

'All for Jesus'
The Launch of the Centenary of the Diocese of Blackburn
All Age Resource
Feast of the Epiphany 2026

Guidance Notes

The following can be used either as a complete order of service once hymns have been added and local adaptations made, or sections lifted out as you see fit and inserted into your normal Order of Service.

Two sections are inserted as **optional extras** to be used as appropriate to context:

- **The placing of the gifts or the figures in** the crib. Either the figures of the wise men or the gifts they brought can be placed into the crib. If you wish to offer prayers as the gifts or figures are put in place then do or it can just form part of the talk. This section of the service is currently as part of the talk
- **The blessing of chalk.** This is an ancient custom that has been reintroduced to many parishes in recent years. Chalk is blessed and distributed to the people who then mark the portals of their doors with a cross, the initials of the three wise men and the year. This simple gesture physically marks out their home as a place where Christ is known and worshipped. If you decide to use this part of the service, the following instructions (choose which are most appropriate in your context) can be distributed to the people:

Traditional wording

Epiphany Chalk: Use the chalk to mark the doors of your homes with the following:

20 + C + M + B + 26

Please use the following prayer as you do so:

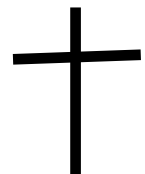
*The Three Wise Men, Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar
followed the star of God's Son who became human
two thousand and twenty-six years ago.
May Christ bless our home
and remain with us throughout this New Year.
Amen.*

Optional wording

Epiphany Chalk: Use the chalk to mark the doors of your homes a big cross

Please use the following prayer as you do so:

*Father God, may this cross remind us,
and all those who visit us,
as we enter and leave our home
that we are your followers.
Help us to demonstrate your love to the world. Amen.*



Centenary All Age for the Feast of Epiphany

Opening Prayer

[Explain that this is the diocesan centenary year and what a centenary is!]

Father God, we thank you that we can come and worship you. As 100 years of our diocese of Blackburn, open our hearts and minds to see all that you have given us and help us to fix our eyes on you. Amen.

Confession & Absolution

Father God, the wise men travelled far to worship Jesus. Forgive us for all the times we can't be bothered to make the effort to worship your Son.

Father forgive us [Use simple signs - see video]

God of all nations, so many people cannot worship Jesus in freedom. Forgive us for not praying for freedom of worship for all your children.

Father forgive us [Use simple signs - see video]

Father of all, so many people do not yet know Jesus as their Saviour and friend. Forgive us for not sharing the good news of his birth with the people we meet.

Father forgive us [Use simple signs - see video]

OR

Lord of grace and truth, we confess our unworthiness to stand in your presence as your children.
We have sinned: **forgive and heal us.** [Use simple signs - see video]

The Virgin Mary accepted your call to be the mother of Jesus.
Forgive our disobedience to your will.

We have sinned: **forgive and heal us.** [Use simple signs - see video]

Your Son our Saviour was born in poverty in a manger.
Forgive our greed and rejection of your ways.

We have sinned: **forgive and heal us.** [Use simple signs - see video]

The shepherds left their flocks to go to Bethlehem.
Forgive our self-interest and lack of vision.

We have sinned: **forgive and heal us.** [Use simple signs - see video]

The wise men followed the star to find Jesus the King.
Forgive our reluctance to seek you.

We have sinned: **forgive and heal us.** [Use simple signs - see video]

May the Father forgive us by the death of his Son and strengthen us to live in the power of the Spirit all our days. Amen.

Bible Reading - Matthew 2:1-12

Read straight from Bible or two video options are...

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IAuDT1oBe1o&list=RDIAuDT1oBe1o&start_radio=1 [text straight from scripture]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=22SMUUMsx0o> [more cartoon]

Talk

Could be a 2 part talk or done all in one.

