

EQUIPPING

for intergenerational ministry

Leading a children's address



Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 19:14

Let the children ...

- Hear the Good News of Christ in a language and style appropriate for them.
- Affirm their identities as God's children through holy baptism.
- Know they are welcomed in the congregation as children loved by God and blessed by Christ.
- Learn about the nature of God's service to his people in worship.
- Explore the symbolism of liturgical space, gestures, furnishings, architecture, and artwork of the church.
- Pray using words they understand.
- Join in worship with the congregation and recognize their unity with God's people of all times and places.



Let the congregation ...

- Welcome children of all ages as fellow participants in the worship and life of the church.
- Learn alongside the children by listening to the children's address.
- Use the children's address as a conversation starter, reaching out to children after the service.
- Pray for children as they grow in faith and stature.

Let the leader ...

- Proclaim a Christ-centered message, based on what Jesus has done, rather than on what the children must do.
- Focus the address on one of the readings for the day, or a related theme. As appropriate, let the leader discuss the Small Catechism or an aspect of the particular church season.
- Engage the children's senses through art, symbols, colours, and meaningful props.
- Encourage the children to listen for certain words or themes to be developed in the sermon or at other times during worship.
- Use the children's address as a springboard to the sermon, so that all listeners are primed to hear the message of the day.
- Pray with the children, summing up the content of the address as it applies to the children.



Helpful Tips

- The best kind of children's address is the retelling of a Bible story or some other related story.
- Communicate using words children understand. Introduce challenging words such as atonement or righteousness by explaining them carefully.
- Keep it short and precise – develop one idea in a five-minute address.
- Use concrete examples or illustrations to explain abstract concepts or ideas, but make sure the illustration does not obscure the message. It's no good bringing a pumpkin to church if no one remembers why.
- Avoid over-reliance on questions to the children. Their "cute" answers may amuse adults, but children can find this embarrassing or humiliating.
- The address should be given at the front of the church so the whole congregation can see and hear. The address may be given before the altar, around the baptismal font, near the lectern, at the Advent wreath, Christmas tree, nativity scene, stained-glass window, etc.
- The address may be given either before the sermon, before or after the readings, or in connection with a pastoral act such as a baptism or the blessing.
- Avoid banal and overly-simplistic moralisation.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE PERSON GIVING THE CHILDREN'S ADDRESS

- If the address is understood primarily as a part of the proclamation of the word in the liturgy, the address may be given by the pastor.
- If the address is understood primarily as encouragement of the children in the life of the congregation, it may be given by a suitably trained and trusted layperson, in cooperation with the pastor.
- Any person serving children in the church must meet the standards for the safety of children in the Lutheran Church of Australia.

FREE RESOURCES *to encourage your children during worship*

Children's addresses

Grow Ministries and the LCA Commission on Worship are pleased to provide a series of Children's addresses for you to use as part of your weekly worship and to encourage the young people in your congregations.

This resource includes all you need to provide an engaging children's address during your worship time. It comes with bible readings, aid ideas and other helpful tips to ensure the gospel message is shared. Available to download at www.growministries.org.au/shop

Worship Notes

Encourage the young people in your congregation to actively engage in worship by providing them with an opportunity to reflect on the songs, sermons and other points of interest. Available to download at www.growministries.org.au



For more information about Grow Ministries, our resources and training, please call **08 8267 7300** or visit our website: www.growministries.org.au



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