

# Worshipping with Children in Church Together!

Having children in church all the time with you can be a hugely rich and formative experience for everyone, it just requires a little flexibility on all parts. Here are some ideas to make it work.

## Music

Mix it up so there is a mix of songs, some more upbeat. They don't all have to be children's songs as children like all sorts of music. Have an action song or learn some NZ sign language together for a song? Provide a box of instruments for younger children to participate with, shakers are great and you can use ice cream containers to make drums that aren't too noisy. Make sure older children can see the words and use the same songs regularly so kids can learn the words and melody. Are there kids who are learning instruments? Perhaps they can learn a few songs to join in with an ensemble, this is great motivation and practice for children!



## Participation

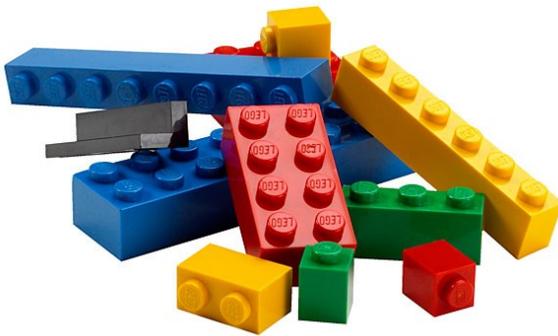
Involve children in all levels of the service; read the call to worship, prayers, bible readings, hand out communion or collect the offering. If you do this regularly then children will see other children up the front and gain the confidence to have a try themselves. Instead of just readings every week, change it up so children are engaged in different ways – impromptu acting out of the readings, have the whole congregation read parts of the reading (have sentences in different colours) get creative! Include everyone in news time, achievements, birthdays etc.

You could create a children's order of service with pictures alongside the words. This is a chance for the adults/parents to assist the child in reading/looking/engaging in the service. If the routine of the church is to bring the Bible in then have a child to carry in a kids bible and place it on a table beside the adult Bible. Look for ways of involving everyone in active prayer using post-it notes or something to write on, stones to pray with and place at base of cross etc.



## Activities

Have an activity table or mat where children can feel included. Having a theme you want to convey for each service helps in tailoring some suitable activities. While there are some great colouring resources available online, not all children enjoy colouring. You could have a lego set and encourage children to make something to respond to the theme. Lego-like bricks are available cheaply at the warehouse. You could also swap this with other building sets. Cover the table with brown paper and let them draw or write a response. A craft activity could fit well with your theme, there are many ideas online, just make sure that someone can tell the children what it means. Word searches, mazes and dot to dots are available online for all sorts of bible stories, but you could print a finger labyrinth, a prayer or a story to read. Have this table up the front or at the side so that children are still included in the service.



## Toys

It is great to have some toys and books available for children. Keep an eye out for bible themed play sets that you can set up invitingly and children can tell the story, for example Noahs ark or the nativity story. For older children rubiks cubes, fidget spinners and small maze toys can keep hands busy.



## Resources

The website [worshippingwithchildren.blogspot.com](http://worshippingwithchildren.blogspot.com) has many ideas for activities, psalms, books and readings to share together based on the lectionary and different scriptures.