




# Notes for worship leaders to accompany the JMA Service 2002

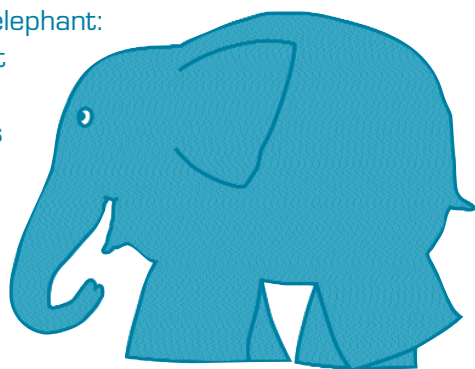
The service this year is structured around the JMA promise and focuses particularly on **learning**. You may like to make sure the JMA promise poster is prominently displayed and order copies of the JMA prayer card for each member of the congregation. A display of JMA's work and its activities in your church might include the target chart and some Rainbow magazines as well as photos and reports of what the children have been doing.

Both of the stories suggested involve elephants and you may like to extend the elephant theme by using the template to make elephant-shaped invitations to this service and encouraging JMA members to make elephant thank you cards for their subscribers or for those who give money regularly.

The symbols brought in at the beginning of the service should be placed in a prominent position in the worship area and remain in view during the service. They may provide an opportunity for a short introduction and welcome to the service.

For **learning** the symbol may be an elephant:

-  it is well known that an elephant never forgets,
-  it is an animal useful to humans because it can carry great burdens
-  the elephant is often decorated and arrives in splendour to mark the beginning of a community celebration.



In this service



the elephant is a reminder never to forget God and never to forget to keep learning,



JMA too is useful, but JMA's burden is the weight of injustice that affects so many people in the world,



this elephant has arrived to mark the beginning of our celebration of those who have worked for JMA over this last year.

For **praying** the symbol may be a candle, a cross and/or some flowers.

For **servicing** use JMA symbols such as badges, the Rainbow magazine or a globe.

### **Suggested first song**

Who put the colours in the rainbow? (CP)

Jesus calls us here to meet him (LFB)

Jubilate everybody (JP)

**Learn**

### **Bible Reading**

1 Corinthians 12: 12-20 'All one body'

This reading has possibilities for some sort of dramatic presentation, perhaps using large props or mime. If done in this way you may like to continue the reading to verse 26.

### **A story about being wise**

This story too has possibilities for enjoyable presentation. A group of children, adults or, even better, a mixture could present the whole story as a drama. Alternatively, you could call a volunteer from the congregation each time another wise man goes to feel the elephant, blindfold them and let them feel a suitable prop.

# The Wise Men and the Elephant

Long ago in a town in India there lived six very wise men. They had to be extra wise because they were blind. One day news spread through the town that a very strange creature was arriving. It was called an elephant and everyone, not least the six very wise men, wanted to see it. But of course they could not see it! What could they do? They wanted to share in the excitement and be able to tell the town's people who had missed it exactly what it was like.

'I have an idea,' shouted one of the men. 'We must feel this creature then we will be able to tell people what it is like'.

So the six men set off to the market place to feel the elephant!

'I'll go first,' shouted the oldest. He moved close to the animal and put out his hands in front of him. All he could feel was the elephant's side. It seemed to go on and on, whichever way he felt. Quick as a flash he shouted to the others, 'It's simple, I know what it's like – an elephant is like a very big wall.'

The second wise man was not content to be told this. He must feel for himself. He reached out in front and grabbed the nearest thing, which happened to be one of the tusks. 'A wall?' he cried. 'It is nothing like a wall at all! An elephant is like a spear, I can feel the sharp point at the end!'

The third man, hearing this disagreement, pushed passed the other two, knocking them out of the way as they still argued. 'Let me near!' he yelled. 'I will decide which of you is right!' He rushed forward and felt something move in front of him. Something squirmed and wriggled in his hands. 'You are both quite wrong, this creature is just like a snake!'

