



An outline service to commemorate the 80th anniversary of VE Day for use with a group of older people

Welcome

We have gathered together today to mark the anniversary of victory in Europe – 80 years ago. Some of us may have memories of that day. Some of us may have heard about it from other people. We want to give thanks for those who fought for freedom in World War II, acknowledging that 80 years ago many were still waiting for news of loved ones in the Far East. We want to give thanks for those who showed such resilience on the home front, and we also want to reaffirm our own commitment to peace.

Prayer

God of peace, who raised Christ Jesus to victory over death, keep us ever mindful of the cost of making peace, of the call to be peacemakers and of the carefulness needed to keep the peace, in our lives, in our land and in our world. Amen.

Specially written prayer by Martyn Payne, BRF Ministries.

Hymn

Choose a hymn to sing along to or listen to, such as 'Great is thy faithfulness' (a CD or YouTube could be used).

Bible passage

Choose a passage from scripture to be read out, such as Micah 4:1–4.

Prayer

Father God, we remember all those who served in the Armed Forces during World War II. We honour their sacrifices. We also remember and give thanks for all who worked hard on the home front: to feed the nation, to care for evacuees, to provide medical care. We pray for all who work for peace today,

especially in those parts of the world which are experiencing conflict at the moment (mention specific countries e.g. Ukraine, Gaza, DRC...). Help us to do all we can to work for peace in our own communities and relationships. We ask this in the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Say the Lord's Prayer together, using the version your context and tradition are familiar with.

Activities

Use any of the below suggestions, considering what would work best in your context.

Light candles

Share round LED tea lights. You could play some music while this happens, such as Garth Hewitt's 'Light a candle in the darkness' or 'Make me a channel of your peace' or 'Let there be peace on earth' or 'Benedictus' from Karl Jenkins' 'The Armed Man'.

Poppies

Stick some red paper 'poppies' on a large inflatable globe or a large, flat, map of the world and talk about areas of the world where there is war at the moment. Prayers could be invited.

Birds of peace

Make paper peace cranes or doves. This online guide could be helpful:

peacecraneproject.org/downloads/folding-guides.

Reminisce

Spend time talking about the group's own recollections of VE Day and/or World War II.

Hymn

Choose a hymn to sing along to or listen to, such as 'God is our strength and refuge' (Dam busters March), 'Lord for the years' or 'Father Lord of all creation' (a CD or YouTube could be used).

Prayer

*God of all peace,
speak your peace to our restless souls,
bring your peace to our troubled lives,
establish your peace in our broken world,
because you have promised to mediate between many nations
so that we should learn war no more.
Lord, work with us and in us towards that day.
Amen.*

From Martyn Payne, *The BRF Book of 100 Prayers* (BRF Ministries, 2022), p. 120.