



PARTICIPATION

Shaping Lifelong Faith

INCLUSIVE

To participate in the life of the faith community, children need to be a part of this community. And to be a part of the community they need to be present for its central practices. They need to rub shoulders with all sorts of folks who make up this community... They need to be seen as active and valued members of their faith community." Ivy Beckwith and David Csinos, Childrens Ministry in the Way of Jesus

This worship program explores the value of participation in the church community and how it is vital for healthy faith development. It is important that children use their gifts as part of the body.






As a church we challenge you to include your kids, families and members of all generations.

The Discipleship Ministry Team - Children
Litiana Turner & Alexandra Manners- South Pacific Division

ABOUT PARTICIPATION

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How can our church **Empower Homes:**

-  Be intentional about allowing children to be a part of the church community.
-  Welcome children into intergenerational worship.
-  Ensure that they participate, use their gifts and feel that they belong.
-  Give children equal opportunity to contribute and have a voice.
-  Guide and mentor them to participate in meaningful ways.

WAYS TO INCLUDE THE KIDS



Songs and Items:

Throughout the programs you will find spaces for songs (congregational) and items. If you have a children's singing group and musicians, great – if not, perhaps add children to the adult music team. Feel free to move aspects of the program around to work in your context.



Offering and Prayer:

Specific ideas are included in some outlines. Try and include as many children as possible. They will really appreciate and grow from their opportunity to serve.



Prelude and Postlude Music:

Most congregations will have children who are learning an instrument. This is a great opportunity to put together an item or a small band to play music before and after the service. This will need to be organised so that children have plenty of time to practice and become confident.

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) – be sure to have the right permission in place. If a data projector can't be used then pictures the children have created could be displayed around the church.



Bulletin or poster:

Our church bulletins are often factual and not very child friendly.

For this sabbath consider:

- Having a special children's sabbath cover designed for the day.
- Do you have older children in your congregation who are good at design? Is there a way that they could be mentored and given responsibility in the bulletin design process on a continual basis?
- Think about content. Is there a way to make it interactive for children?
- Could you include one of the Just for Kids understanding our church inserts?
- *Available from <http://children.adventist.org.au/participation>*
- Is this something you can consider doing more than one sabbath a year?

PARTICIPATION SERVICE

ABOUT THE SERVICE

This worship service explores an essential component of Faith Shaper. It looks at creating home environments that are positive for faith development. It explores how church, home and school need to work together.



Suggested Running Sheet/Program Guide

Please note, these are approximate times and assume an 11:00am start.

10:50	Prelude music
11:00	Welcome & Announcements
11:05	Congregational songs of your choice
11:15	Offering
11:18	Prayer
11:20	Readers Theatre
11:25	Sermonette 1
11:30	Sermonette 2
11:35	Object Lesson
11:40	Interview + Sharing Time
11:45	Dramatized Bible Story
11:50	Sermonette 3
11:55	Drama
12:00	Sermonette 4
12:05	Closing prayer
12:07	Postlude

WELCOME

Welcome script:

Have a different person come up the front and say each line (if you don't have enough people then each person can say two lines). Try to avoid pauses between the lines so it flows. The next person should be ready to step up as soon as the person before them finishes. Everyone says 'Welcome to God's house!' together at the end.

- Person 1:** Welcome
- Person 2:** In today's program we will be talking about participation.
- Person 3:** And how it is important for all of us be involved in church.
- Person 4:** No matter how old we are
- Person 5:** Whether we are new to the church family
- Person 6:** Or have been around a long time
- Person 7:** We all need to be involved
- Person 8:** When we participate we feel part of things
- Person 9:** And when we feel part of things then we feel at

home.

Person 10: Each year young people leave churches they never felt part of

Person 11: When we allow children to participate and have a role in our community then they feel part of church rather than just observers.

Person 12: And more likely to remain part of church when they grow up!

Person 13: We have a few things going on in our church at the moment and here they are

Person 14: *(Insert specific announcements here)*

Person 15: We hope you enjoy today's program.

Unison: Welcome to God's house!

OFFERING

Have buckets at the end of each row. Pass the buckets along the row then have someone from each row bring them to the front.

Today we are all going to participate by collecting the Tithes and Offerings. Somewhere along the row is a bucket under a chair. The person who has the bucket under their chair is today's offering collector. Please collect the offering in your row then you, or someone else in the row, can bring the bucket to the front. Once you are all here we can pray. When all the buckets are at the front, pray.

