

WORSHIP IDEAS FOR A COMMON WORSHIP, ORDER ONE SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

PLEASE NOTE: it is not suggested that you try everything on the list below in the same service!

¶ The Gathering

The Greeting

- If the first greeting is used (Common Worship p167), president and congregation could raise their hands to each other as they speak their words, to emphasise that this is a way of saying hello.

Prayer of Preparation

- Slowly fill a clear glass bowl with water from a clear glass jug.
- The children could be encouraged to learn the collect for purity by sequencing the lines: either each line could appear on a separate strip of paper, or they could be printed in the wrong order on a single sheet with a box at the end of each line where the child can fill in a number to indicate the right order.

Prayers of Penitence

- Pebbles, symbolising those things for which forgiveness is asked, can be placed into the bowl of water. One child, or a small group of children could do this on behalf of the whole congregation, or each congregation member could be given a pebble by a child on entering church, and could then place it in a large bucket of water, as and when they felt moved, during a time of reflection, with music.
- During a silence for reflection, the congregation could taste the bitterness of sin by eating short piece of 'bread stick' dipped into a bowl of lemon juice. When absolution is pronounced, the bitterness can be removed by dipping another piece of bread stick in honey.
- If the font has been filled, the water could be used for asperges (sprinkling the congregation) at the absolution.
- The children could be supplied with 'happy' and 'sad' masks, or faces on paper plates, or a pair of curved card lips which can be turned up or down. They could hold up 'sad' during the confession, and 'happy' at absolution.

- The congregation could indicate the things they are asking forgiveness for by writing or drawing on small pieces of paper. The paper can be in a shape that is relevant to the theme of the day's service, if that is appropriate. The children could collect the papers and lay them at the foot of a cross.
- Children could use published 'sorry' books (eg *I'm Sorry - Little Fish Books About You and Me*, SU, ISBN 0 8307 0957 6) or make their own, giving examples of the things they might ask forgiveness for. When absolution is given, these books should be collected and put away and should not come out again during the service!
- The congregation could be asked to make a tight fist as they imagine the things they are holding on to that need God's forgiveness. They then open their hands, palm down, to release these things. Next hold out their open hands, palm upwards, to receive the absolution.

Gloria in Excelsis

- This is a joyful response to God's forgiveness. Singing is most appropriate, but make sure it is something the congregation, especially the children, can easily join in with. There are several short, simple and dramatic versions such as the 'Peruvian Gloria'. If you use an ornate 'choir party piece', invite the congregation simply to listen and let their thoughts be carried away on the wings of the music, rather than lose the joy of it by trying to join in something that is too hard for them.

The Collect

- The Collect completes the Preparation and at this point the Common Worship rubric (p171) says *The president introduces a period of silent prayer* In the silence there could be a brief activity appropriate to the theme of the collect (eg the collect for the 3rd Sunday before Advent refers to people 'in authority': cards showing pictures of world leaders, maps of their countries or their flags could be distributed or images projected, and people could spend a moment or two silently praying for them).

¶ THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

Readings

- The children can use their own Bible story books at this point. If they contain a version of the Gospel for the day, so much the better. The books should be kept in a special place and taken out and put back with care.
- If the reading is from a good 'child friendly' translation many in the adult congregation will also be appreciative! *The Message* version (Eugene Peterson, Navpress, ISBN 1 5768 3289 9) often offers a lively rendition.
- Activity sheets based on the Gospel for the day can be purchased (eg Redemptorist *Look* sheets) or produced 'in house' which children can complete on clip boards during the readings and perhaps on into the sermon.
- There are many alternatives to simply reading from scripture, including: drama, dance, mime, rap, or response to 'key words' (as in the CPAS *Telling Tales* series).

Sermon

- Similarly, there are many ways of exploring the meaning of scripture other than just talking about it. An activity might fill the 'sermon slot' so that the congregation have a chance to talk about and reflect on what they have heard rather than the worship leader doing it all. Children can present something themselves provided they are well prepared and microphones are used.

The Creed

- Wherever choices are invited, make sure they are 'child friendly'. Again, many adults will also prefer this. There are a number of affirmations of faith that can be used at this point (p138-148). The short question and answer one (p144) allows children to learn and use the repeated response.
- The children, the congregation as a whole, or the worship leader can move around the church to places appropriate to each of the persons of the Trinity: eg. the door (leading to the world) for the Father; the altar for the Son; the font for the Holy Spirit.
- Images connected with the three persons on the Trinity could be shown at the appropriate moment during the creed/affirmation.

