

# Half Time

## An all-age service at Otumoetai Baptist Church

In July 2022 the pastoral staff at Otumoetai Baptist planned an all-age service based on the idea of *Half Time*. We were halfway through the year, and it had been another 6 months of Covid disruptions and significant challenges in New Zealand and around the world. We were tired. Our people were tired. We felt it was a good time to pause, reflect on the year so far and focus on the idea of resting in God.

Below is the service outline. Please email [jan@obc.org.nz](mailto:jan@obc.org.nz) if you have any questions or would like to see any of the supplementary resources.



### Half Time Service Outline

*We set the church auditorium up café style, with small tables and chairs. We always have paper and pens on the tables for those who like to draw. We encourage everyone to be involved and included in the activities and discussion, no matter their age.*

**Opening.** In our services we usually open with a welcome, some worship songs, notices and prayer.

**An introduction to the theme.** We explained the theme of Half Time, and played a short clip from the movie *Flushed Away*.

**Game 1: what is this?** We created a slideshow of photos from our church services and social events in the first six months of the year. The photos were cropped, so they weren't as easy to identify. In their table groups, people wrote down what they thought the photo was from. Of course, we handed out prizes to the groups who got the most right!

**Interview.** We interviewed a couple who are involved in an exciting project for our church. Who could you interview in your congregation who has done something interesting or significant in the last 6 months?



**Game 2: Guess the headline.** For this game we gave the table groups news headlines from the last 6 months for them to guess what the story was about. We gave bonus points for the funniest answers as well as the correct ones.

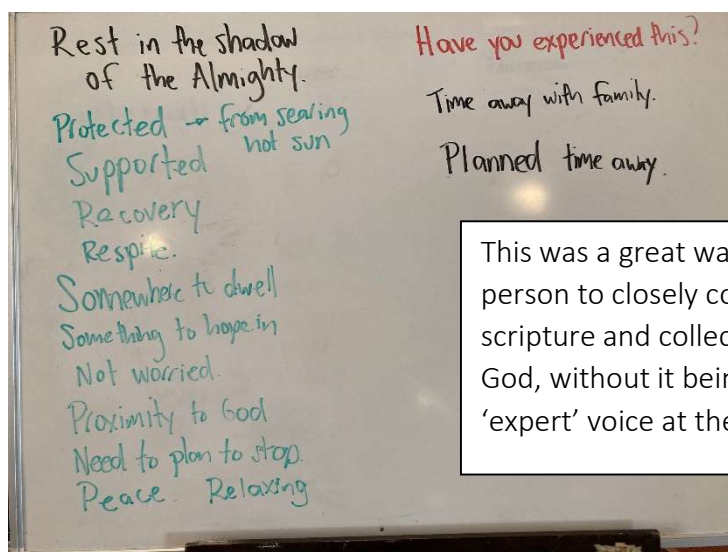
Stories included: Covid, the war in Ukraine, the cost of living crisis, inflation, the Tauranga by-election, losing the rugby to Ireland!

**Reflection on 2022:** We introduced this section by explaining that we had just remembered what we had done as a church (in game 1) plus what had been happening in our world and community (in game 2); now it was time to ask, how are you doing this year? Each table had a set of pictures with instructions to spread them out and for each person to choose one picture which summed up how they were feeling about the first half of 2022. They were to share with their group what picture they had chosen and why. (We have found these pictures to be an awesome resource for facilitating conversation. You can download them from the Salvation Army [here](#).)

**Scripture:** After people had time to share about their picture, we did an informal survey by asking a series of questions: How many of you said you were tired? How many of you got Covid? How many of you got sick with something else? How many of you were busier because someone else got sick? Many people were feeling fatigued! It was time to look at God's word and think about what he might be saying to us.

We listened to and then read aloud together **Psalm 91:1-6**. On the tables we had a copy of the verses on an A3 piece of paper, with 3 questions for people to discuss in their groups.

We asked groups to share with everyone some of their ideas, which we recorded on a whiteboard.



This was a great way for every person to closely consider a piece of scripture and collectively hear from God, without it being lead from one 'expert' voice at the front.

## Psalm 91

<sup>1</sup>Those who live in the shelter of the Most High  
will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

<sup>2</sup>This I declare about the LORD:

He alone is my refuge, my place of safety;  
he is my God, and I trust him.

<sup>3</sup>For he will rescue you from every trap  
and protect you from deadly disease.

<sup>4</sup>He will cover you with his feathers.

He will shelter you with his wings.

His faithful promises are your armor and protection.

<sup>5</sup>Do not be afraid of the terrors of the night,  
nor the arrow that flies in the day.

<sup>6</sup>Do not dread the disease that stalks in darkness,  
nor the disaster that strikes at midday.

**What stands out to you?**

Underline, circle, highlight, write or draw...

**What do you think it means to rest in  
the shadow of the Almighty?**

**In the middle of 2022, have you  
experienced this, and if so, how?**

**Prayer Response.** We gave the groups some time to pray for each other. Each person had a copy of Psalm 91:4. They were encouraged to write the names of the people at their table in a feather, and take the verse home to continue to pray for God's rest and shelter.



He will cover you with his feathers,

He will shelter you

with his wings. Psalm 91:4



We finished with a **closing song**.

We loved this service! There was a real buzz in the room as people engaged with each other around the theme and the words of Psalm 91. Together we heard from God and had some fun along the way.