*Dear Lord, thank you for your tithes and offerings. We willingly give back a portion of the gifts you have given us. We know everything belongs to you including our next breath. Thank you for giving us an opportunity to share what we have. Thank you also for the opportunity of participating in the fellowship we share together. In your name,
Amen.*

Thank you, now if you could please carry the buckets to the back of the church. Thank you for your participation today.



PRAYER

If possible include a family or people of various age groups in the prayer time.

Prayer points to include:



Thank you that we can worship together as part of your church family.



Thank you that we are all part of this body. Thank you for giving us a role to play in your body.



We pray for wisdom and patience for those in our congregation who mentor our children.



We pray that this church can be an environment where all people can feel a sense of belonging and participate.



Thank you Lord for your gifts to us and people who are willing to allow you to work in and through them.





Let the new self be renewed in the image of God, created in righteousness and true holiness, without the dominion of sin, that we should walk in holiness, as we live under the dominion of God.

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READERS THEATRE

1 Corinthians 12:12-28

Reader 1: Our bodies have many different parts which work together to make one body.

Reader 2: It is the same with the body of Christ

Reader 1: Which is His church.

Reader 3: We come from different places,

Reader 2: Racial groups

Reader 1: And backgrounds.

Reader 3: Some of us are rich

Reader 2: And some of us are poor.

Reader 1: We are all very different

Reader 2: But the Holy Spirit has fitted us all together into one body

ALL: And together we make up God's church.

- Reader 4:** Our bodies have many parts and they must work together to help us move.
- Reader 2:** What if our foot was to sulk and say
- Reader 3:** "I am not part of the body because I can't do what the hand does";
- Reader 2:** And what if your ear was to feel sad because it wasn't able to see like your eyes?
- Reader 4:** Is the ear less important to us than the eye...
- Reader 1:** Suppose the whole body was an eye,
- Reader 2:** Then how would we hear?
- Reader 4:** Or what if we were one big ear,
- Reader 3:** How could we smell?
- Reader 1:** Fortunately that isn't the way God made us.
- Reader 4:** He has made many parts for our bodies and has put each part
- ALL:** Just where He wants it.
- Reader 1:** What a strange thing a body would be if it had only one part!
- Reader 4:** It is the same with His body the church –
- ALL:** Many parts, one body.

Reader 2: The eye would never say to the hand

Reader 3: "I don't need you"

Reader 2: Neither would the head say to the feet

Reader 4: "I don't need you"

Reader 2: As they are all important.

Reader 1: Sometimes the parts that seems to be the weakest and least important are really the most necessary.

Reader 2: If one part suffers,

Reader 1, 3, 4: All the other parts suffer with it

Reader 2: And if one part is honoured

Reader 1, 3, 4: All the other parts are glad.

Reader 1: So I tell you now today, all of you together make up the body of Christ.

Reader 2: Even though you are all very different people God loves each of you infinitely,

Reader 3: You are all important

Reader 4: And necessary parts of His church.

ALL: Which is His body.



SERMONETTE |

**If possible have a model human body (most school science labs have them).
Using Paul's body analogy work through (Ephesians 4).**

- **Every part of the body matters.** What happens when a part of your body decides not to do its job? The rest of the body suffers. What if your liver decided to start living for itself saying: 'I'm tired of what I do around here – I don't want to serve in this body any more – I want a year off to be fed – I've got to do what's best for me.' What would happen? Your body would die. Today lots of churches are dying because of people who are unwilling, for various reasons, to participate. They sit on the side-lines while the body suffers.



- Each of us has a part to play and if we neglect that part or do not give it our best shot we are not just robbing each other, but robbing God and the impact of our church body. Ephesians 4:11-12 says that *“It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.”*
- God created us to be good at different things, and no one is good at everything. This is how God wanted it to be so we would all need to work together if things are to work best. God made each of us to care about different things, be good at different things and be excited about different things so together we can serve in a body that shows the world what can happen when we work together. **God has designed each of us to do something special in the body of Christ 'the church'.**
- Church is all about growing, serving, worshipping, connecting and sharing together.