Prayers of Intercession

- Subjects for prayer could be written or drawn about on pieces of paper, possibly in shapes appropriate to the theme of the day, and collected up to be taken to the altar at the offertory.
- Symbolic actions such as lighting a candle, or planting a seed can accompany prayer, either done by a representative or representatives of the congregation (who could be children) or by the congregation as a whole during a time of reflection. Music is often helpful.
- Visual symbols of things to be prayed for can be used eg a globe, a house, a church, or symbols of aspects of church life, such as a Brownie banner or a music book. They can be placed in one central position as the prayers progress, or placed in 'stations' around the church which can be 'visited' by the congregation during a period of reflection.
- The children can use a variety of resources in a prayer time of their own, whilst the adults are being led in prayer: published or self-produced 'please' and 'thank you' books; 'lift-the-flap' thank you prompts; prayer cubes; jigsaws made of pictures appropriate to the standard headings for intercessions, or cards with these headings and an appropriate picture; boxes of cards with pictures – of people, places, everyday events, nature - which can be used to stimulate prayer.
- If the children are expected to listen to prayers being read by a worship leader, make sure the prayers are brief and would get the 'plain English' award – again, many adults will also be thankful for this. The same is true, if children are asked to read prayers – they should also be provided with good microphones, and given time to practice the technique of using them.

¶ THE LITURGY OF THE SACRAMENT

The Peace

- The children can be gathered at the front and asked to take the Peace out to the congregation. Some may want to be accompanied.

Preparation of the Table Taking of the Bread and Wine

- The elements can be brought up by children who can say the leaders lines in the Prayer at the Preparation No8 (Common Worship p292), if provided with a microphone.

Eucharistic Prayer

- The children can have the text in their own illustrated booklet which will help them mark progress through the prayer – a booklet for each prayer in use in the church will be needed.
- Young children can use ‘thread the lace’ silver card shapes of the chalice and paten to get them used to the special vessels used at this point.
- Symbols, or symbolic images relevant to each section of the prayer can be used to point up its structure and mark progress.
- Children can work with a set of ‘matching pairs’ cards – on one set of cards are key phrases from the prayer in use, and on the other are appropriate illustrations. The children aim to match the phrases to the pictures before the prayer is over.
- The ‘Thank you’ element of the prayer could be emphasised by giving the children sets of cards illustrating things they might want to give thanks for, and encouraging them to look at some of these cards and reflect on them during the prayer.
- The children could look at published books, such as Teddy Horsley (*The Picnic – Teddy Horsley Goes to Communion*, Leslie J Francis & Nicola M Slee, NCEC, ISBN 0 7197 0857 5) on the theme of Holy Communion.
- The choice of prayer can be ‘child friendly’ – Prayer H is short and responsive; the responses in Prayer D encourage participation. Remember, ‘child friendly’ choices make many friends amongst adults too.

The Lord’s Prayer

- Children should be encouraged to learn the prayer, perhaps as a sequencing activity (cf Collect for Purity, above).
- Published or self-produced Lord’s Prayer books can be used.
- Mimed actions can accompany the prayer. The children can be asked to devise these. ‘Signing’ is becoming a more regular feature in liturgy, and many find that it is a beautiful enhancement to worship: expressive miming can have a similar effect for all.

Prayer after Communion

- The rubric (Common Worship p182) states *Silence is kept*. During this silence, appropriate images of could be projected - with suitable accompanying music, if we interpret 'silence' as an absence of words!

¶ **THE DISMISSAL**

- The congregation can face the door, and the dismissal can be given from there

GENERAL POINTS

- The children can use their own communion book, either published or home-made. Published resources are *My Communion Book*, Diana Murrie, CHP, ISBN 0 7151 4946 6 (discount on pack of 6! ISBN 07151 4977 6); *The Communion Cube*, Diana Murrie, CHP, ISBN 0 7151 4976 8; *My Holy Communion Book*, Aileen Urquhart, Redemptorist. ISBN 0 85231 238 5
- Clipboard activities can be devised for the whole service. *Come and Join the Celebration*, John Muir & Betty Pedley, CHP, ISBN 0 7151 4947 4 has a complete set.
- Some form of 'clock' or other device to mark progress through the different sections of the service structure helps children know where they are – and how much more there is to come.

Many of the above ideas have been adapted from:

A Church for All Ages, Peter Graystone & Eileen Turner, SU 1993
Come and Join the Celebration, John Muir & Betty Pedley, NS/CHP, 2001
Multi-Sensory Prayer, Sue Wallace, SU 2000

Revd Steve Dixon, Children's Officer
Manchester Diocese, Board of Education
Church House, 90 Deansgate
Manchester M3 2GH
Tel: 0161-828-1433
e-mail: stephendixon@manchester.anglican.org

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