



The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church— Department of Christian Education

▶▶▶ Making disciples through "events that form and transform"

Children's Day Resource: June 13, 2010



Children Contribute to Worship

Every one of us, young and old, can assist in the ministry of the church. Messages and service do not come solely from the pulpit or adults. Children are also given gifts to use to enrich the worship of the entire community. Children bring their complete involvement, their eagerness to participate, their laughter, their questions, and their imaginations.

Discipleship calls us to engage children creatively in worship. When we practice this, we cultivate the worship of others.

Children can also minister to adults in worship. First, children contribute by their very presence. Everything is new to them, and they help us see God through their new eyes. They ask questions that help us to clarify our beliefs and add energy to our own prayers to God.

Secondly, when children are included in worship, adults can experience firsthand the strength of metaphors used in the Bible. Statements about receiving the kingdom of God like a child have more power when children are present with us.



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Children Can and Do Worship!

Can children worship?

Children worship with each new discovery of their lives: stars, puppies, and even snowflakes. Reverence, respect, love, awe, praise, adoration, appreciation, and honor come naturally to children. Jesus himself valued the songs of children's praise.

In worship with the congregation, children will actively experience words such as these:

Hosanna: Save us, we pray."

Hallelujah: "Praise (you) the Lord."

Shalom: Wholeness, made perfect, peace.

Praise: To sing, to give glory to God.



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Children Seek to Be Involved in Worship

Children may seem to learn at random. They absorb information and feelings through every sense. For adults who do not understand how children learn and process their experience at worship, it seems easier to reprimand children who interrupt, to scowl at them, or to grumble than to receive them joyfully and respectfully, to explain the service, to enable them to participate, and to include them in the worship experience.

Children want to know what is acceptable; they want help to understand our expectations. Behavior "problems" of children may actually be clues that leaders are too verbal or too intellectual, even for adults in the congregation. Children whisper and wiggle and drop paper. They naturally act as if the congregation should be seen and heard in worship. Young children can, in fact, learn to act appropriately when their active participation is welcomed and guided in love.



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Children's Educational Programs

Christian education activities should be used to prepare children to participate in congregational worship or to assist with leading worship.

Children will experience worship only through worship. Children will learn about worship through other experiences with the church's Christian education program. They can develop concepts about worship through experiences in Sunday school classes, in opening exercises for the entire membership of the Sunday school, in the nursery for infants and toddlers, and in youth programs.

Components of Education for Worship

Education for worship should include opportunities to meet the pastor and other clergy, worship leaders; to explore the sanctuary to see the chancel, nave, pulpit, communion table, baptismal font; to pass the offering plate; to follow the order of worship in the bulletin; to learn to use the hymnal and Bible; and to pray the Lord's Prayer and recite the creeds. Children may learn the meanings of key words, such as anthem, response, invocation, adoration, communion, Lord's Supper or Eucharist, and call to worship.

Source: [Including Children in Worship: A Planning Guide for Congregations](#) by Elizabeth J. Sandell