SERMONETTE 2

Right Attitude:

- Paul talks about our attitude being more important than the job itself. When we have the right attitude of being servants then participating in the body just happens.
- Imagine that you drove past some people who had been made to do community service and had to clean up the rubbish beside the road. Most of them would work slowly and not be very excited about what they were doing. They are just there to clock up their hours.
- Now imagine if you drove past a group of school kids who had adopted a section of the highway to keep clean. They would be having fun getting the same job done. They are not doing the job because they have to, but because they see the purpose in what they are doing. It's the same with participating in the church body. It's not about doing it because you have to, but that you understand Jesus wants to work in and through you to change lives.
- It is a privilege for you to play your part in Christ's body. When we work together toward bringing people to Jesus we can have a lot of fun along the way. We encourage each other, support each other and help each other. When one of us is down we are to look after that person. When one of us has something good happen we are to celebrate it together.

- Paul says, If one part hurts we all hurt. (Maybe put in example about when you have hurt a part of your body and your whole body feels in pain). If something exciting happens to one part we can all feel excited. Paul says that this experience of being together is what God created us for.
- Paul goes on in Corinthians chapter 13 to talk about the importance of love in the body. We are to be a body that loves God and shows that love to each other. Serving out of love is very different to serving out of guilt and being scared. When I do something for my mum out of love it is much more fun than doing it just because I have to.
- God designed this church to be a body – where all of us participate together, where we care about what happens to each other and where we remember that we Christ's body together.
- This week let's see what each one of us can do to make this church family more of a community. Maybe it's phoning up someone to encourage them, maybe it's inviting someone home for a meal. Maybe you will help someone with a job or look after someone who has had a bad week. Think of what you will do this week to build relationships. Maybe it's time for you to stop just watching and get involved in the part God designed you for.
- Paul says, You are Christ's body – that's what you are – you must never forget this!

OBJECT LESSON

You will need:



- Two boxes containing 50 standard Lego pieces each.
- Stop watch to time the race
- 5 volunteers (from different age groups)

Say something like:

Ok, I need five volunteers. Who would like to help me?

Call up five people and put four people in one group and stand them in front of one box of Lego and put one person in front of the other box.

Ok, now what I want you to do is build a Lego wall. The first group to use up all the pieces wins. You got that? Ok, ready, set go!

You may want to have an example for them to copy depending on the age of the kids you are choosing from. The group team will finish first. Perhaps you could have a prize for them.

Wow, you guys were so fast. Congratulations on winning the race. Here is your prize.

Then go over to the person on their own who didn't finish

So, what happened to you? Why were you so slow? You've got heaps of Lego left?

They will say something about it not being fair. That the other team had more members.

So it wasn't fair? Turn to audience **Did you all think it wasn't fair too?** Hopefully they will call out that it wasn't fair and maybe give you a few reasons why.

You know God wants us to work together. He wants all of us to participate. In Ephesians 4:12 it says that "Christ gave us gifts to prepare us to serve and make the body stronger" God wants the church to work together. Like these two groups building a wall it is much easier when we don't have to work on our own.

Give a prize to the other participant.

The end.



INTERVIEW + SHARING TIME

Find someone in your congregation who is a builder. If you don't have a builder in your congregation you can adapt the question for someone else who works as part of a team. Ask questions like the following:

- * What different roles do you need people doing when building a house?
- * Do you need all those people? Couldn't you just do it by yourself? No, why?
- * Surely you have seen the electricians work enough times now, you could do it couldn't you? No, why?
- * Why is it easier to build a house with a team?

When we work together, when everyone participates, it makes the building process smoother, quicker and easier. Everyone using their special skills makes the building stronger and better. Being part of a team is great.





DRAMATISED BIBLE STORY

Characters:

- * Narrator
- Little Lad
- Father
- Mother
- Jesus
- Andrew
- Other Disciples

Props:

- * 'Fish' for Little Lad and his Dad to sort
- Basket lunch for Little Lad (containing loaves and fish)
- 'Food' for the disciples to hand out/collect
- 12 Large baskets for the disciples

The Narrator reads the scripts as the other characters act out what is read. Little Lad, Mother, Jesus and Andrew all have speaking parts in bold type.

Narrator:

Little Lad lived by the lake – a deep blue lake where at night his father went fishing.

In the morning Little Lad helped his father sort the fish he had caught. They put the big fish in one pile, and the little fish in

another pile. Big fish, little fish. Big fish, little fish.

