



Divine services for children

Suggested at least once a quarter, on a local or regional basis, a children's service should use the special Divine Service Guide that is provided for that quarter. Children's service Divine Service Guides replace the Sunday morning Divine Service Guide and should not be used in addition to the Sunday Divine Service Guide for that day.

The purpose is to:

- give the children a special word that is understandable, memorable, and relevant
- clearly put them in the center of the congregation
- create opportunity to connect multiple generations within the congregation
- strengthen the value of the divine service and increase their knowledge of Christ and the Bible

In order to help build excitement and to ensure that the entire congregation is prepared for these unique services, they should be announced well in advance. It is encouraged to consider setting a consistent frequency of the services (i.e. the last Sunday of the first month of each quarter). Where possible, the children can participate in some of the congregational functions (ushering, greeting, as the choir, etc.). The person giving the children's message should be someone that has the capability to communicate and connect well with the children. For example, a Sunday school teacher, young adult, etc. that is dedicated to prepare for this responsibility.

Liturgy

The divine service is opened in the normal way with the invocation, opening prayer, Bible verse, and response hymn. Thereafter, the minister at the altar can introduce the theme and a few thoughts, which should not exceed 5 minutes.

The person giving the children's message then begins in front of the altar, speaking directly to the children, who should be sitting in the first rows.

The unique children's portion is per the recommendations set out by the Children's Work Group that accompanied the Children's service Divine Service Guide for that given quarter. This section of the divine service can be anywhere from 15-25 minutes, depending on the number of students and their ages, and can include methods such as speaking, props, skits, demonstrations, and simulation. Questions and dialogue between the children and facilitator are encouraged.

During this time, the priests should sit in the congregation. The children's component can end with a congregational hymn, which allows the priest to return to the altar. The officiant can then summarize the children's component and prepare the congregation for Holy Communion, which should take no longer than 10 minutes. From then on, the service liturgy continues as normal.

It is also suggested that lunch or refreshments with the congregation be available after the service to highlight and celebrate these children services, and to provide additional opportunity for generations to interact with each other.



Do not steal. Trust in God!

Bible Text:

You shall not steal.
--Exodus 20:15

Message: We are not to steal. God will take care of us.

Introduction

Just imagine that today was a really odd day and that a new rule has been introduced: "Stealing is allowed today." What would happen? What would be the first thing you stole? But how would you protect your own things if everyone were allowed to steal? And how would you feel if someone took away your favorite toy and you said, "Leave that alone! That's mine!" and he replied, "What do you mean? Stealing is allowed today. This belongs to me now"?

Now let us imagine the situation the other way around. What kind of world would it be if no one were to steal ever again? We could do without locks on doors. In fact, we could leave our doors wide open when we leave the house. We would not need to look around anxiously on the bus and hold on so tightly to our bag. It would not be so terrible if we lost something of ours or left it lying around somewhere because people would always give it back to us. That would truly be a beautiful world!

If someone were to steal my favorite toy, I would feel really terrible. And that is also how the other person would feel if I were to take something of his. This is why God says: "You shall not steal." This rule is very good. We would all be much better off if we did not steal and if no one stole anything from us.

Main part

What does the commandment mean in everyday life?

Not stealing means, for example:

- not taking anything away from anyone;
- not downloading music, films, or software illegally;
- returning things on loan to us in undamaged form (books, toys, etc.);
- protecting public property (for example, not damaging or dirtying trains, buses, school benches, parks, or buildings);
- not pretending we have a good idea if that idea actually came from someone else (theft of intellectual property);
- not exploiting the poor, and not wasting things other people need (for example, food, clothing, water, or energy);
- not robbing someone else of personal dignity.





What happens if I do steal something after all?

And what happens if you have perhaps stolen something and are now bothered by a guilty conscience? Then talk to God about it. He will not punish you, but will forgive you. And you can also talk about it with your parents or any other loved ones you trust. And then make things right by giving back the item you have stolen.

Do not steal. Ask God instead

Why do so many people steal anyway? It is because many are in need and do not know how else to help themselves. Some think they do not have enough and need still more. And yet God desires to provide you and me with everything we need. He is generous and merciful. He knows when you are in need of something. However, you should not steal it but ask God for it.

Summary

- We are not to steal. God will provide for us. Let us ask Him for this.
- And if we did steal something, we can tell God about it and make up for the harm we have done.

Didactic tips

- Before the main message of the sermon begins, you could ask the children if a friend or sibling ever took one of their toys (or things) from them without asking first, and how that made them feel.
- The first two questions (“What would happen if stealing were allowed today?” And: “What kind of a world would it be if no one were to ever steal again?”) can be addressed to the children. They can then give free reign to their imagination and visualize both situations in their minds.
- The children can also be asked to give examples of what it means not to steal before the minister goes into the answers shown in the bullet points.

Supplemental Notes and Activity Ideas:

Exodus 20:1-17

And God spoke all these words, saying:

² “I *am* the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of ³ *bondage*.

³ “You shall have no other gods before Me.

⁴ “You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness *of anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth; ⁵ you shall not bow down to them nor ⁶ *serve* them. For I, the LORD your God, *am* a jealous God, visiting ⁷ *the iniquity*





of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth *generations* of those who hate Me, ⁶ but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

⁷ “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold *him* guiltless who takes His name in vain.

⁸ “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God. *In it* you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who *is* within your gates. ¹¹ For *in* six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

¹² “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

¹³ “You shall not murder.

¹⁴ “You shall not commit adultery.

¹⁵ “You shall not steal.

¹⁶ “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

¹⁷ “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that *is* your neighbor’s.”

Going Deeper...

Learning to depend on God – Luke 12:22-31

²² Then He said to His disciples, “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on. ²³ Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing. ²⁴ Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds? ²⁵ And which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? ²⁶ If you then are not able to do the least, why are you anxious for the rest? ²⁷ Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ²⁸ If then God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will He clothe you, O you of little faith? ²⁹ “And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. ³⁰ For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you need these things. ³¹ But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you.



Visual Aids

Our Guide

Do this activity before the beginning of the service. Have one of the children put on a blindfold. The minister or another adult then gives instructions to the child to walk around the room, making sure that they do not allow the child to bump into anything and to safely make it back to their seat.

After this activity, you can ask some of the following questions:

- How did the instructions from the adult help the child with the blindfold on?
- What might have happened if the child ignored the instructions?

Explain to the children that the Bible verse for the service is one of God's commandments. God gave us commandments to help us live and guide us in our actions and thoughts. You can say a few of the other commandments that God lists in Exodus 20, and then tell the children that they'll be learning about the commandment, "Do not steal."

Nature Walk

This activity can be done together after service or individually at home with parents/guardians. Give each child a basket and go on a walk around the yard or the neighborhood. Have the children collect items from nature, such as a rock, a feather, or flower petals, etc.

Explain the story in Luke 12:22-31 to the children, about how God cares for the smallest things, such as the birds and flowers. Because He takes care of even these small things, that must mean He truly cares about people! Jesus explains to the disciples that God will care for us and all of our needs, and because of that, we do not have to worry.

We learned in service that some people steal because they are in need and they do not know how else to get what they need. Some people steal because they don't think they have enough and want more. When we realize that God cares and provides for us, then we have no reason to steal or try to get things for ourselves.

Ask the children some ways that God has shown that He cares for them (i.e. they have a house to live in, they can go to school, they have clothes to wear).

Community project

Explain to the children that God provides for all of His creation. Sometimes, He even asks us to help Him! As a family, go through some of your old clothes or toys and donate them to a local shelter or organization. Help your children understand that you are helping to show other people that God is taking care of them and providing for their needs.

