

Family Worship and/or Summer Worship

The biggest challenge of family worship or summer worship is creating a service that is accessible to children and youth, but still relevant and meaningful to adults. It seems like an impossible task, but sometimes distilling a service down to a core message and using different media to communicate that message in a way that is accessible to our younger members creates a new way for our older members to understand the word of God. Included in this package are some ideas, resources, and suggestions for elements of family worship that are intended as an inspiration and help to you as you plan. This guide focuses on small children, but older children and youth will benefit from a change of pace as well!

Ideas for creating a successful family worship service:

- Children need to be in proximity to what is happening in order to pay close attention. Creating some kind of area for children and/or families to sit throughout the service makes the service feel different for children and gives them the proximity they need to (try to) focus. There are foam squares in the toy cupboard of the Toddler Worship room, or you could use blankets to create a specific, confined space for children to use.
- Small children love dancing and playing instruments, but it helps them to have a little bit of guidance; i.e. some very simple actions, a dance step, or walking around in a circle holding hands. The little toddlers won't necessarily be comfortable dancing in the front, so you could recruit a parent to help lead dancing at the back.
- Keep it simple! Repetition can be annoying for adults, but it's necessary for kids. Get everyone to repeat a sentence together, sing a simple refrain often throughout the worship, etc.
- Don't make the service too long! It's tempting to talk more because there isn't a homily, or to include tons of family-friendly elements, but one essential aspect of being family-friendly is to KEEP IT SHORT! One hour is actually a great length for families with young children.

Resources in the toy cupboard of the Toddler Worship room (use the Shared Spaces key to get into the room, and there is a Nursery Toy Cupboard key in the sound room):

The Jesus Storybook Bible (in toy cupboard)
Children of God Storybook Bible
Psalms for Young Children
All Things Bright and Beautiful (picture book)
Tub of instruments and scarves
Crayons and pencil crayons

Possible Family Worship Elements:

Dances: Maya, Courtney, David Braun and Peterjohn are people who currently have/do dance in our church. Jana is still willing to teach dances.

Clowns: Jane and Lynda may be able to help new clowns, but are retiring their own clown identities.

Picture books:

A picture book can be a great way to put a new spin on a Scripture or idea. You can research key words on the Winnipeg Public Library website or go to CMU to the CommonWord resource library (in the new building, beside Folio Café).

Reader's Theatre:

Nettie is amazing at writing reader's theatre for Scripture passages. You can talk to her for help and write your own, or find an interpretation of Scripture online. These little skits can really bring Scripture to life for young people, especially when you use modern language and cultural references.

Art:

If you have a piece of art at the front, pick it up and bring attention to it. Explain it and ask for responses on it to get kids and youth involved.

Atrium stories:

Carolyn is willing to do the following atrium stories in worship. Rachel, Tessa and Aaron can also be approached to do these or other stories.

Creation Noah Abram and Sarai Exodus 10 Best Ways to Live	Jesus and the Children Jesus and Bartimaeus Jesus and Zacchaeus Jesus the King
Advent The Boy Jesus in the Temple	Jesus is Risen: Mary Magdalene Jesus is Risen: Road to Emmaus Ascension Pentecost
Jesus is Baptized Jesus in the Wilderness The Mustard Seed The Good Samaritan The Great Pearl The Great Banquet The Good Shepherd	

Child-friendly Songs from the Grain of Wheat book (this is certainly not complete and doesn't even include songs from the hymnal. Just choose songs with a good beat and repetition for the little kids, and simple lyrics for the older kids):

Celebrate

Colours 23

"Jehovah Jireh"

Break Forth Into Joy

Good Morning Jesus

On Tiptoe

I Will Your Gates With Thanksgiving

Christus Victor

Ride On King Jesus

Wings of an Eagles

Holy Lord

This is the Day

Great and Wonderful

If I were A Butterfly

Come All Your People

Be Still and Know (Atrium Song)

Over My Head

Sizohamba

Freedom Is Coming

Siyahamba

God is a Good God

Some additional ideas:

- 1) Pictures (on the wall, on a projector, held up, passed around)
- 2) Physical things to do:
 - passing out objects like rocks/shells/chocolates/whatever
 - actions to songs
 - involving the congregation (specifically children) in a drama or other activity that requires them to get out of their seats
- 3) Avoid words and language that are inaccessible to children (use small words)
- 4) Involve the children in the "talking parts"
 - older children could (help) read scriptures
 - have a few pictures of certain key elements in the readings, and whenever you encounter one, hold up the picture instead of saying the word, and have the kids say it instead.
 - for children that can read, post a "memory verse" on the wall, and let them work on memorizing it before/during the service. If they can recite it from memory at the end (perhaps during announcements, perhaps to someone after the service?), they get a small prize.
 - ask the children to listen for certain things in the readings or other "talking parts"
 - have them cheer/clap/raise their hands/whatever when they hear a certain word/phrase/concept
 - have them listen for the answers to questions you pose ahead of time
 - have them count something in the text (the number of times someone says "do not be afraid" or the number of people that ask Jesus for healing, etc.)
- 5) Shorter teachings/prayers/readings/etc. (perhaps not necessary if children are engaged)
- 6) Quicker transitions between parts of the service, to help keep the attention of children (e.g. don't call up a reader, then wait for them to walk to the front, open the Bible, and begin to read; give them an order of service ahead of time, so they can come up and be ready to read whenever the person before them has finished)
- 7) Teach *about* the different parts of worship, what they are, and why we do them

- 8) Involve children in leading some parts of the service
- help pass out physical objects if those are incorporated
 - light candles
 - explain some things to the congregation (e.g. during Lent/Advent, explain that it is a season of waiting, and what we are waiting for)
 - older children could be "assistant" worship leaders, and meet with the worship leader to help plan/execute the service
 - help pick songs
 - say some things at the front during worship (prayer, part of communion liturgy, story)

9) ask/allow the children to share during sharing time about things that are important to them, and involve them in the prayers of the people, perhaps by giving them a response to say after each item, or by asking them to mention the different concerns that have been raised