

More worship ideas

1. The beginning of the journey

Before the worship there may have been music playing. So allow a few moments of silence before a reader (reading probably from the back of the church) reads Psalm 22:1-5.

Another voice then says: The person who wrote those words felt desperately alone. Such desperation is perhaps also the experience of many of those who are diagnosed with HIV/AIDS – particularly in parts of the world where treatments are too expensive to be widely available. Jesus Christ used these same words when he hung on the cross. He too felt desperately alone.

At this point, you could show USPG's PowerPoint which illustrates the Stations of the Cross with images of people living with HIV. See page 19 for how to order this PowerPoint.

The voice continues: In spite of his agony, the psalmist trusted in God. Today our trust in God is linked to our belief, as Christians, that in Jesus Christ, God has known and has suffered the harshest human pain. From this trust new beginnings can dawn.

- *You could play music from The Umkhosi CD, a collection of songs performed by young South African singers dedicated to raising AIDS awareness. The faith and pain of the singers shines through their music. It can be ordered for £10/€10,90 from www.uspg.org.uk or call 0845 273 1701.*

2. Moving onwards – yet deeper

A reader reads Psalm 22:6-11

Another voice then comments: The scorn experienced by the psalmist is sadly felt by too many people with HIV/AIDS. It reflects the mockery that Jesus Christ experienced as he hung on the cross. Yet, in spite of this suffering, the psalmist knows that God has cherished them throughout the whole of life.

You might wish to draw on the material in the sermon notes – The Body of Christ has AIDS – to reflect on 'stigma'. See page 6.

You could sing a Taizé chant, eg Within Our Darkest Night, Nada te turbe, etc

Example prayer:

*Risen Jesus,
You are there close beside each person,
You descend to where we are,
To the very lowest point of our human condition,
And you take upon yourself all that hurts us,
Both in ourselves and in others.
You accompany every human being...
(Brother Roger of Taizé)*

3. A prayer for deliverance

A reader reads Psalm 22:12-21

Another voice then comments: Although written in a very different context, the graphic language of the psalm seems to catch only too well the physical pain and suffering which is the lot of many people living with HIV or AIDS. However, the sense of alienation that is so all-encompassing at the beginning of the psalm is now replaced by direct words of prayer to God: 'Come quickly to my aid.'

You might wish to use extracts from the bible study on page 8.

You could use the prayers of intercession on page 14.

4. Telling your name to my brothers and sisters

A reader reads Psalm 22:22-26.

Another voice then comments: The mood of the psalm dramatically shifts, from lament to thanksgiving. The psalmist – who began by sensing himself or herself so alone – now feels supported as their brothers and sisters are invited to join in this ever widening song of praise. This circle extends to the corners of the earth. It is in this context that we can celebrate the support that USPG gives to churches in their ministry to people with HIV/AIDS. In supporting our brothers and sisters in this vital ministry we enable lament to turn into confidence and God's name to be honoured throughout our world.

Use one or more of the examples showing how USPG is helping to support church work tackling HIV/AIDS – see page 16.

If people are holding candles/tea lights this could be the moment for them to be lit.

Pray the Lord's Prayer together. If you wish you can pray this very slowly and at the end of each phrase offer silence for people to reflect, quietly or aloud, on ways in which the prayer links to the situation of people with HIV/AIDS.

5. All the ends of the earth

A reader reads Psalm 22:27-31.

A voice then comments: The psalmist now extends the circle of praise even wider by calling on the people of God from the past and future, as well as the present, to add their voices to the chorus. We remember those who have died due to AIDS in the past, acknowledge the pain of those who suffer in the present, and offer our prayers for those who will be affected by this virus, directly or indirectly, in the future. We hold them in the embracing and infinite love of God. Let us shape our candles together in the form of a cross, the symbol of God's ever-caring arms.

Sing a song of quiet confidence, eg In the Lord I'll Be Ever Thankful (Taizé), during which people set down their candles in the form of a cross.