



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.



Jesus, a Special King

Bible Text:

And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. Luke 1: 31-32

Message: Jesus is our king.

Elaboration:

God promised to send His people a king who would deliver them from their enemies. But Jesus was not king like the others.

- A king wears a crown and beautiful clothes, lives in a palace, and is surrounded by a court. Jesus looked like an ordinary man and lived among the common people.
- A king enforces the law and punishes the wicked (this reminds us of David and Solomon). Jesus forgives the sinner who repents.
- A king imposes his will. Jesus obeyed the Father. But no one could prevent Him from doing His Father's will.
- Jesus helped and served all. He was able to help even in hopeless situations.
- Jesus won the victory over evil and death, and was able to return to His Father.

Let us follow the example of Jesus:

- we live among mankind and share our lives with others;
- we forgive those who have hurt us;
- we obey God's commandments;
- we help our neighbor; we can always do something for him, especially by praying for him;
- we remain faithful to God so that we can enter into His kingdom.

Summary

Jesus is our king. He is great in our hearts. We obey Him and follow His example.

Didactic tips

A child is chosen to be the king. The officiant asks the children how one can recognize a king, where he lives, and what he does. Then the king is given a crown, a scepter, and royal clothes, and is surrounded by bodyguards. They follow him as he walks through the church to go and sit on a throne. Children are brought to him after having drawn lots. Depending on the color of the card they have drawn, the king either sends them to prison or pardons them. Then a child is chosen to play the role of Jesus. The child crosses the church without ceremony, goes to the "prisoners" and frees them.





Supplemental Notes and Activity Ideas:

Brainstorming Activity

At the beginning of the service, ask the children “what do we know about Jesus?” Make a list of their answers on chart paper. Be sure to include that Jesus is our king, from the message statement above.

Remind the children that when we believe that Jesus is our king, we put Him and his commandments first in our lives. We love Him and obey Him and honor Him by our actions and our words and how we love each other.

Act it out

See didactic tips above.

Further Bible Reading

John 13:34-35

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

John 8:31-32

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

John 14:21

Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.”

Matthew 7:24

Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.