



Sundays: Kids Friendly Worship



Kids Friendly Worship



Presbyterian Church
of Aotearoa New Zealand

This document is intended as a resource for the Church. The information it contains is not prescriptive. The Book of Order and its subordinate standards contain the Church's official rules and directions. Any perceived conflict between the information contained in this resource and the Church's Book of Order and subordinate standards is entirely unintentional.

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Also available in our series “Kids Friendly Sunday” resources are:

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a. Worshipping with children

The **PCANZ Directory for Worship** recognises that children bring special gifts to worship and grow in their faith through their regular inclusion and participation in the worship of the congregation. It states:

"Those responsible for planning and leading the participation of children in worship should consider the children's level of understanding and ability to respond and should avoid both excessive formality and condescension. The Session/Parish Council and minister should ensure that regular programmes of the church do not prevent children's full participation with the whole congregation in worship, in Word and Sacrament, on the Lord's Day. Christian education should facilitate participation in worship.(ch 3.1.4)

A Kids Friendly church is intent on involving children in worship. Whether the worship occurs within corporate Sunday worship, in separate children's activities, during the week or even outside the church buildings, intentional inclusion of all ages will allow children to feel they belong and have something to contribute and can grow in faith.



"The nurture of children in church is much more than Christian education. Children learn by watching and imitating adults and by projecting themselves into imaginary worlds. Clergy and worship committees must give serious thought to making the Sunday worship truly accessible to children and educating parents and other parishioners to see children as fellow-worshippers, not as intruders who have to be hushed or distracted so that adults are left free to pray!"

Gretchen Pritchard-Wolff

"Offering the Gospel to Children"

IN CHURCH

The sooner children are included in the all age worshipping community the sooner they will come to believe that they belong and have something to contribute. Children bring life to congregations and require more creativity in our worship.

Plan the time that children are in church to engage and involve them. Review everything you do from the time the service starts and consider how it could better include children e.g. if the minister and elder carry in the bible at the start of the service, invite a child to walk with them carrying the children's bible.

Reflect on when the children are with the wider congregation and when they are set apart. What does this say to the children and to the rest of those gathered?

"To truly welcome children we need to "interrogate" our worship services." Pastor Alison Sampson, South Yarra Community Baptist Church. Read her excellent article:
<http://www.kidsfriendly.org.nz/worship-together/worshipping-with-children/>

IDEAS FOR INVOLVING AND VALUING CHILDREN

- Minister or adult worship assistant invites children up front early in service to light the Christ candle.
- Children stay up front on Kids Friendly mat or cushions so they can be fully engaged in what's happening. (Resist having a children's corner with toys, books etc. This suggests to the children that church is not for them so they need to be entertained.)
- Minister introduces "child worship assistant" who leads the Thought for the day or Call to Worship, followed by Minister's/adult worship assistant's prayer and Lord's Prayer.
- Minister, Kids Friendly designate or child reads children's scripture for the day (if not the same as adults').
- Children's talk, drama, quiz, testimony, chat presented relating to children's lesson theme/scripture.
- Band or children's choir leads children's song and/or includes songs that appeal to all ages.
- Child is chosen to collect children's offering in the sponsored child box and then bring it to the front with adult offering.
- Children are asked to help adults collect adult offering and bring food basket to front.
- Children are blessed before leaving for their programme.

OTHER KIDS FRIENDLY CONSIDERATIONS

- Intentionally plan service time while children are present to engage and involve them.
- Avoid lengthy adult notices while children are present.
- Choose appropriate songs while children are present.
- Ensure children are greeted during the greeting time.
- Consider ways to involve children in different prayers by explaining the kind of prayer and inviting contributions.
- Introduce special guests to children e.g. choir, organist, guest speakers etc.
- Involve children in sacraments e.g. baptism, communion.
- Invite children to contribute by playing instruments, participating in a drama, joining a children's choir or an all age choir or singing group, sharing a reading etc.
- Use children's artwork as background to projected songs or as decor.
- Display children's art in your church and/or foyer or on the front cover of your order of service.
- Create a Kids Friendly look for your church.
- Include children's bibles in your pews/churches.
- State in your order of service that your church is Kids Friendly and what this means.
- Publicise the programmes you have for children on Sunday and during the week.
- Be creative and varied in the way you share the scripture, news, pray etc.
- Share news and celebrations.
- Keep reminding your congregation of Jesus' command to let the children come.



"There are a host of ways to involve children in worship that are only limited to the creativity and boldness of worship planners." Pastor Randy Engle, The Sermon for Children.

Stories from our churches:

Child worship assistants at St Heliers Presbyterian



Kids Friendly Revs Pauline and Stan Stewart share one of the ways they like to involve children in worship and encourage their leadership as a child worship assistant. Each week they or the Children's Minister phones a child to invite him/her to be the worship assistant. The child is then emailed a "Thought for the Day" (see example) and is asked to be at church 15 minutes before start of service to be briefed and to pray with the elder on duty.

