

Small Group Worship Leader's Guide – Easter

Provided by the faculty of the School of Church Music and Worship

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Visit www.artistictheologian.com/smallgroup for hymn accompaniments and PDFs.

Getting Started:

1. In his book, *Recalling the Hope of Glory*, Allen P. Ross writes: “For worship to be as glorious as it should be, for it to lift people out of their mundane cares and fill them with adoration and praise, for it to be the life-changing and life-defining experience it was designed to be, it must be inspired by a vision so great and so glorious that what we call worship will be transformed from a routine gathering into a transcendent meeting with the living God.” On this Resurrection Sunday, even as we are sequestered in our living rooms separated from our church families, may it be that the Holy Spirit would grant us a more glorious vision of the “Lamb upon the Throne!”
2. While we consider the transcendent glory of Christ, we must also be aware that Jesus knows and cares about every detail and concern of our lives. The situation with the COVID-19 pandemic has not taken him by surprise. In his book, *Hidden Christmas*, Pastor and author Tim Keller asks a series of questions that reflect the infinite power of Jesus to relate to and comfort his children: “Have you been betrayed? Have you been lonely? Have you been destitute? Have you faced death? So has he!” Jesus knows every detail of our lives. But he also rose from the dead and conquered death and sin! And today (and every day) we celebrate the fact that He Lives! Jesus Christ rose from the grave and He Lives! He lives to glorify God the Father. He lives to intercede on our behalf. He lives to fulfill his eternal purposes!
3. Pray the Scriptures! The Easter order includes several passages that work beautifully as prayer guides. Praying the Scriptures also helps us learn how to pray. My friend Don Whitney has some great insights into praying the through the Bible in his book, *Praying the Bible*: “To pray the Bible, you simply go through the passage line by line, talking to God about whatever comes to mind as you read the text...So basically what you are doing is taking words that originated in the heart and mind of God and circulating them through your heart and mind back to God. By this means his words become the wings of your prayers.”

Opening Scripture (1 Peter 1:3-7)

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope **through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead** ⁴ and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you. ⁵ You are being guarded by God’s power through faith for a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ You rejoice in this, even though now for a short time, if necessary, you suffer grief in various trials ⁷ so that the proven character of your faith—more valuable than gold which, though perishable, is refined by fire—may result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.



Artistic Theologian

Biblical Faithfulness | Musical Excellence | Ministry Focus

www.artistictheologian.com

Group Prayer (Potential Prayer Prompts below)

Adoration:

- We praise God that he is the Creator of the universe and the Redeemer of our souls.
- We praise God and adore him as our Father.
- We praise God for being our Living Hope!
- We praise God for the life that comes to us because of Easter – because Jesus is alive! Jesus has risen from the grave and defeated sin and death!

Confession:

- We confess that although Christ has shown us mercy, we may not have shown others mercy and grace.
- We confess that we have placed our hope in people or things that will ultimately disappoint.
- We confess that we desire things that ultimately perish and fade.
- We confess that we've not rejoiced in our circumstances and have forgotten that our God is in control.

Thanksgiving:

- We thank our Father God for sending His only Son to give us new birth into a living hope!
- We thank God for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and that he indeed is alive!
- We thank God that through Jesus and his completed work on the cross and his resurrection that we have an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading!
- We thank God for his grace in allowing us to go through this difficult time and that through it, our character and faith are being refined.
- We thank God that the outcome of all our circumstances may result in praise!

Petition:

- We pray that others would come to know the great mercy we have in Christ Jesus.
- We pray that others would come to know Jesus Christ and to trust in him alone for their salvation.
- We pray that we would be good witnesses in our current trials and that others would see Christ-honoring character and faith in action.
- We pray for those grieving the loss of loved ones due to the virus and other diseases.
- We pray for our church, our pastors and leaders, and government officials.
- We pray that God would end this pandemic and that believers would be strengthened to share their hope in Christ and the inheritance we have that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading.
- We pray for health care workers...for their strength, their stamina, their health, and for those who are believers, their witness.

Leader – potential transition: On this Easter morning, all because of what Christ has done, we praise God for hearing our prayer, and we praise him for his holy Word. And now as we read from the Gospel of Matthew, may the events of that resurrection morning fill our hearts with gratitude and praise...

Scripture (Matthew 28:1-7)

Reader 1: After the Sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to view the tomb. ²There was a violent earthquake, because an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and approached the tomb. He rolled back the stone and was sitting on it. ³His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow. ⁴The guards were so shaken by fear of him that they became like dead men.

Reader 2: The angel told the women, “Don’t be afraid, because I know you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. ⁶He is not here. For he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. ⁷Then go quickly and tell his disciples, ‘He has risen from the dead and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; you will see him there.’ Listen, I have told you.”

Hymn: Christ the Lord is Risen Today

Leader - Possible Transition Statement from the hymn: We just sang the word “Alleluia” after each phrase of Christ the Lord is Risen Today. Alleluia simply means, “God be praised!” There is an ancient Easter greeting still used in many churches all over the world on Resurrection Sunday. The leader says, “He is Risen!” and the people respond, “He is Risen Indeed!” This morning we praise our God because,

Leader: He is Risen!

People: He is Risen Indeed!

Leader: He is Risen!

People: He is Risen Indeed!

All: Alleluia, God be Praised!

Hymn: Crown Him with Many Crowns (vs. 1, 2, and 4)

Leader – Possible Transition Statement after hymn: As we have just been reminded of the Kingship of Jesus Christ, we can rest in the reality that Jesus is reigning now, and that he will reign forever!

Scripture Reading (Assign 4 Readers for Psalm 103:19-22 and Revelation 19:11-17)

Reader 1: The Lord has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all. Bless the Lord, all his angels of great strength, who do his word, obedient to his command.

Reader 2: Bless the Lord, all his armies, his servants who do his will. Bless the Lord, all his works in all the places where he rules. My soul, bless the Lord!

Reader 3: Then I saw heaven opened, and there was a white horse. Its rider is called Faithful and True, and he judges and makes war with justice. His eyes were like a fiery flame, and many crowns were on his head. He had a name written that no one knows except himself.

Reader 4: He wore a robe dipped in blood, and his name is called the Word of God. The armies that were in heaven followed him on white horses, wearing pure white linen. A sharp sword came from his mouth, so that he might strike the nations with it. He will rule them with an iron rod. He will also trample the winepress of the fierce anger of God, the Almighty.

All: And he has a name written on his robe and on his thigh: King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Possible Transition Statement: Jesus came the first time, and he is coming again, as the king over all kings. He will come again as the king of nature and nations. Until he comes again, people can still trust in him for their salvation. As a pastor once said, "He still rides a donkey and not yet a white war-horse with a rod of iron. He is ready and wanting to save all who will come to him. Come to him. Know him. Receive him." Let's sing to our King!

Hymn or Song: Behold Our God (used by permission) or All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name

Closing Prayer