


Intergenerational Worship

Tips for Pastors

Can the church truly be in worship to our God, if children are not present?

"To be Christian in the full, robust, biblical sense of the word, we cannot go it alone. We must participate in the life of the church: we must become members of a concrete community of faith."

Believing, Behaving, Belonging. Richard Rice



"In many churches the young belong only to their peer group, and when they graduate from youth group, they graduate from the church. With their peers they go off. . . Leaving behind the congregation to which they never belonged."

Children Matter

*Every Child a
Disciple of Jesus*

- Welcome and show respect to children of all ages.
- Model love and care to children as part of the worshipping community.
- Take the needs of children and their families into consideration when you prepare your worship and sermon.
- Children learn through their senses, so plan to use as many senses as possible – seeing, hearing, moving, touching, tasting.

“Tell me and I’ll forget

Show me and I may remember

Involve me and I’ll understand.”

- Rethink the value of the cognitive, word laden long sermon. Make it relevant by giving age appropriate examples throughout..
- Ensure the sermon has a strong everyday application.
- Welcome the children and ensure that they feel you care about them.
- Invite children to use their gifts. Involve them and their families in the worship.

To be worship leaders

To give the welcome

To pray

To sing

To play an instruments

To give scripture readings

To collect the offering

To help with an object lesson

To be sound, data projector and IT helpers

To dramatise a sermon illustration

To tell stories

To share experiences

To give testimonies

To produce artwork for sermon illustrations

To preach

Include children in altar calls

- Consider the time of your worship. Sometimes swapping Sabbath School and church is more suitable for families.
- Make worship bags for the young children to take into church. Use:

Puzzles, Felts, pictures ,Pencils, Paper, Books, Plastic animals, Stickers,
Colouring pictures

- Make children’s bulletins and activity pages based on the sermon for the older children.
- Give the children a simple word list with pictures and definitions. Encourage them to listen for the words during the sermon.
- Provide children with Bibles and encourage them to look up scripture.
- Encourage parents to help children participate in singing, prayer and offering.
- Organise parent partners who will sit in church with a young family to help them.
- Provide attractive places in your church for feeding babies and changing nappies.
- Provide booster seats for toddlers so that they can see above the people in front of them.
- Celebrate children’s milestones as church family events and invite family and children’s participation in these special events.
 - Baby dedication
 - Starting school
 - Making a commitment to Jesus
 - Baptism
 - Starting High School
 - Leaving School
- Organise family friendly programs for special days such as :
 - Mother’s day
 - Father’s day
 - Spring Festival
 - Easter
 - Christmas
- Prepare older children for the understanding of, and participation in, the communion service. Where possible organise a family service where children and parents can remember Jesus sacrifice together, and grow spiritually as a family.
- Prepare “Takeaway” questions for families to discuss at home as follow up from the sermon and put these in the church bulletin.
 - What was the key point of the sermon?
 - Why do you think he preached on this topic?

- What is one lesson that you learned?
- What difference is this going to make in your life?
- Visit children and their family at home to build relationships and trust.
- “From the lips of children and infants, you have ordained praise.” Matthew 21:16

“Children believe that Church is mostly for adults *unless* they are included in a meaningful way.

Children believe that they have no say in what happens in the church *unless* they are given some ownership.

Children believe that they have nothing significant to contribute *unless* their input is valued and respected.

Children believe that they are always the receivers in church *unless* adults are open to receiving ministry from them.

Children believe that they must wait until they are older to discover their gifts and callings unless their gifts and callings are recognised and encouraged.”

Kirk, Daphne Heirs Together England Kevin Mayhew 2003

“One of the simplest and most profound ways to nurture a child’s soul is to make room in the pew. The starting place for helping children to worship consciously and joyously is to just bring them along . . . children experience a sense of belonging that no curriculum can replicate.” Timothy Jones

“Congregations who hold themselves responsible before God for the faith nurture of their children believe the children must intentionally be included as responsible participants and contributors.” Marie Yust

Participation in the communal worship of God is a crucial piece of human spiritual formation – the time each week when the faith community gathers together. It strengthens our souls in both cognitive and affective ways. Ivy Beckworth

“Participation in a vital faith community is essential to the Christian formation of the young.” Children Matter

Julie Weslake