

SERMON OPTIONS FOR LAY-LED WORSHIP

Congregations that are holding a lay-led service as their principal weekly worship have several options for reflecting on and responding to the Word of God. If there is a licensed lay Preacher who is part of the congregation, whether it is the Worship Leader or another individual, then they may prepare and deliver a sermon in response to the day's lessons. Otherwise, a sermon may be selected from an authorized source and presented to the congregation, or the congregation may participate in a structured discussion.

Authorized Sermon Sources

The Bishop has approved the following resources from which sermons may be selected, then shared during lay-led worship. Be sure to read carefully the Scripture passages appointed for the day and to select a sermon that corresponds with those texts.

- **Sermons That Work:** These are *written* sermons that can be read aloud by the Worship Leader or another individual. They are prepared by Episcopal clergy for every Sunday of the church year, and an archive allows you to browse through sermons from past years of the lectionary cycle. When reading a sermon during worship, be sure to give credit to the person who originally crafted it.

Sermons That Work can be found at: <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/sermons-that-work/>

- **A Sermon for Every Sunday:** These are *video* sermons by well-respected preachers. If your parish has the necessary equipment, one may be selected and shown during worship. Look for the "How it Works" section on the *A Sermon for Every Sunday* website for tips on equipment and setup. Transcripts of the sermons are available and may be read, in lieu of showing the video. (Again, be sure to give credit to the original preacher.)

A Sermon for Every Sunday can be found at: <https://asermonforeverysunday.com/>

- **Day 1:** These are *audio* sermons that can be played during worship, perhaps most easily using a smartphone and portable Bluetooth speaker. Here again, full transcripts are available.

Day 1 can be found at: <https://day1.org/>

Alternative: Structured Discussion

As an alternative to providing a sermon, those planning a lay-led worship service may consider including a structured discussion of one of the day's Scripture passages

Ideally, the discussion would be led by a member with skill and confidence as a facilitator, such as someone with experience as a classroom teacher or corporate trainer. This *could* be the Worship Leader, but it might be someone different. The role of the facilitator is to ensure that communication remains respectful and focused.

Here is a brief outline of how such a discussion might go:

1. Provide the congregation with:
 - the Scripture text that will be your focus,
 - a brief commentary on the reading (These are available from The Episcopal Church for every Sunday of the year and can be found at <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/bible-study/>), and
 - a few reflection questions (which are included in the selected commentary).
2. If their size warrants it, ask the congregation to break into small groups of 3-5 people for more effective conversation.
3. Have the congregation engage in small-group reflection and discussion, using the supplied questions as a starting point. You may have to experiment a bit to find the right amount of time to allow for this. You could begin by offering 10-15 minutes, then adjust for the next time if that seems best. Keep in mind that, without the Eucharist, you can be generous with the time allowed, making sure that everyone has an opportunity to participate, while also being close to the familiar length of a weekly worship service.
4. If the congregation did break into smaller groups, you could bring everyone together for some facilitated sharing among the larger group.