

ANZAC Day All Age Service

This is an outline of an ANZAC day service from Otumoetai Baptist. At OBC we are able to sit people around café style tables, which makes discussion and group activities easier. If you don't have this as an option, you can still encourage people to form groups with those sitting around or near them. You will need to make sure no one is left out, and we always encourage our groups to include everyone in the various parts of the service, no matter what their age. You will need to change and adapt this service plan to your context. Please email jan@obc.org.nz if you have any questions or you would like to see the slides and other resources for the prayer stations which accompany this plan.

Opening song – 5 minutes

Notices and welcome - 10

Whakawhanaungatanga – what does ANZAC day mean to you? Slide 1

Discuss with those you are sitting with or near.

Brief feedback – invite several people to share what ANZAC day means to them.
Aim to include people of different age groups.

2 songs - 10

Message: ANZAC Day gives us the opportunity to remember and to pray for peace. Slide 2 - 20

(Explain the Poppy image on each table; this is to colour in or use to record thoughts, ideas, symbols, drawing etc)

First of all this morning, let's look at that first bit, ANZAC day gives us the opportunity to remember... so what is it we are remembering? What is it that we aren't to forget? So here is a little bit of background to ANZAC Day, for those of you who may be a bit unsure.

ANZAC Day is celebrated every year on April 25th to remember and honour those New Zealanders and Australians who have served and lost their lives in the two world wars and other conflicts for example, in Korea and Vietnam. It commemorates and honours both returned and currently serving servicemen and women.

ANZAC is an acronym. Who knows what it stands for? For the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, and this name for kiwi and aussie soldiers was first used in World War 1, 1914-1918.

Slide 3 The date of April 25th marks the anniversary of the landing of Australian and New Zealand soldiers – the Anzacs – on the Gallipoli Peninsula in 1915. The aim was to capture the Dardanelles and open a sea route to the Bosphorus and the Black Sea. At the end of the campaign, however, Gallipoli was still held by its Turkish defenders.

Thousands lost their lives during the Gallipoli campaign: 87,000 Turks, 44,000 men from France and the British Empire, including 8500 Australians and 2779 New Zealanders, about one in six of those who served at Gallipoli. 130 000 lives lost. So why do we commemorate such an overwhelming and tragic defeat?

They may have ended in military defeat, but for many New Zealanders then and since, the Gallipoli landings signalled that New Zealand was becoming a distinct nation, even as it fought on the other side of the world in the name of the British Empire. So yes this was a tragic and costly defeat, but it was one of the first times New Zealand was seen as a separate country in its own right... and so the ANZACs and Gallipoli were part of us forging our own identity. Interestingly, it was also in WW1 that we started to be called kiwis too.

Anzac Day was first observed in 1916, so just one year later, and in 1920 it became a public holiday. So NZers have been remembering for over a 100 years. And since then, NZ soldiers have fought and died in other wars too, the most deadly being WW2, where 12 000 NZ soldiers died. **Slide 4**

The red poppy flower also known as the remembrance poppy is a symbol that has been used to remember those who died in wars since the 1920s. Anyone wearing one this morning? In the week or so leading up to ANZAC Day people wear a red poppy to show their remembrance and respect.

And so, no matter what you think about war, that is what tomorrow is about - **ANZAC Day gives us the opportunity to remember.**

ANZAC Day has becoming increasingly significant for all ages in NZ society. The numbers attending memorial services has steadily increased over recent years, as a younger generation seeks to honour the cost of past generations and to commit to it not happening again. Which leads me to the second part of the statement up there:

ANZAC Day gives us the opportunity to remember and to pray for peace.

ANZAC day offers us, as the church in NZ, a time to focus on and to pray for peace.

Because when we look at the story of the Bible and when we look at the life of Jesus, we see that peace is the ideal, peace is a reflection of the kingdom of God. So while wars and conflict and violence happen, the aim is for people to live in harmony with each other. Let's look at a selection of verses about peace from scripture. **Slide 5** On your tables, there are 5 verses about peace. Hopefully there are enough copies for everyone to have one each. I have got some helpers to read each verse through twice. As you listen, underline, write in the margins, draw a symbol... and think about this question: What stands out to you?

Matthew 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He will judge between many peoples and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide. They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war any more. Micah 4:2–3 (NIV)

When peacemakers plant seeds of peace, they will harvest justice. James 3:18 (CEV)

God brings wars to an end all over the world. He breaks the arrows, shatters the spears, and burns the shields. Psalm 46:9 (CEV)

Share in your groups, what stands out to you. – 5 minutes.

It is God's intention that we work toward peace. But the history of the world is littered with wars. There has never been a time when the whole Earth has been at peace. Today there is conflict in many countries. **Map Slide 6** The most reported conflict here is what is happening in Ukraine, but it is not the only war happening right now.



There are many views on the way to deal with war, and many will be represented in this room. Some of you will consider yourselves pacifists; some of you will believe that there is such a thing as a just war. Either way, soldiers and civilians are killed and innocent people suffer.

ANZAC Day gives us the opportunity to remember and to pray for peace.

And we are going to do just that. You will have noticed that there are 6 prayer stations around the outside of the room. We are going to spend 15 minutes praying for the war in Ukraine and other parts of the world. Some of the stations refer directly to the Ukraine, but you can also include others places of conflict in your prayers. Start at the station nearest you, and then move around as an individual or in a group or a family. You might visit all of them or only a few. Most of them include something to do because this is a great way to focus our prayers, and I encourage you to follow the instructions at each station, but feel free to engage as you would like. If you are watching online, the stations will come up on slides and even though you won't have the props with you, you will still be able to read the instructions and spend this time praying at home.

Let me pray, and then you can get started.

A peace prayer: **Slide 7**

Dear God

As we live every day, help us to be a channel for peace.

May we bring love where there is hatred and healing where there is hurt; joy where there is sadness and hope where there is fear.

I pray that we may always try to understand and comfort other people as well as seeking comfort and understanding from them.

Wherever possible may we choose to be a light in the darkness, a help in times of need and a caring, honest friend.

And may justice, kindness, and peace flow through our hearts forever. **Amen**

Prayer Stations for Ukraine. **Slide 8 -13** - 15

(These stations were adapted from a resource from

<https://www.sunhatsandwellieboots.com/2022/03/interactive-prayer-stations-for-all.html>. Email jan@obc.org.nz if you would like to see our version of the posters and slides.)





ANZAC Day gives us the opportunity to remember and to pray for peace.

Video - NZ National anthem to sing together. Play about 3 mins

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dPcj_aC8fk

Responsive Prayer: **Slide 14-15** 5

*God, you are perfect
and reach out to us in our imperfection.*

*We are at our most imperfect in war
and need your reaching out even more.*

We ask your close care for all who suffer in war.

*God bless and keep the fighters, willing and unwilling
who bear scars on the inside and outside.*

Give them peace.

*God bless and keep the objectors
who stand and fall for non-violence.*

Give them peace.

*God bless and keep the children whose childhoods war steals.
Fill the gaps with your boundless and eternal love for them.*

Give them peace.

*God bless and keep the victims of war
Invaded, assaulted, bereaved.*

Give them peace.

*God bless and keep all imperfect humans who are complicit in war,
The leaders, the followers, the cheerers, the beneficiaries.*

In your perfect, generous, strange love and mercy,

Give us peace. Amen

Slide 16 ANZAC biscuits together - These biscuits were popular during both world wars, as women at home could send them overseas and know they would still be edible after weeks at sea. Soldiers would break them up into pieces for breakfast or enjoy them with a cup of tea.

Let's enjoy an ANZAC biscuit over a cup of tea or coffee this morning.