Then Little Lad and his father went to breakfast. For breakfast Little Lad had barley loaves. Little Lad liked barley loaves. They were round and crusty and good. Barley loaves would make him grow strong, make him grow tall. Then he, too, could go fishing on the lake.

One morning Little Lad saw many, many people going by his home along the lake shore. They were going to find Jesus.

Little Lad: *to Mother* "May I go too?"

Mother: Why yes, you may go. I will make you lunch. You will be hungry after that long walk.

Narrator: Into a basket Little Lad's mother put five barley loaves and two small fish. She gave the basket to Little Lad to take with him on his long walk beside the lake.

Little Lad waved good-bye to his mother, barefooted, he walked through the tickly grass, and the prickly weeds, and over the sun-warmed stones. Little Lad was happy-happy to be walking along the lake shore on such a sunny morning. But most of all he was happy because he was going to see Jesus.

Little Lad found Jesus on a grassy hillside talking to many, many people. Jesus told such interesting stories. He told about animals, and birds, and what it is like up in heaven. Little Lad listened and listened. Sometimes he thought of eating his lunch,

but always he waited for just one more story.

Andrew: Little Lad, do you have any lunch?

Narrator: Asked a man named Andrew.

Little Lad: Oh, yes sir, I have five barley loaves and two small fish.

Andrew: Would you like to share your lunch with Jesus?

Little Lad: Oh yes sir, I would like to share my lunch with Jesus.

Narrator: Little Lad gave his lunch basket to Andrew. He watched Andrew take it to Jesus. He saw the pleased look on Jesus' face. And then he heard Jesus say to the people.

Jesus: Sit down on the grass, all of you. We shall now have lunch.

Narrator: Little Lad's eyes opened wide...

Little Lad: *Whispered.* There is not enough lunch for all these people in my little lunch basket.

Narrator: He was about to go and tell Jesus that there were only five barley loaves and two small fish in the basket, but Jesus was asking the blessing. Little Lad bowed his head.

Little Lad saw Jesus reach into the basket and bring out barley loaves and fish for his helpers to pass to the people. Little Lad moved closer to see better.

Andrew smiled and gave him a loaf and a fish. Then Jesus reached into the basket again and brought out more loaves and fish. Again, and again, and again. Jesus put His hand into the basket and always there were loaves and fish.

Little Lad: *Amazed.* How can it be? In my basket there were only five loaves and two small fish. But Jesus keeps taking more and more and more!

Narrator: And then he knew! It was Jesus' blessing that made more-more barley loaves and more fish! When everyone had eaten, Jesus said...

Jesus: Gather up the left-over food.

Narrator: His helpers went here and there with baskets picking up all the small pieces. Little Lad counted the baskets of leftovers.

Little Lad: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 baskets!

Narrator: What a surprise – and all from his little lunch!

Little Lad hurried home to tell his father and his mother how Jesus had fed a big crowd of people from his basket of lunch. And how when the people had eaten, there were more left over than he had to begin with.

VIDEO CLIPS:

You may like to use a clip in place of the Dramatized Bible story. Loaves and Fishes <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fC3FLqDgWRE> (4.50)

ALTERNATE CHILDREN'S STORY:

You could also tell a story from your own experience about something you have participated in. For example, collected for the appeal, a carwash fundraiser, 10,000 Toes, a fly and build. Something where you have joined other to help or support a cause, then describe how it made you feel helping others.

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SERMONETTE 3

Involvement in Ministry and Service:

This sermon is best suited to an upper primary student.

- Can you see my faith growing before your eyes? Well probably not but do you know that as children participate in the church body their faith grows?
- One of the vital faith shaper experiences is Participation. How do you think the little boy felt when his lunch was used to feed everyone?
- We need to be able to serve and participate in the activities of our church. Serving God is important for all of us to do. One of the reasons God put you on this planet is to serve. How you serve shows us what God is like. Letting us help you serve helps us experience God.
- The Bible says in Proverbs 20:11 that "even a child is known by his deeds, whether what he does is pure and right." Some people think that children should be seen but not heard. Some people think that our turn will come one day when we grow up. That's not what God thinks. He wants everyone in his church serving and being

available for Him to use. Even us kids.

- The Bible is full of examples of kids who served:
 - The little boy who gave his lunch (Matthew 14:13-21)
 - Samuel served in the temple (1 Samuel 2:18)
 - Josiah the king of Judah served God when he was eight (2 Kings 22:1-2)

- Participating makes us feel part of the church and gives us a sense of belonging. When we serve it also has a great influence on other children.

