



WORSHIPING TOGETHER: EVERY-WEEK EVANGELISM

WHETHER WE HAVE CHILDREN, grandchildren, or no children, it's important to create a church where children feel welcomed and included in the worship service. If we want children to join our church when they are older, we need to make sure they're happy in church today. Each time a child experiences a church service they will either enjoy it and feel increasingly positive toward church, or they will not enjoy it and will feel increasingly negative toward church.

Throughout the Bible, worship included people of all ages. It took place in a garden, in a tent, by an altar, on the side of a mountain, in the temple, in synagogues, and in homes. God also gave His people a calendar of amazing feasts and celebrations that included all the senses (such as in the tabernacle) and different hands-on activities, such as building temporary tabernacles together. No one in the Bible ever worshiped the way most Christians have worshiped for the last few centuries.

INVOLVEMENT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Whenever a younger person is involved in the worship service, the other children and teens are more likely to pay attention. Churches that are intentional about creatively involving children are more likely to attract more children and families. When a child is involved in the service, unchurched relatives might be more willing to come along too.

Here are some simple ideas for involving young people in your church services:

YOU'RE WELCOME!

- Train your children and young people as volunteer greeters. Let them take turns welcoming other young people who visit your church.
- Help children assemble welcome packs for visitors, especially children. Ask them what they would like to receive in a welcome pack if they visited a church.

LET'S PRAY

- Invite a family to offer prayer as a group. They can each offer part of the prayer, such as adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and requests.

- Invite children to bring something that they're thankful for and place it on a table at the front of the church as part of your prayer of thanksgiving.
- Give children cards on which they can write short prayers. Gather them up during the offering time and choose a few to read each week during the prayer.

READING GOD'S WORD

- Invite a child or teen to present the Bible reading during the service. Ask them a month in advance so they can study the passage with a parent or a safe mentor and then deliver it with meaning and understanding. Give them the space to be creative. They could act out the passage or they could draw pictures or take photos and create a PowerPoint to illustrate the verses. They might even dress as a Bible character to present the words.
- Invite a young person to read the scripture and then interview them about what the verses mean to them personally.
- Ask a family to present the scripture passage in whatever way they would like. Find a dramatized Bible version to inspire ideas.

THE JOY OF GIVING

- Invite young people to design tithe and offering envelopes for your church.
- Ask them to create or decorate different containers for special offerings and events.

VISUAL DISPLAY

- Invite children and teens to create artwork for your church services. In one church an artist worked with the children to make beautiful wall hangings illustrated with Bible verses.
- Ask children to bring to church one flower in a specific color, such as red for a Communion service. A skilled florist can help them create a display for your church. Even a row of red flowers cut to the same height and placed in small bottles or drinking glasses can look amazing. Or they can make informal arrangements in jars for the tables at a potluck.
- Invite artistic children and teens to design church bulletin covers or PowerPoint backgrounds.

SING YOUR HEART OUT!

- Plan to include a contemporary children's song in your service; it can follow the children's story.
- Invite a young person to choose a hymn or song on the theme of the service. Let them introduce the hymn and explain why they chose it. Shy children can write out their ideas for someone else to read or make a video of their introduction to show before the song.

- Encourage young musicians. Invite a music teacher to mentor them and help them prepare a simple accompaniment that is well within their ability. Or let them play with a small group, where mistakes might be less obvious.

SERMON TIME

- It's important to help children to enjoy the sermon time in whatever way is comfortable and enjoyable for them. Most sermons last much longer than a child can endure sitting still in an adult-sized chair!
- Tell the children's story in the middle of the sermon, as a sermon illustration.
- Find practical sermon illustrations, such as simple science experiments, and involve children in the process.
- Invite teens to make a short video on the sermon theme or to interview other church members about a sermon-related topic.
- Hide an image related to the sermon on some of the PowerPoint slides. Ask children to count how many of these images—such as animals, words, people, or objects—are hiding on the slides.
- Make a collection of story bags for younger children to borrow during church. A story bag has felt shapes for creating a scene on the floor, soft items that can be used to tell a story, such as plush or knitted animals, knitted Bible characters, and other quiet components related to a story. The bags also contain a simple storybook so that a child can use the pictures to tell their own Bible story and act it out with the soft props.

INTERGENERATIONAL WORSHIP

Ideally, worship services include a variety of activities to suit everyone in the congregation. Why not explore intergenerational worship? Search the Internet for books and resources to help you grow intergenerational worship in your church. 2

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