

# Formation/Worship Options

Working through the values, mission and vision tool will make it easier to work through the specifics of this section. In order to develop a ministry plan, we must ask the question: Where will the children be during worship?

We will explore three potential options.

## **Option 1: Children Are With the Worshipping Congregation**

### Foundations:

If you have selected this option you undoubtedly hold to the following:

- Recognition that there is a difference between education and worship.
- Worship includes the whole body of Christ.
- God's continuing self-revelation is not age specific.
- Helping children be quiet during worship is not the same as helping children worship.
- There are many valid ways to help children worship.
- Provide space and a place for children to have voice within worship.

### Challenges:

- Varying developmental levels to address.
- Requires more planned movement.
- Involves more preparation.
- Involves more people.
- Involves more space.

### **Child Contributions to Worship**

- Spontaneity
- Receptivity
- Thanksgiving
- Simplicity
- Enthusiasm
- Hope
- Self-giving love
- Respond physically and emotionally

### **Intergenerational Worship:**

This does not mean all participants need to understand everything that is happening all the time. However, there is a focus on engaging all the generations either simultaneously or varied generations repeatedly throughout worship.

## Key Elements for Engaging Children in Worship

- Keep worship segments short.
- Use children and families as leaders.
- Lift up the high calling of parents to engage their children in worship.
- Plan in movement and experiences.
- Use vocabulary children can understand.
- Include sermon illustrations from childhood experiences.
- Involve children and family in worship prep and planning.
- Use stories, not object lessons.
- Don't forget visual cues.
- Include some consistent rituals.

<p style="text-align: center;">Ask yourself,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“If I were a child...”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ Could I relate to and engage in the...<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Story</li><li>○ Prayers</li><li>○ Place</li><li>○ Ritual</li><li>○ Music</li></ul></li><li>❖ Could I see?</li><li>❖ Would I feel welcomed and affirmed?</li></ul>
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## Experiential Elements We Have or Could Include in Worship:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Intergenerational Worship Evaluation

	Evaluate each statement and include percentage of weekly occurrence where appropriate. For example if a statement is true for half the weekly services, the percentage would be 50% or 26 weeks.	Yes	No	% or # of Weekly Occurrences
1.	Church leaders encourage and advocate for intergenerational worship and intergenerational worship leadership that includes all the generations.			
2.	All generations are considered in the planning of each worship service			
3.	Attention is paid to inclusive vocabulary that children as well as adults can understand			
4.	Sermon illustrations include references to all generations including children and youth			
5.	The inclusion of each generation is considered within prayer elements			
6.	The service and setting include images and the opportunity for each participant to experience them.			
7.	Movement is <b>planned</b> into each worship service and sensitive to everyone.			
8.	Experiential elements are included			
9.	Attention is given to the amount of time allotted for each worship element and the attention span of children.			
10.	Parents are equipped to help children worship			
11.	The congregation is educated on how to encourage and affirm children in worship			
12.	Consideration is given to helping prepare children and youth to serve as worship leaders			
	<i>All generations including children and youth serve:</i>			
13.	as prayer leaders			
14.	as scripture readers			
15.	as ushers			
16.	as greeters			
17.	through music			
18.	through drama or dance			
19.	in set up and take down			
20.	through AV or through other technical ministries			
21.	All generations are given the opportunity to share their continuing stories of faith.			

## Option 2:

### Children are engaged in children's ministry and worship

#### Foundations:

If you have selected this option you undoubtedly hold to the following:

- Importance of discipleship.
- Developmentally appropriate learning environment.
- A recognition that there is a difference between education and worship.
- Worship includes the whole body of Christ.

#### Challenges:

- Movement of children in and out of worship.
- Safety of checking children in and out of children's ministry.
- Adults may never be engaged in discipleship.
- Staffing during worship.

### What Does This Option Look Like?

For many churches this option includes two parts.

#### **Part 1:**

Children are present during the first portion of worship and then are invited to participate in the children's ministry during the sermon. Some churches have the children return at the end of the service, after the sermon. Many churches offer ministries for nursery and toddler age children during the entire service.

#### **Part 2:**

In addition to being present during the first portion of worship, children are present for a once a month all church or all family service. Often this is a communion service as this gives children who have accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior an opportunity to receive communion and it automatically includes more movement and visual elements. Those planning for these services specifically work at including children, youth and adults. These services often involve children. Sometimes the preparation for their involvement takes place during the other three weeks they are in their children's ministry setting.



### Option 3:

#### Children are engaged in a children's ministry

##### Foundations:

If you have selected this option you undoubtedly value the following:

- Importance of discipleship.
- Developmentally appropriate learning environment.
- Difficulty of children engaging in worship settings designed for adults.

##### Challenges:

- Children may never worship, or never worship with adults.
- Staffing during worship.
- Adults may never be engaged in discipleship.
- When does the whole body come together before God?

### Key Considerations for Ministries to Children and Youth

#### Nursery/Toddlers

- Inviting
- Near the worship space
- Colorful, clean, plentiful equipment
- Sign in and sign out
- Cheerful staff
- Safety plan for evacuation and emergencies

#### Preschool

- Colorful, clean, plentiful equipment
- Sign in and sign out
- Cheerful staff
- Safety plan for evacuation and emergencies
- Curriculum and supplies
- Communication with parents

#### Grade School

- Invite committed spiritually maturing mentors
- Choose and evaluate curriculum
- Organize supplies
- Encourage creativity
- Include ministries for connecting with the larger church and community
- Communicate with parents
- Provide opportunities to serve