

New Apostolic Church USA

FaithArc

Divine Service Guide for Children's Service

Divine Services for children are 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 by the Faith Arc Team. 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 of a children's service 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 Divine Service Guide for children's service includes a unique portion designed by the Faith Arc team specifically for use with children. This section of the divine service can be anywhere from 15-25 minutes, depending on the number of children and their ages. It may include methods such as interactive discussion, 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.

You are Valuable

God knows us and want us to have fellowship with Him

Bible Text:

"Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will." - Matthew 10:29 (NKJV)

Message: God sees and knows us. We are precious to Him.

Prior to the start of the divine service, place a small blank index card or piece of paper at each seat and a washable marker (do not use a yellow marker). Have baby wipes available for clean up.

Introduction – Background for the minister

Starting in Luke 12:4 Jesus encourages His disciples and tells them that they do not need to be afraid of anyone. He draws their attention to the countless sparrows and explains that God knows every single one of them. This is followed by our Bible text. Our great God, who knows every single tiny sparrow in the world, knows us so well that He knows exactly how many hairs each of us has on our heads.

If you have ever been close to a bush with a flock of sparrows in it you will have noticed them babbling and chattering away. It is almost impossible to follow a single sparrow with your eyes because they flit from branch to branch and yet they all look the same despite their differences. God, who created the whole world and every single sparrow in it, knows every single one of them. He can tell them apart and knows when even one of them falls to the ground (Matthew 10: 29).

Main part – share with the children

We are precious

Jesus says we are more precious than many sparrows. That may sound strange, because we respect every living being and do not weigh up a life with money. (Share some interesting facts)

- There are over 7000 species of frogs in the world
- There are over 48,000 species of spiders in the world
- There are over over 1 million species of insects in the world

And God created all of them, knows each one of them, and watches over them, like the sparrow.

But if we imagine that we cannot even keep an eye on a single sparrow for a day, we might better be able to understand how great it is that God watches over us at every moment of our lives. He loves us so much that He has even numbered our hairs on our head. Sometimes with all the chattering and noise around us and everyone wanting to get their way we might feel like a sparrow in a big flock. Then questions can arise. Does anyone even notice me? Does it even make a difference that I am here? Who am I? Does it even matter what I do here? (conduct the following activity)

- Tell the congregation we're going to create some chatter by asking everyone in the congregation, when you say go, to repeatedly say the name of their 3 favorite colors and to continue saying those 3 colors until you say stop. Let this go on for about 30 seconds making sure the "chatter" is fairly loud.
- Then ask a few children what the favorite colors are of a member sitting a few seats from them. The children most likely will not be able to because they could not hear through the "chatter".

The "chatter" around us can be overwhelming, loud, and make us feel like we don't matter. The chatter is not always words, it could be busy schedules, social media, hobbies, etc. But our heavenly Father hears us through the chatter and knows our every thought, each word, all of our actions, and watches over us with care.

God knows us and wants us to have fellowship with Him

Our heavenly Father knows us. He sees what we do and watches over us. Even if we are just flying with the flock, God is keeping watch over us because He loves us. That is why we can be sure that even if we have the feeling that we are nothing special, that we cannot make a difference, or that no one hears us, we are important to God. Whatever happens to us in life, God sees everything. Our Bible text tells us that God loves us so much that He knows us down to the tiniest hair on our heads and that He watches over us.

- Ask the children if they know how many hairs are on a person's head? Let several children try to guess.
- Ask them to gently take a lock of their own hair or someone's next to them to see if they could count the hairs. Give them time to count.
- Ask if anyone was able to count the hairs. Let a few children share their response.

Tell the children that there are about 90,000-150,000 hairs on a person's head. God has numbered each of those hairs and knows when one of them falls. He knows more about us than we know ourselves. And because He loves us, we will be able to live with Him forever. (if time, do the following activity to lead into the summary)

- Ask the children to take the washable marker and to color the tip of one of their fingers and to gently press that finger onto the paper, creating an image of their fingerprint.
- Have someone hand out baby wipes so the children can wipe off their fingers
- Let the children share their fingerprints with other children so they can see that no two are alike.
- Tell the children that God created every human being that ever lived, is alive now, or will live in the future with a unique fingerprint and God knows each one of them.

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Remind the children that another way our heavenly Father knows us is by our voice - our motto this year is "Prayer Works". Remind children to pray often, especially when they feel afraid or when they feel that no one hears them. Remind them God also hears every prayer.

Summary:

- God loves us and knows us very well. We are precious to Him.

- We can feel safe with God because He wants us to live with Him forever.

Didactic tips

Be sure to allow the children movement every 10-15 minutes to keep them focused on the message. Sharing unusual facts is an effective way to keep children attentive. Give each activity ample time so all children can fully participate in the activity.

Supplemental Notes and Activity Ideas:

Intergenerational Collaborative Art:

This is an intergenerational activity focused on the idea that everyone is precious in God's eyes and a wonderful way to reinforce the message in a meaningful and collaborative manner. This activity could be done during a fellowship after the Children's Service:

Materials Needed:

1. Art supplies (a variety of colored paper, markers, crayons, glue, scissors, etc.)
2. A poster board for every 4-5 participants
3. A Bible or printed verses (e.g., Psalm 139:14, Matthew 10:29-31)

Prep:

Place a piece of poster board and art supplies on each table. Assign children and members to tables so you have a mix of young and old at each table.

- Begin the activity by asking each table to discuss the following questions (place a copy of the questions on each table to assist with the discussion):
 - What do you think it means to be precious in God's eyes?
 - How can we show that we believe everyone is valuable to God?

- Ask table members to write or glue one of the Bible verses (Psalm 139:14, Matthew 10:29-31) onto the poster board and to create a collaborative piece of artwork using the art materials on the tables. Each participant can contribute to the larger picture, symbolizing God's love and watchful eye over His precious creation.
- At the end, allow tables to share their artwork and thoughts with one another. Encourage them to express gratitude for the diversity and uniqueness of each individual in God's eyes.
- Conclude with a prayer thanking God for creating everyone as precious and valuable beings.

This activity combines creativity, reflection, and discussion to reinforce the message that everyone is special in the eyes of God, fostering a sense of unity and appreciation for the diversity of His creation. Consider hanging the works of art in your fellowship room or in an area where the congregation can see and enjoy and hopefully, continue the conversation about how God values each of us.