

Introduction

Welcome to a series of programme outlines for children to use in leading the worship service. It is hoped that they will give you a variety of ideas that allow children of various ages to be involved. They have been written to help equip and empower children to minister. Being involved and using their gifts in ministry is an essential part of building a strong faith.

Sections 1-5 are a series of programmes written by Amanda Bews that provide ideas to assist children in your congregation to present the purposes of church. It is important that the entire church family understands why we exist as a church. When we know our purpose we can move towards being what God calls us to be.

Section 6 is also written by Amanda Bews and it provides ideas for passing faith on to children.

Section 7 was written by Stephen and Leanne Davies for Papatoetoe Church in Auckland, New Zealand. It gives ideas on how to build a rock-solid spiritual foundation in children.

Remember that these sermon helps are just ideas and outlines. Your church will have gifts, skills and resources that you can use, so please adapt them for the unique culture of your church. Each child who is chosen to deliver the talk will need to use the words/concepts/expressions/illustrations that work for them. It will be good to get the pastor to coach the children on sermon delivery.

While these sermons will take quite a bit of preparation, the time spent in practice will be worth the effort. Children can often present concepts in a direct way and express ideas that may be more difficult for an adult to get across.

If you are thinking of using this resource as a basis for a worship service then make sure you work it through with the wider church leadership team so that this programme can link with various other aspects of church life and be part of the journey of the church.

Pray for and with the children in regard to their part in the programme and let them know that what they are doing is really important and that Jesus can work in and through them to grow His kingdom.

*"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.

Organisation

Bulletin

Have a special cover designed for the day – you could ask a child(ren) to draw a picture of them participating in an activity such as reading the Bible, praying, spending time in nature or serving. Have children handing out the bulletins. This job, along with taking up the offering, allows children to be involved in the church service. Try and use every child in some capacity (all children over three years of age can generally be used in some way).

Prelude and Postlude Music

Most congregations will have children who are learning an instrument. This is a great opportunity to put together an item (eg violin and piano duet) or a small band to play music before and after the service. This will need to be planned three or four weeks earlier to give the children plenty of time to practice and become confident.

You might want them to learn a song from the song list. *Play Today* series is a great source of worship songs for the Beginning and Intermediate piano player. Children will be able to contribute to worship, even if they only have limited musical ability.



While prelude music is happening you might like to show data projector pictures of the children in the church family (if these are not being used during the offering). Include pictures of children under three so that all children get acknowledged/included somewhere in the programme.

Praise and Worship

A list of songs is included that you might like to choose from. You may know other songs that present the theme and that your congregation would sing more confidently. Don't do all new songs otherwise the congregation will not be able to join in and participate. The most important thing during praise and worship time is for the congregation to express worship to God. They cannot do this if they do not know the songs. If you have a singing group leading the singing, add children to the group or in some cases you may be able use all children.

Offering and Prayer

Specific ideas are included in some outlines. Try and include as many children as possible. They will really appreciate the opportunity to serve. Use this time as an opportunity to help train children and develop their gifts.