

Day of Mourning: Whole church family time

Packet of Hankies... (allow 10 minutes)

Preparation.



You will need a packet of clean hankies – a mix of adult and children's designs is appropriate.

On each hankie, using permanent marker, write one of the statements below about Jesus.

Additionally make a Giant hankie from a large piece of fabric (an old sheet would be ideal). Write the prayer below on this super hankie in large black letters.

Process

Gather your children - if that is your usual practice.

Say: "Today has been set aside as a Day of Mourning for those affected by the bushfires. Mourning can mean crying, sobbing, talking about the things that are upsetting us, or just keeping silent and feeling sadness. Mourning is when we show each other how sad we are about what has happened. When something terrible happens, it's normal and right to feel sad, or strange, or sorry, or shocked. That's the way God has made us. We will all feel a little bit different, but we are together to share how we are feeling, and to show that we care for those who have suffered.

God knows how we are feeling about these fires – but more than that – God joins in with our mourning. God is never glad when his precious people (and that's everyone) are hurting or scared.

Today I've got some hankies that will help us as we mourn. These are special Hankies that remind us of how Jesus knows all about the troubles of those affected by the bush fires.

Let's see how our hankies can help us remember Jesus as we mourn together.

Do: Distribute the normal hankies to as many of the children as are happy to accept one. Ask the children to take their hankie back to a grown up in the congregation, perhaps their parent, but not necessarily.

Ask the grown ups to help the children read their hankie.

Go through each one...repeated so that the congregation will hear clearly.

The Next step: Call the children back to the front (or centre)

Say: “Jesus experienced all of these difficult things, and knew the sadness and mourning that we feel today in his bodily life on the earth 2000 years ago, and his Spirit is with us, now, comforting us and reminding us that God has felt all of the pain and troubles and sadness of the bushfires, and mourns with us today.

Do: Begin to unfold the super-sized hankie...inviting children to take hold of the edges

Say: “We are going to gather all of our sadnesses together in this big hankie with prayer - knowing that God is with us and hears us all.

Pray: Lord Jesus, many people have said about you ‘Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows’ reminding us that you care so much for us, and especially for those who suffer. Thankyou for this day of Mourning, when we can show you and each other our sadness. Thankyou that our sadness comes from loving the beautiful land you have created and loving people who have lived in it. Please turn our mourning into steps of serving and our sorrows into joyful giving. Amen

Jesus was thirsty (John 4)

Jesus was frustrated at injustice (John 2)

Jesus needed help from others (John 21)

Jesus cried, (John 11)

Jesus was homeless (Luke 9)

Jesus felt hopeless. (Mark 15)

Jesus felt great pain (Matthew 27)

Jesus died (Mark 15)

Jesus came alive again