Wise men

- Finding wise men hidden around church (pictures or figures) (*v9 went in search of the new King*)
- Placing them in the crib (with appropriate prayer if that is the tradition)
- v10 excited when they found Jesus - what's your excited face?
- v 11 bowed & worshipped Jesus
- v12 brought Jesus gifts - can you remember what they were?
 - Gold (for a King)
 - Frankincense (Godliness / priest / divinity)
 - Myrrh (suffering & death)
- what might you have brought as a gift for Jesus?

Gifts

- Every celebration needs a party game so we're playing pass the parcel
[Wrap a pass the parcel with each layer having a gift that God has given us eg creative, encouraging, loving, money, time, sporty etc - you might choose to include a sweet as well]
 - Play pass the parcel around church and every time you get to unwrap read out the gift.
 - In groups think about how we could use each of those gifts we've listed for God
- God has given each of us gifts and we've thought about a few then. Which gifts has God given you? What are you good at? How might you use that gift this year? *[Could write these on a picture of a gift]*

Bring the gifts forward and pray that we would use those gifts for God's glory this year. Remembering that the best gift we can give God is our whole selves!

Creed & Act of Dedication

My brothers and sisters, today we launch the celebrations of the centenary of the Diocese of Blackburn. As we do so I invite you now with joy in your heart to declare your faith and trust in the God who reveals himself to us in Jesus.

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist?
I believe and trust in him. [Use simple signs - see video]

Do you believe and trust in God the Son, who took our human nature, died for us and rose again?

I believe and trust in him. [Use simple signs - see video]

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ known in the world?

I believe and trust in him. [Use simple signs - see video]

This is the faith of the Church.

This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. [Use simple signs - see video]

In this year of centenary and through the Spirit's power, will you give your all for Jesus, seeking to know him and love him ever more deeply through worship, study and prayer?

With the help of God I will [Use simple signs - see video]

Will you love your neighbour and serve all people with devotion and generosity?

With the help of God I will [Use simple signs - see video]

Will you share your faith with others, rejoicing to give reason for the hope that is within you?

With the help of God I will [Use simple signs - see video]

Heavenly Father, as the wise men offered gold, frankincense and myrrh,
so we make to you the gift of our lives
at the start of this Centenary year.
Through your spirit at work within us,
may many come to know you in your Son
and kneel to do him homage.
For you live and reign ever one God,
world without end.

Amen.

Prayers

Use our bodies in different positions to help us with our prayers...

Bow or Kneel - Father God, help us to worship you. Not just on Sunday's but with our whole lives.

Open hands / arms - Father God, help us to use our gifts to show the world your love and give you glory.

Touch tummies - Father God, we pray for those in our world who will go hungry today. For those who are struggling or suffering. May they know your love.

Hold hands - Father God, we thank you for the gift of our church family, both here, across our diocese and around the world.

Touch feet - Father God, we pray for one another that wherever we go this year we will be bold in sharing your love with others.

Concluding with the Lord's Prayer...

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Response activity (when home) - Chalking

We have thought about living for Jesus this year with our whole lives. An old tradition is about chalking on doorframes to show that this house has people who worship Jesus. Maybe it's something you could try this year - both as a reminder each time you enter your home but also a sign to others visiting that you are living for Jesus.

Blessing of chalk (if part of your tradition).

May God, who provided a safe dwelling place
for the eternal Word,
bless this chalk,
the homes of the faithful,
and the people who live there.

As you keep this centenary year,
may your home be a place of Christian welcome.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Give our chalk and instructions as people leave (as per first page).

Final Prayer

Diocesan Centenary Prayer

Heavenly Father,
in our Centenary year
we rededicate ourselves and our Diocese to you.
Send the Holy Spirit to give us
confidence in our witness,
generosity in our service,
and love for our neighbours,
that your Church may be renewed
and many come home to you,
through your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen

Dismissal

We have seen his glory, the glory revealed to all the nations.
Go in the peace of Christ. **Thanks be to God**