



MINISTERING WITH (CHILDREN)

THROUGHOUT THE ELCA

**Intentional Engagement
of Children in Worship¹**
Compiled by Pastor Janelle
Rozek Hooper

- *Ask children how they would like to lead/participate.²
- *Think about kids when planning times (ex. early bedtimes) and lengths (45 min ideal.)
- *Select music available to nonreaders.
- *Use expansive names for Gods, especially verbs.
- *Be flexible knowing a gift children bring is spontaneity amongst others.³
- *Incorporate as many senses as possible at logical places.⁴
- *Use children's art (exs.bulletin covers, pp worship backgrounds, banners)
- *Invite children into sharing their offering/prayers that include nonverbal ways.⁵
- *Write litanies available to all age levels.(Consider language, length, descriptors)
- *Newsletter articles about the importance of children as participants in worship.
- *Provide training for adults who will be assisting children in worship so that they are appropriately supportive.
- *Invite parents/whole families to participate together if that helps with anxiety.
- *Invite folks into discovery rather than authoritative belief.
- *Have service as thematically focused as possible.⁶
- *Use scripture/lectionary resources easier to read for kids.⁷
- *Regularly evaluate worship in regards to pacing, meeting goals, etc.⁸

¹ some ideas from "Including Children in Worship: A Planning Guide for Congregations" pg18 from Elizabeth J. Sandell

² Examples include but are not limited to: Greeter, Usher, Acolyte, Crucifer, Lector, Choir, Prayer Leader, Liturgical Dancer, Sacred Arts, Communion server

³ p. 14 Adults Can Develop Childlike Qualities (Matthew 18:1-4)

joy, honesty, receptivity, tenderness, awareness, eagerness, trust, love, openness, spontaneity, hope, imagination, reconciliation, affirmation, complete involvement, motion and rhythm, clear communication, expression of feelings, energy, generosity, acceptance, simplicity, enthusiasm, creativity

⁴ p. 9 "The Bible describes worship in physical terms: *standing, kneeling, lifting hands, lifting the head, clapping hands, dancing, lying down, wearing sackcloth*. These all can reflect and encourage an attitude of praise and worship. These are all positions that children will enthusiastically try."

⁵ p. 15 "They ask questions that help us clarify our beliefs and add energy to our own prayers to God.

⁶ Examples include but are not limited to: Four readings from different books (lectionary) is too confusing for children to pull the themes together.

⁷ "God's Word, My Voice: A Lectionary for Children" by Lyn Zill Briggs.

⁸ p. 13 "Attitudes that exclude children in worship may be clues that worship is closed to other groups as well.