

Every Child Matters

Service ideas to help churches explore the value of children and young people and the church's responsibility towards them.



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Service Ideas

To be included during the service

- **Show the Safe to Grow DVD** – A whole church approach to the safeguarding of children and young people (4 mins) at an appropriate point during your service
- **Read your church's Policy Statement on Safeguarding Children and Young People** during the service so that the whole congregation knows their responsibilities and who to talk to if they are worried about something

Song ideas

- Come now is the time to worship – Brian Doerkson
- Let everything that has breath – Matt Redman
- Everyone needs compassion (Mighty to save) – Reuben Morgan
- Living for your glory – Tim Hughes
- Our God – Chris Tomlin
- Your grace is enough – Matt Maher
- Amazing grace- John Newton
- Big family of God – Nick & Becky Drake
- God is love – Nick & Becky Drake
- I want to be like Jesus - Cindy Rethmeier

Prayer ideas

- Pray generally for children & young people and their leaders
- Pray for the children and young people in your church and their leaders by name – you could ask them to stand or to come out to the front
- Pray for families – again you could ask them to stand
- Pray that your church would be a place where children and young people are valued and cared for

Father thank you for the gift of children and young people and for the joy they bring. Thank you that Jesus teaches us that they belong right in the centre of your kingdom. Help us to love, care for, protect, value and teach them well. Help us also to learn from them of the freedom, dependence, humility, trust and openness that can be ours if we will only accept the kingdom of God as they do.

We pray for families that your love might be at the centre of each one and that you would help parents to guide and nurture the children in their care. We pray for our church family too that you would help us to get to know one another better and to help us to make sure that each person here is loved, valued, cared for and

protected. Give us the courage to speak out if we see something we are worried about and wisdom and grace as we grow together, all of us at different stages of our journey with you.

Help us all to understand our responsibility to bring children and young people to Jesus, not just those of us who are parents or who work directly with our children and young people. May we be a community where young and old can learn and care for one another. We pray for all the children and young people that we have contact with as a church each week through our regular activities, we ask that you would bless and keep each one of them and lead them on in their journey with you. We ask too that you would guide, protect, encourage and equip all who work with them week by week and have the privilege of walking alongside them, give them wisdom in all they do to help children and young people to encounter you Jesus and to grow in their relationship with you. Amen.

Readings

- Mark 10:13-16 – the little children and Jesus.

There is a creative bible reading of this passage in session 1 on the Christian Life & Children DVD (London School of Theology)* which could be shown.

- Matthew 19:13-14, Luke 18:15-17 – the little children and Jesus
- Deuteronomy 6: 4-9 – love the Lord your God
- Matthew 18:10-14 – the parable of the lost sheep
- Luke 2:22-32, 39-40; Mary and Joseph present Jesus in the temple
- Matthew 11:25 – hidden things revealed to little children
- John 6:5-15 – the feeding of the 5000
- Matthew 18:1-5 – who is the greatest in the kingdom?
- Psalm 8 – the praise of children & infants

*Christian Life & Children DVD resource – a small group resource for every adult church member. 'Inspired by God's passion for children, this resource highlights the Bible's guidelines for our role, as individuals and as a church family, in the spiritual growth of children.'

Talk: Valuing children and young people – points that could be included

- Every person is valuable in God's sight, including each child and young person
- When Jesus says 'Let the little children come to me' he challenges the culture of the day. Children had very little significance or importance, they were

thought of in terms of who they would become as adults, not for who they were as children.

- The disciples thought Jesus was too busy to deal with children, but he gives them importance in their own right, spends time with them and blesses them.
- Jesus teaches that if we won't accept the kingdom of God like a child we will never enter it.
- We need to become like children in order to enter the kingdom of God, they are model citizens – we should be aiming to become like them in their openness, trust, honesty, dependence, humility and freedom, we have so much to learn from them as well as them learning from us.
- God works through children – one little boy's food in the feeding of the 5000, Josiah becoming king when he was 8 years old (2 Kings 22:1), the praises of children are powerful (Psalm 8)
- We are warned not to get in the way of children encountering God
- We can all play a part in bringing children and young people to Jesus, helping them to make a positive contribution to the life of our church.
- We all have a role to play in promoting the welfare of children in our church and children we come into contact with, it is everyone's responsibility to protect children and young people, to take an interest in them and to report anything that we are worried about.
- Jesus was interested in children, as a church we should be too.
- If we welcome a child, we welcome Jesus.

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