



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.



Protecting God's creation

Bible Text:

Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Genesis 1: 28

Message: Care for the creation!

Elaboration:

God is the Creator

In the same way that a painter creates a picture or a builder constructs a house, God has created heaven and earth, the land and the sea, plants and animals, and human beings. Everything comes from Him. He is the Creator (CNAC1.1.1/ CNAC-QA 3).

Responsibility for the creation

If we entrust something nice to a friend, such as our favorite toy, we want her or him to handle it carefully and not damage it.

God created a beautiful and perfect world. When He had created everything He looked at it, and indeed it was very good (Genesis 1:31).

God entrusted His creation to us. He said that we should subdue the earth, as it says in our Bible text. But that does not mean that we can exploit the earth as we want or even damage it. In fact, we are accountable to God in how we treat the environment. That means we need to preserve, protect, and use its resources responsibly (CNAC 3.3.1.2/ CNAC-QA 85, 86).

Environmental pollution

This includes not polluting the environment. It is important, for example, that we do not throw our garbage on the street, into the forest, into the sea, or anywhere else. Garbage is dangerous for humans and animals, and it can damage plants. Polluted drinking water can make people and animals sick.

What can we do to prevent the environment from being polluted? We can collect garbage, and not just throw it anywhere, and we can bring our own bags when we go shopping so that we do not always have to be given new plastic bags. The children will probably have many more ideas about how they can contribute to keeping the environment clean.

Responsibility for future generations

After we cook and eat, we clear the table, wash the dishes and put everything away so that we have clean pots and dishes for our next meal.





We hope and believe that the Lord will return soon. But if He does not return beforehand, then our children and grandchildren need a safe and clean environment in which to live. It is our responsibility to see to it that future generations have a safe and clean future, and that they can still have a good life on this earth.

Didactic tips

Following are some questions which we can ask the children in connection with the above.

- Is there anything that we human beings can create? Maybe we can make a toy, but we cannot create a plant or an animal. Only God can do that. That is why we must protect plants and animals.
- What does it mean to have responsibility?
- Imagine if no one at school ever cleaned the whiteboard. Picture the whiteboard after a day, a week, or even a year. What would it look like?
- What would happen if we were to throw our garbage into the park? Picture the park after a day, a week, or a year. What would it look like?
- What can we do at church to help keep the environment clean and safe?
- What can we do individually, at home or at school, to help keep the environment clean and safe?

Supplemental Notes and Activity Ideas:

Act it out

Using the creation account in Genesis 1, have the students, or other volunteers in the congregation, each represent a day during the account of creation. When it is their day, they can read the according Bible verses and possibly have props or other visual representations for what was created that day.

Pray about creation

Sit outside and think about God's creation. Thank Him for creating us and for giving us a place to live. Ask Him to reveal ways we can take better care of creation, as He asked mankind to do so.

Be still and know

Within the next week, as a family, watch the moon and the stars come out. Be fully present, no cell phones, and think about God's vastness as you see, hear, and feel the majesty of creation.





Further Bible reading regarding God's creation

Genesis 1:1-31 (NIV)

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

3 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. 4 God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

6 And God said, "Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water." 7 So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. 8 God called the vault "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.

9 And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. 10 God called the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters he called "seas." And God saw that it was good.

11 Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so. 12 The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. 13 And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.

14 And God said, "Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years, 15 and let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth." And it was so. 16 God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. 17 God set them in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth, 18 to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. 19 And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.

20 And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky." 21 So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. 22 God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth." 23 And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day.

24 And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so. 25 God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their





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kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

26 Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals,[a] and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

27 So God created mankind in his own image,

in the image of God he created them;

male and female he created them.

28 God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

29 Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. 30 And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.” And it was so.

31 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day