'Wall, spear, snake! Let me get at it!' shouted the fourth wise man. 'Where is this elephant?' and being shorter than the rest he found in front of him the beast's large leg. 'You're wrong, all wrong. It's plain to me that elephants are very much like trees.'

As he said this, the fifth man could wait no longer. 'Let me pass, I will tell you! Why this is so obvious, even to a blind man.' He was holding firmly to a

large ear waving in the breeze as he shouted to them. 'An elephant is clearly just a sort of fan!'

That left number six puzzled by what he had heard. 'I've caught the elephant here, all of it is in my hands. It is nothing more than a rope!'

And so the argument raged. 'WALL, SPEAR, SNAKE, TREE, FAN, ROPE', was all the townspeople could hear, screamed out from those wise men. None would give way. Each knew he was right. AND if he was right then everyone else must be very wrong. So at the end of the day each went home convinced that only he knew what an elephant was really like and the other five must be very stupid indeed!

### **What do you think?**

If you have time, give everyone time to answer these questions in small groups or with those sitting next to them.

- Were they all right? Were they all wrong? Were they really wise?
- Can you suggest what they might have done?
- Have you ever been in the position where you think you have seen something, perhaps in the playground, and others have seen differently? How do you decide who is right?
- Are there similarities with the way we get to know people or God?

### **Suggested Songs**

I am the Church, you are the Church (BBP)

Nourished by the rainfall (SL)

**Serve**

### **Presentation of JMA awards**

Remember to take a picture of the JMA group after the service. We love pictures of the JMA collectors for Rainbow, but remember these tips: get close up and make your picture different in some way!

### **Bible Reading:**

Matthew 5:13-16 'Being light and salt'

## **An Elmer story about being your true self**

The suggested story is Elmer by David McKee, published by Andersen Press in hard back and Red Fox in paperback (£4.99) and also available in 'big book' format.

Elmer, as the children will know, is a multicoloured elephant, who decides that he no longer wants to be different from everyone else. He tries to cover up his colours, but soon realises that different is good.

JMA or any other group in the church might take on the task of making a large Elmer, perhaps as a patchwork on a sheet or a paper collage. Then find a way of turning it grey (to fit the story), maybe by having a grey outline on the back or having a grey shape to lay over the coloured one. If you have time, make the other animals that Elmer meets on his way through the forest, so that they can greet him on his walk.

This is a wonderful craft project, because the finished Elmer looks wonderful on a display for weeks afterwards. (Don't forget there are now dozens of Elmer stories and many lend themselves to use in all-age worship.)

## **Pray**

### **Prayers**

Either using the grey elephant you made for the Elmer story or a separate one, write up any suggestions members of the congregation have for prayers of intercession. In a moment of silence let everyone pray their own prayer.

Give everyone a brightly coloured piece of square paper and invite them to write or draw on it, 'One good thing about you that makes you you.'

Stick the coloured pieces onto the grey elephant – our prayers and our selves will make a difference.

## Offertory

Include JMA boxes and/or collectors' books, symbolically or literally, in the offertory.

## Suggested Songs

From the tiny ant to the elephant (CP)

God said, God said world (SNM)

Think of a world without any flowers (JP)

## An elephant never forgets

At the end of the service give everyone an elephant shape, it is for them to take home, but first ask them to write or draw something from this morning that they want to remember.

## Suggested Final Songs

I planted a seed (CP)

Father in Heaven grant to your children (HP)

I sing a song of the saints of God (JP)

**Elephant template  
for invitations, thank  
you cards and take  
home elephants.**



## Song books

Songs are suggested from the following publications. You may prefer to make choices from the books you regularly use but if you have a copyright licence, you may enjoy making copies or OHPs from the options offered.

CP Come & Praise, BBC Publications

JP Junior Praise, Marshall Pickering

HP Hymns and Psalms

SNM Songs for the New Millennium, Church House Publishing

BBP Big Blue Planet, Stainer & Bell

SL Sent by the Lord, Wild Goose Publications

LFB Love from Below, Wild Goose Publications