- We realise that this church is for us and not just a place our parents bring us to. Sure we need help and we need good role models but we can do lots to participate and allow Him to use us.
- Most kids would just love to participate – we just need to be given a go.

- Children are not simply to be seen as jugs to be filled with information but rather as whole people of God who can actively contribute to the mission of God.

- Invite children to share ideas of how they can be part of the church's mission.

- Some ideas for how we can be involved might include:
 - Helping deliver food parcels.
 - Helping with letterboxing.
 - We can be Welcomers.
 - Helping the deacons with the offering.
 - Handing out bulletins.
 - Saying the prayer.
 - Preaching.
 - Global Youth and Children's Day
 - There are lots of ways if we keep thinking.

- Think about how you participate and what it would take to mentor one of us kids in that area.
- In the story of Jesus feeding the five thousand Andrew did not see much when a little boy showed him he had five loaves and two fish. However for Jesus what the little boy had was enough to be used by Him to accomplish His purpose.
- God has plans for our generation and He trusts you to train us. Will you help us participate?

DRAMA

ARTY THE ANT

Characters:



Narrator
Arty
Alex

Props:



A Bed with blankets
Antenne x2 for ants to wear

Setting:

Arty's bedroom, bare necessities like army barracks. Very tidy. He rises and makes his bed carefully smoothing it out perfectly during the narration. Narrator stands stage left.

Narrator:

There was once an ant called Arty. Everyday he woke up early in the morning and spent the whole day finding and collecting food for the nest. Everyday was the same, up at dawn, work all day and go to bed exhausted at night. Then one morning Arty thought...

Arty:

I am tired of working all day. I think today I'll stay home and watch the grass grow and eat that chip crumb I found under *(insert Pastor's name)* bed.

During narration Arty retrieves the crumb from under his bed, lies down and begins eating looking very pleased with himself.

Narrator:

So Arty collected his crumb and settled back for a quiet day, wondering to himself why he hadn't thought to have a day off earlier. Well, as all of you know, Ants are very organised insects and it wasn't long before someone realised that Arty was missing. And Alex Ant, Arty's older brother – who was a soldier Ant, was sent to look for him.

Light fades down off Narrator and onto the Ants. The sound of knocking is heard. Then Alex ant enters stage right.

Alex: *(frustrated/concerned)* Arty, what are you doing lying there in bed...are you sick?

Arty: No. *(picks off more chip)* It's my day off.

Alex: *(Angry)* Day off!! We don't get day's off in Summer. We have a strict schedule to follow. Now get up. We need to hurry and catch up to the others.

Arty moans and puts a pillow over his head.

Arty: *(moves pillow to hugging position)* All I do is hurry... *(in fake voice)*.It's quick Arty, there's a piece of Taco over there or Hurry Arty, there's a sun flower seed over there...get it before that pigeon does – As if I can take on a pigeon.

Alex: *(lecturing)* Now Arty, the nest needs you...

Arty: *(annoyed)* No they don't. They won't notice if I stay home. There has to be at least 10,000 others doing the same job as me. I am sure they can manage with

9,999 today. Besides, who are you to tell me to hurry? All you do is stand around all day...

Alex: *(defensively/annoyed)* I might look to you like I stand around all day. But just last week our nest was stepped on by *(insert Pr wife's name)* while she was hanging out the washing. If I hadn't given her a good nip we'd all have been turned into ant paté. You workers all run away while we soldier ants run towards the danger.

Arty: *(sadly)* You are right. I'm just a worker and not important like you are. So who will care if I stay home today?

Alex: We are all important. If you and all the other workers stopped gathering food, all us soldiers would starve. We need you, all of you to look for food. What if today was the day you were going to find ½ a snicker's bar and you chose to stay home instead.

Arty: But I don't like snickers...I have a nut allergy.

Alex: Well, dairy milk then...The point is you are an important part of the nest. The Queen depends on you to help search for food. Because when Winter comes it will be too late. We all have to work together so we can keep the nest going. What if tomorrow the other 9,999 worker ants decided to stay home while you work? Where would that leave you?

A pause while Arty thinks to himself.

Alex: Come on Arty, I'll help you find your spot in the line.

