



## 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.



## Our prayers

### **Bible Text:**

*When He rose up from prayer, and had come to His disciples, He found them sleeping from sorrow. Then He said to them, "Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation."*  
-- Luke 22:45–46

**Message:** Praying helps!

### **Introduction**

After instituting the Lord's Supper, Jesus and His disciples went out to the Mount of Olives. He wanted to go there to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus was afraid of what was going to happen. He knew that He would be arrested and killed. His disciples were no help either because their sadness had made them fall asleep. But Jesus trusted God because He knew that God would stand by and help Him even in this hopeless situation. This boundless trust is expressed in His petition: "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done" (Luke 22:42). Even though God did not answer Him directly, He did send Him an angel who strengthened Him. Then Jesus went and woke His disciples and told them to pray.

### **Main part**

#### **When do we pray?**

Even children sometimes have to deal with difficult situations. Maybe they have had an argument with their friends, their teachers, or other people who are very close to them and they do not know how to solve these problems. Maybe they came home with bad grades or are worried about an upcoming math test. Or maybe someone has died whom they liked and they feel very sad.

In such difficult situations we can always turn to God in prayer. We can trust Him to help us. Even if God does not answer our prayers directly, He can send kind people to help us. These people are a little like the angel who appeared to Jesus. And like the angel, they can comfort us and maybe even give us some good advice on how we can find a solution for our problem.

#### **We pray continually**

Let us not only pray to God when we have problems though. We are disciples of Jesus and He would like us to pray to Him all the time. It is important and necessary that we stay in touch with God through our prayers. We pray together with our family, but we can also pray alone, for then we can tell God about all the things that make us happy or that make us sad. We also pray in the divine services. The officiant begins the divine service with a prayer and closes it with one. The Lord's Prayer is a beautiful and important prayer, which we always pray together with the congregation before the celebration of Holy Communion.

#### **We pray for our future**





## Children

Jesus does not only direct the gaze of His disciples backwards, but He encourages them to look ahead. And He does the same with us. We can pray for a good and secure future. We ask for God's support and help to accompany us, and as children of God we can also look forward to the return of Jesus. That is why we are not afraid of the future, because we know that God's kingdom will come!

### Summary

- When we pray to God we talk to Him. We can tell God anything in our prayers.
- God can comfort and help us by sending us kind people.
- Our prayers are important because they help us to stay in touch with God.
- We look ahead and are not afraid of the future.

### Didactic tips

Ask the children what prayers they know and what the different postures are for prayer.

The Lord's Prayer could be prayed together with the children. If you do, point out to them that they can also say this prayer on their own.

They should also know Psalm 23 as a prayer psalm. You could read it to them.

## Supplemental Notes and Activity Ideas:

### *Jeremiah 29:11-13*

<sup>11</sup> For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. <sup>12</sup> Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. <sup>13</sup> And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.

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### Going Deeper...

#### **When should we pray? – James 5:13-18**

<sup>13</sup> Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. <sup>14</sup> Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. <sup>15</sup> And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. <sup>16</sup> Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. <sup>17</sup> Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he





prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. <sup>18</sup> And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

### Visual Aids

#### **A conversation**

Make a list of conversation topics that children could talk about, and write each topic down on a different piece of scrap paper. The topics could be a combination of something more serious (i.e. a family member is sick), something that is an every-day occurrence (going to school), or something that is a desire (getting a dog). When you have the list, fold up the papers and put them in a bowl.

Pair up the children and have a child from each pair choose one of the conversation topics from the bowl. When the child has chosen their conversation topic, have them role play with their partner what their conversation might sound like. This part of the exercise can be done as one group, with each pair taking turns, or the pairs of children can do this separately, just in front of each other.

- The child who chose the topic will start the conversation, and their partner will respond as a friend. For example,
  - Child A: I really want a dog.
  - Child B: What kind of dog do you want?
  - Etc.

After each pair gets to role play their conversation, talk with the children about how prayer is like having a conversation. When people pray, they are talking to God. And God wants us to talk to Him, even if it is just to tell Him about our day. We can talk to God about anything – serious things or happy things. Anything!

#### **Names of God**

Use your congregation's *Reflections on Prayer* book to make a list of the different names and characteristics of God, available on page 164 of the *Reflections on Prayer* book. (If you are unsure where this book is located, speak with your rector.) Published in 2021 by the NAC USA, families can order their own copy of [Reflections on Prayer from Amazon](#). Show this list to the children, and ask them to each choose a name or characteristic of God that they connect with.

After they have a chance to review the list, sit in a circle. Have one of the adults start a prayer, and then have each child say one line of prayer using the name of God that they chose. The adult can then end the prayer after each child has had a chance to contribute to the prayer.

As an alternative, if the children would be more comfortable with writing down their line of prayer using the name/characteristic of God, give them time to compose a line of prayer. Then the adult can put all of the sentences together and use them in a prayer with the children to end their time together.



## Children

### **Congregation project**

Have the children ask members in the congregation about things that they pray for and phrases that they might say when praying, such as phrases of praise or giving thanks (i.e. “Eternal, loving Father,” “God, thank you for forgiving me”). After the children have a chance to speak with the members, come together as a group to share what they learned. Point out to the children that not only did this activity help the children to learn more about the people in their congregation, it also provided them with inspiration for their own prayers and the words they might use to speak to God.

