'dots' on their significant places...if you're using a large printed map you could use coloured stickers to allow the children to mark their favourite places.

Explain: Explain to the children that just as some parishes walk the boundary of their parish (which can take a long time) we're going to have a go at a Beating of the Bounds activity this afternoon but walk around the boundary of the school.

Beating of the Bounds Activity

Prior to this activity you will need to have planned a route around the school grounds and thought about some suitable 'pit-stops' where you can stop, reflect and pray as you go around.

Some ideas of places you could set up as 'pit-stops':

- The playground – A place where you can reflect on friends and fun
- The school garden – Ideally this is where you'll finish your walk
- The playing field – A place to think about the seasons, the summer and sports days
- School pond – If the school has a pond you can use this as a place to reflect on nature
- The school gate – A chance to think about those beyond the school
- Flower beds – If there's somewhere where bushes/flowers are growing, you can reflect on nature

Before you take the children on the walk around the grounds, explain that every so often you will be stopping and reflecting (do they know what reflecting means?), we'll also say a short prayer at each place.

Reflections for each place could include:

Think about this place where we are, what's special about this place? What activities happen here? How does this place change throughout the year?

Prayer: For the blessing of this place, we pray
Hear us, good Lord

If you can try and make sure that this activity finishes at the school garden area which was 'ploughed' back in January. In advance have some small trowels and some seed potatoes there.

Explain to the children that sometimes Rogation is when the first plants are planted and so having prepared the land a few months ago we are going to plant something which we can harvest in September/October ready for our harvest festival.

Give the children some time to plant the potatoes (with help from the teachers).
(A conversation with the school caretaker to make sure these are watered, especially over the summer, would be useful...you could even involve them in the planting.)



Primary School Visit

A Short Rogation Service

(adapted from *Common Worship: Times and Seasons*, 'The Agricultural Year')

Prior to this section teach the children the response

Remember, Lord, your mercy and loving-kindness towards us.
Bless this good earth, and make it fruitful.
Bless our labour, and give us all things needed for our daily lives.
Bless the homes of this parish and all who live within them.
Bless our common life and our care for our neighbour.
Hear us, good Lord.

For all cities, towns and villages,
and for their well-being and prosperity, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mercy.

For the rural economy and for its regeneration, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mercy.

For those who tend the countryside and preserve its order and beauty, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mercy.

For traditional rural skills and crafts and for those who exercise them, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mercy.

For all farms, all who work them, and for the whole farming industry, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mercy.

For healthy crops and abundant harvests we pray.
Hear us, good Lord.

For the care and welfare of animals
and for the vets who look after them we pray.
Hear us, good Lord.

For all who process foods and prepare them for distribution and sale:
we pray to you, O Lord.

For all supermarkets and shops, and for all who work in them:
we pray to you, O Lord.

For those who distribute food to those in need:
we pray to you, O Lord.

Almighty and everlasting God,
you are always more ready to hear than we to pray and to give more than either we desire or
deserve: pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy, forgiving us those things of which
our conscience is afraid and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask but
through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. **Amen.**

Closing: Close your time together by thanking the children for listening and joining in and
invite them to keep an eye on the ground where the potatoes have been planted over the
coming months as they watch them grow.

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Youth Group Session

Session Aims

- To explore the meaning behind Rogation Sunday
- To think about what it means to be good stewards
- To think about who in our community we can care for

Key Passages: Genesis 1:27-31, Matthew 25:31-46

Equipment: A pack of Starburst (enough for 4 per young person and some for prayers at the end), large paper, pens, pencils, a map or two with the parish boundary drawn on, printed words for the grace (optional).

Ice Breaker: Starburst 'Rock, Paper, Scissors' – Hand out 4 Starburst to each young person and explain that for the next 5 minutes you will be having a 'Rock, Paper, Scissors' tournament. If you win against someone you get one of their Starburst but if you lose you give them one of yours. If you run out of Starburst you're out.

After the 5 minutes of gameplay see who has the most Starburst and give the young people the option to share them amongst the group if they'd like to.

Introduction: Explain that the theme for today's session is Rogation Sunday/Rogationtide. Do any of the young people know what this is? (They probably won't!)

Rogation is a period of 3 weekdays before Ascension and used to be about asking God to look after the crops and to protect them from mildew but is now also used to think about how we can be good stewards of our world and get along with those in our local community.

Ask: Who has ever grown something in the garden or in a pot at home? What did you grow? Did it work? Did you think about praying for your plants?

Explain: Growing plants takes time and they require lots of looking after. Too much or too little water can be fatal, if the pot is too small they might stop growing and they need enough light and the right temperature too. Rogation Sunday is about asking God to bless the crops so that people have enough to eat but also because many people in our community rely on the money they make from their crops to look after their families.

Bible Passage: Read Genesis 1:27-31 as a group

Discussion Questions:

- 1 – What does God tell the man and woman about the plants and seeds?
- 2 - What does God tell the man and woman to do?
- 3 – What does this passage tell us about being good stewards of our world?
- 4 – How do you think this fits into our lives today?



Youth Group Session

Explain: This passage reminds us that God created the world and asked us to look after it. It also reminds us that we should be good stewards of it which is the second part of Rogation Sunday.

In some places (and maybe your church is one of them!) churches walk around their parish boundary on Rogation Sunday. Show the young people a map with the parish boundary drawn on.

Activity

Give the young people some coloured pens/pencils and invite them to add detail to the map that is relevant to them.

Can they find their houses?

Can they find places they hang out or go to regularly on the map?

Can they find the church?

Can they add other key places in the community onto the map? (shop, Post Office etc.)

Community Groups: As one big group or several small groups ask young people to use a large sheet of paper to write down the communities that they are part of (this could be scouts, sports teams, school, school clubs, church etc.)

Discussion: As a big group discuss the following:

What are the key places in the community?

Which places are special to you? Why?

Where in our community are the people we need to care for?

Bible Passage: Read Matthew 25:31-46

Discussion Questions

1 – What does this passage tell us about looking after others?

2 – What does this passage tell us about who we should help?

3 – How does this fit into our local community?

Activity

Explain to the group that just as some churches may walk their parish boundaries we are going to do something practical for Rogation Sunday and do something that blesses/looks after our local community.

Spend some time with the group thinking about different ways the group could do something to look after those in the local community. It would be great for young people to come up with their own ideas but some ideas could include:

- A way of 'blessing' people in a local nursing home or school – maybe dropping off some cake/chocolate/fruit
- A free car wash
- A way of raising some money for a local charity
- Talk to the parish council to see if they have something young people can contribute to
- A local litter-pick



Youth Group Session

Starburst Prayers

To close the session spend some time praying as a group using Starburst. Hand young people one of each colour (maybe they've got some left from earlier!) and, as they eat the Starburst, invite them to be praying (silently or out loud) for a different topic per sweet.

Green – Pray for those who farm in your community and ask God to bless their crops.

Yellow – Pray for those in the community who are ill and need looking after.

Orange – Thank God for all the good things you enjoy, for the food you love to eat and the groups/clubs you enjoy being part of.

Purple – Pray for each other, your church and group especially as you seek to do something for those in your parish.

Finish this time of prayer with a closing prayer or maybe by saying the grace together (if you use the grace have some copies printed for those who don't know it).

'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, evermore. Amen.'



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Material from *Common Worship: Times and Seasons* included here is copyright The Archbishops' Council 2006 and is used with permission.

Common Worship: Times and Seasons is published by Church House Publishing and available via www.chpublishing.co.uk and is also available on the Church of England website www.churchofengland.org

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