



## 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.



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## Showing compassion

### **Bible Text:**

*“So which of these three do you think was a neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?” And he said, “he who showed mercy on him.” Then Jesus said to him, ‘Go and do likewise.’”*  
*Luke 10:36-37*

**Message:** Help Others!

### **Introduction:**

This Bible text is taken from the familiar parable of the Good Samaritan. The following special points should be highlighted from it: those who have a compassionate heart will not make a big detour around people who are suffering, as the priest and Levite did in the case of the man who had been beaten and left to die. They will rather go there and help without making a big fuss, and see to it that things go better for them in the future. The key message here is that the Samaritan did not look away, but decided to help.

### **Main part**

Our children too are faced with decisions regarding the neighbor and what they can and should do for him. Because they have learned from Jesus they will make an effort to act differently than others:

- If your friend has problems, if he is being laughed at or being ignored, go to him, be there for him and stand up for him in front of the others.
- When a dispute arises (at home, in class, or among friends), try not to take sides, as this will only worsen the conflict. Be a peacemaker, who makes every effort to restore the balance.
- You probably know classmates who have few friends, who never participate in anything, who keep to themselves. Most of the other children just ignore them. Try to help them and talk to them. If they still do not want to talk, accept it. But show them that you are there for them – even if you just give them a smile.

### **Conclusion**

Everyone is advised to act in accordance with the words of Jesus: “Go and do likewise.” In other words, let us do as the Samaritan did.

### **Didactic tips**

- Reading of the parable in *Luke 10:25-37*.
- Have the children perform a theatrical skit.
- Additional notes and activity ideas on following pages



## Supplemental Notes and Activity Ideas:

The following ideas are provided as suggestions and launching points for a local children's team to customize and use what would work best for them. It is not expected that the children's service include all of these ideas.

**Compassion** – noun. *A feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is stricken by misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the suffering.*

- In addition to sympathy, compassion should inspire empathy. In 1 Corinthians 12:26 Apostle Paul goes on to remind believers that we are all part of the body of Christ and that, *“if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.”*

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### Act it out

- A skit is a good way to make a message memorable for children. Consider getting parents, grandparents, youth, and other members of the congregation involved in acting out a skit that helps reinforce the point(s).
  - Act out the story of The Good Samaritan
    - Have someone narrate the story from Luke 10:25-37 and assign parts to people in the congregation
  - “Not my problem”
    - Using people from the congregation, duplicate the skit found at this link, <https://skitguys.com/videos/item/not-my-problem>
    - Ask the students questions about what happened and what should've happened.

### Questions

- Possible questions to use during the service:
  - Have you received compassion before? What was the situation? How did that inspire you to show compassion to others?
  - What are the benefits of showing compassion to others?
  - Does showing compassion to people only benefit them?
  - What are ways we can show compassion to others in our family? In our congregation? In our community?



### Community project

These ideas can be touched on during the service. However, the divine service should not turn into a planning time for a community project or service activity. Determining who and when to serve can be done after the divine service or at a later date after those involved have had a time to think of some ideas.

#### Matthew 25:35-36

*“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.”*

Compassion is one of the most important character traits we can nurture in our children. Yet our culture encourages selfishness. If we want our children to develop servant hearts, we need to give them opportunities to serve.

Every person is valuable and has worth in God’s eyes.

1. Pay attention to what is happening around you. (Use your eyes and ears)
2. Show others the Love of Jesus.
  - Find a way to help
  - Smile
  - Use Kind words
  - Pray for them

#### **Some suggestions/ideas:**

1. Go to a nursing home and visit the residents there, just talk to them. You could also prepare a small gift to give them.
2. Get a rake, some yard waste bags, and head off some fall and rake as many leaves as you can for elderly or disabled individuals in your congregation and community. If it’s winter, shovel snow. If it’s summer, mow their grass.
3. Get together with some friends and go grocery shopping for a needy family. Pitch in a few dollars each and see how far you can stretch the money.
4. Go to a children’s hospital in your area and visit the kids there. Many places would let you put on a small program (games, skits, etc.). Those who are sick really need a boost and this is a great way to do it.





### Idea for preparation for Lord's Prayer, Repentance, Absolution, and Holy Communion

- Ask the students to summarize what compassion is. If needed, remind them of the definition used earlier in the service
  - **Compassion** – noun. *A feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is stricken by misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the suffering.*
- The core of the gospel message is a message of compassion. God had such a deep feeling of sorrow as a result of our relationship with Him being damaged because of Adam and Eve's sin, that He had a strong desire to alleviate the suffering and fix the problem. He showed us, sinful people, compassion by sending His Son as a sacrifice to die for our sins.
- There are three types of relationships that Jesus highlights in this parable about the Good Samaritan:
  - What's yours is mine—represented by the robbers
    - They took what they wanted and didn't care who it belonged to or who they would hurt in the process.
  - What's mine is mine—represented by the priest and Levite
    - They didn't want to be bothered by the man's suffering
  - What's mine is yours—represented by the Samaritan
    - The Samaritan saw someone in need and decided to help this man. The story doesn't say how much he ended up spending on the man or what the final outcome was. Only that he felt sorry for this man and did what he could to help this person.
    - Jesus also says "What's Mine is yours" and gives us life and restores us in the moments of Holy Communion with Him.





## Further Bible reading regarding “Compassion”

The Bible talks of a God who has compassion for Israel. It tells of a Savior who suffers for the world, and it asks us to live and act compassionately.

### **Matthew 14:13-14**

*<sup>13</sup> When Jesus heard it, He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself. But when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities. <sup>14</sup> And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick.*

### **Matthew 20:30-34**

*<sup>30</sup> And behold, two blind men sitting by the road, when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, “Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!”*

*<sup>31</sup> Then the multitude warned them that they should be quiet; but they cried out all the more, saying, “Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!”*

*<sup>32</sup> So Jesus stood still and called them, and said, “What do you want Me to do for you?”*

*<sup>33</sup> They said to Him, “Lord, that our eyes may be opened.” <sup>34</sup> So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him.*

### **Mark 6:34**

*<sup>34</sup> And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things.*

### **Luke 7:12-15**

*<sup>12</sup> And when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her. <sup>13</sup> When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, “Do not weep.” <sup>14</sup> Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried him stood still. And He said, “Young man, I say to you, arise.” <sup>15</sup> So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother.*

### **Romans 12:15**

*<sup>15</sup> Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.*

### **1 Corinthians 12:26**

*<sup>26</sup> and if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.*

### **1 Peter 3:8**

*<sup>8</sup> Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous;*

