



Ways to use SeasonsFUSION








By Donald Schmidt

A church in Hanapepe, Hawaii, had to combine worship and Church school when their church building was destroyed by a hurricane. When the new building was built, they found they had enjoyed the fusion so much they kept doing it.

SeasonsFUSION seeks to capture a similar sense, and provide resources that support congregational life as we worship, live, learn and grow as disciples.

These resources can stretch some of our understandings of worship, learning and serving, and seek quite literally to fuse them together. The resources are designed for time together, as well as apart, that is holistic, designed for all ages, and invites us into creativity. They are also designed to be used along with your own ideas; SeasonsFUSION will work best when a planning team is able to look at the materials and decide (and adapt) what will work best in your situation.

Who is FUSION designed for?

-  Congregations who are looking for resources that integrate or *fuse* worship, learning, and service, and support the many ways they practice Christianity.
-  Smaller congregations where age range and numbers make age-level faith formation programs difficult to maintain and sustain.
-  Small but vital congregations committed to faith formation and living their lives together in ways that embody and nourish faith.
-  Congregations that look to lay worship/preaching teams and need some study helps.
-  Congregations who want to experiment with reshaping their lives together as a worshipping and learning community.
-  Congregations who are looking for support for growing faith and discipleship at home.
-  Congregations that...well, you fill in the blank!

So, where to begin?

The page About this Season of Creation, Pentecost 2 (p. 3) provides an introduction to the themes, mood and movement of the season. Consider copying/reproducing this page and distributing it to congregational members through the bulletin, church paper, or e-mail list. In addition, articles on pp. 4-5 introduce the Seasons' art posters, and provide information to enrich the theme/direction of the season. Other articles, which enhance the weekly resources include:

- *Celebrating the Season of Creation* by Norm Habelpage 6
- *Forest* by Theodore Hiebertpage 7
- *Land* by Lee Levitt-Olsenpage 8
- *Wilderness/Outback* by Norm Habel ..page 9
- *River* by Sue Britton.....page 10
- *Scripture from My Heart to Yours* by Sarah Agnewpage 11

Here are the resources you will find included for each week:

- ❑ **A Planning Page** – this weekly calendar page notes liturgical and ecumenical observances for the week, as well as including the lectionary readings at a glance.
- ❑ **Biblical Background** – a brief commentary on the readings for the day, and the theme direction
- ❑ **Reflecting on the Word** – reflective and thought-provoking questions. You may find this useful for adult studies, youth discussion, lay worship teams, young adults preparing alternative worship, sermon seeds for clergy, and so on.
- ❑ Focus for Worship, Learning, and Serving that considers what is going on in the lives of those who will gather on this day, and how the theme might intersect and connect with their lives.
- ❑ **Worship Outline** – 3 pages of worship resources designed with all ages in mind, providing a wide variety of different experiences each week.
- ❑ **Poetry and Prose** – Articles, stories, poetry, as well as saints and interfaith days.



Season of Creation, Pentecost 2

- **Bible Story** used in church, growing faith and discipleship at home. This story works across all ages, and is also available in MP3 on the *Season of Creation, Pentecost 2 Data CD*.
- **Faith Stations** – These can be used in a variety of ways. You might choose one, two or more to set up in or around the worship space, so people remain within the worship space, which is especially suitable for congregations where there are fewer children and young people. Some will want to offer them for children, youth, and others who leave worship for 20 minutes, usually during the sermon time. They can also be used in mid-week settings, or in the worship service itself. These activities are designed to affirm and foster the way we live, learn and grow as disciples.
- **Resource sheet** – designed for use at one of the Stations.
- **Activity sheet** to be used by the very young in church time, posted to the church website for downloading, mailed or taken to families when visiting.

One way to use SeasonsFUSION might look like this: a planning team (probably looking at several weeks at a time) decides which resources to use. As you explore the weekly scriptures you will note themes that apply to your church, and then plan to use or adapt some of the worship resources to suit your needs. Recruiting a wide variety of laity to help lead each week's worship is key to making this resource feel like it "belongs" to the whole congregation.

Next, decide which faith stations you wish to have. This will depend on your interests as well as the ages and numbers of people likely to participate.

Those who have left worship in the middle will be invited to rejoin the congregation for the end of worship time; this helps tie the events together and provide a cohesive sense of worshipping and learning together.

Some additional resources that help support these materials:

- *Music Booklet* with sheet music and pages with lyrics only for copying.
- Data CD with:
 - images for projection
 - "media" presentation (PowerPoint®)
 - Bible stories in MP3 format

- Station directions formatted for printing and display
- Extra Resources folder that will include extra resource sheets, patterns, and so on
- text files: worship outlines, articles, song lyrics for copying into bulletins and newsletters
- Living the Seasons At Home. This 8-page booklet provides a weekly engagement of the focus passage from the lectionary you will probably hear at church on Sunday. Each week provides an opening conversation that connects the theme with your life including a brief introduction to the focus passage and a summary of the reading. Finally, suggestions are offered to help you practice the Christian character lifted up by the theme and focus passage.

You can also access these things at www.seasonsonline.ca

- Spirit Sightings – weekly stories and questions for connecting SeasonsFUSION with events in the world.
- Lectionary bookmarks. Go to Library and click on "Overview"
- Looking ahead – a guide to the upcoming seasons. Go to Library and click on "Overview"
- Resources for Reformation and All Saints' Days
- A virtual resource booklet with craft ideas, recipes, patterns, and more.

Lastly, an evaluation form provides an excellent opportunity to let us know what is working, what you would like more of, and what is not helpful. In a new resource such as this hearing your thoughts and ideas is crucial, so please take a moment to fill out the form each season.

So, are you feeling a little overwhelmed by the wealth of material before you? Don't be. While SeasonsFUSION may seem like a lot to digest at first you will soon find ways to tailor the resources to fit the needs, hopes, and dreams of your congregation.

Like any church resource this material will work best when you work as a church to make it truly your own. May God be with you in this exciting journey!

An editor of church resources for almost 20 years, Donald Schmidt was served on the Seasons editorial team for several years. He currently works as a writer and pastor in Seattle, Washington.