It isn't too late to catch up.

Arty: Am I really that important to the Queen?

Alex: Of course you are!!

Arty: *(getting out of bed, both head for door)* OK then, but will you teach me how to nip? I'd like to have a turn at...

Talking fades out as they leave the stage.

Narrator: We are all parts of God's body. It takes every one of us to make it complete, for we each have different work to do. So we belong to each other, and each needs all the others, Romans 12:5.

The voice over could also be displayed on the data projector screen while being read.

[End]

SERMONETTE 4

This sermonette is to be presented by an adult.

- Children love participating and being involved. And it has been the same forever.
- Even in the time of Christ the children were involved. In fact they were so involved that the Church Leaders of Christ's day got very upset with Jesus.
- Matthew 21:15 – 16 “When the religious leaders saw the outrageous things he was doing, and heard all the children running and shouting through the Temple. “Hosanna to David's Son!” they were up in arms and took him to task, “Do you hear what these children are saying?” Jesus said, “Yes, I hear them. And haven't your read in God's Word, 'From the mouths of children and babies I'll furnish a place of praise?’”
- Has anything changed? Do children still make a lot of noise? Are they enthusiastic in all they do?
- But notice what Jesus' response is. “From the mouths of children and babies I'll furnish a place of praise!”
- As far as God is concerned children have every right to praise God as do the adults. In fact He enjoys the praise of children just as much as adults. They have a special place in his order

of things, with the disciples being told to allow the children to come to Christ and not to chase them away.

- As we get older we forget what we were like when we were children and can become more and more judgemental of them and their noise and actions.
- But what we must remember is that when a child is involved in worship and the church community they are more likely to stay with that community.
- So what can a child do at church that is involved and meaningful? How will you help a child participate?
- The more they can be involved the more they feel that they belong. The more they feel that they belong, the more they will grow in faith.

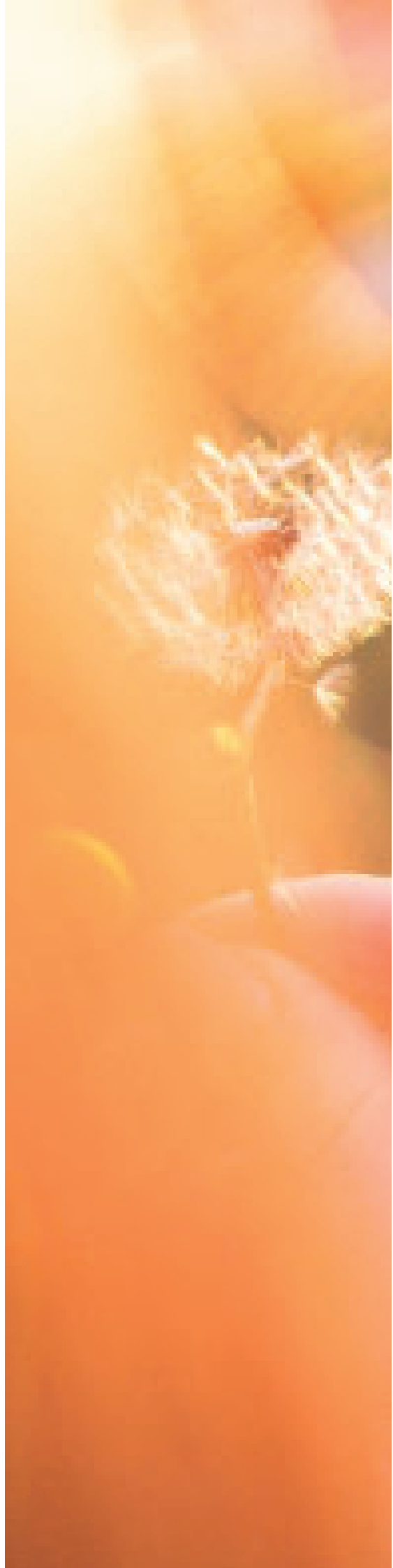
CLOSING PRAYER

Item:

Choose an item or congregational song that focuses on healthy loving relationships while showing pictures of the church family enjoying family time.

Closing Prayer:

Child or Children/Children's Ministry Leader/
Pastor or Elder







This resource was written as a collaboration between Brendan Pratt, Amanda Bews and Julie Weslake. Edited by Litiana Turner. Layout and design by Rebekah Rankin.

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