The child enters with the minister, carrying the children's Bible, wearing a stole (as is the custom for St Heliers ministers) and sits at the front.

The child leads the congregation in the "Thought for the Day". Says Pauline: "I like to have a child lead us in a "Thought for the Day" each Sunday. It helps the congregation get to know the children, encourage children's leadership and share a child's thoughts with the congregation. The themes for my "Thought for the day" are influenced by my conversations with children."

The child worship assistant then chooses another child to light the Christ candle, who says: "*We light the Christ candle*. The congregation responds, *Christ is the Light of the World*."

The child worship assistant receives the offering alongside the minister and leads the children out to "Sunday School", carrying the children's Bible.

SAMPLE "THOUGHT FOR THE DAY"

ALL SAINTS DAY (Author: Rev. Pauline Stewart)

Leader: Today is All Saints day. It's a time to remember those we love who have died.

All: We thank you God for the many people we have loved in our lives and that even when they die their love lives on in us.

Leader: Sometimes we get really sad when we miss our loved ones.

All: Help us to know that their Spirit is still with us and that the way they touched our lives and our world lives on.

Leader: Lord we thank you that love never dies.

All: We thank you that our love for those who we miss so much draws us together and gives us a new appreciation of each other and the world around us.

Leader: We thank you that you are with us always - in good times and in bad times.

All: God we affirm again that in life and in death and in life beyond death you are with us and we are not alone. AMEN

LET THE CHILDREN COME (Author: Jill Kayser)

Leader: Today is a day we remember how much Jesus loves children.

People: Thank you for the way children bring love to our lives.

Leader: Thank you God for the children of our church and community.

People: Thank you for the life and hope children bring to our church family.

Leader: Thank you that children can also teach of your love.

People: May we be open to their example and teaching.

Leader: Thank you God that all of us, young and old are your children.

People: Thank you God for being our loving and caring Parent.

Sung Blessings at St Johns in the City, Wellington



At St John's-in-the City, children bless the congregation in song before leaving for their programme and adults respond by singing the same blessing back. *"May God's blessing be upon you now. May you know of His great love for you. May God's blessing be upon you now. Right where you are."*

Kids Friendly Call to Worship at Timaru Presbyterian

Rev Mary-Jane Konings writes a child friendly Call to Worship each week by adapting the lectionary Psalm. They can be accessed from textweek.com. or her blog: calltoworship.blogspot.com Says Mary-Jane "I started writing them because I wanted to include the Psalm themes in the service in a way that engaged children. I like thinking about different ways to help the children and adults get to grips with some important ideas – that God loves them very much, that God is awesome, and that listening to God is important. I also like making the Psalms a little bit Kiwi, and a little bit South Canterbury. I think these calls help our older congregation to hear their familiar psalms with fresh ears, and they love hearing the children call out their parts.

At St Stephens in Timaru, the children bring in the Bible, light the Christ candle, and help lead the call to worship before one of them leads us in a prayer of adoration. My hope is to see children start writing their own Call to Worship soon."



KIDS FRIENDLY "CALL TO WORSHIP" SAMPLES

KIDS FRIENDLY PSALMS (Author: Rev. Mary-Jane Konings)

PSALM 26:

Leader: Come, let us worship the Lord,

Children: We have been very good!

All: We trust in the Lord with all our hearts.

Leader: Examine our hearts and minds O God,

Children: We remember that you love us very much.

All: We choose to praise your name today.

PSALM 124

Leader: If the Lord had not been on our side

All: If the Lord had not been on our side

Leader: When enemies attacked us

Children: They would have eaten us all up

Leader: Our help is in the name of the Lord

All: Praise be to the Lord

Children: Even though those enemies have big sharp teeth

All: We have escaped! Our help is in the Maker of heaven and earth.

PSALM 133

Leader: Come, let us worship God in unity

Children: It is choice when brothers and sisters get on.

All: When we are united in the love of Christ,
It is like precious, sweet smelling balm.

Leader: Come, let us be together in worship

Children: No more fighting! No more —me first.!!

What really matters is God – and God is love!

All: As we draw near in worship, there is blessing and new life,
Let us worship our loving God together.

KIDS FRIENDLY CALL TO WORSHIP FOR PENTECOST

(Author: Benita Barton, St Mark's Pinehill)

LEADER: Thank you God for the changes that this season of winter brings here in Otago.

ALL: For the driving clouds and the open skies;

LEADER: For the salt air from the harbour;

ALL: For the everlasting hills.

LEADER: We thank you for your Spirit

ALL: That comes like the wind from the harbour and the hills

LEADER: Invisible, unmistakable, full of power

ALL: Blowing through the streets of Dunedin

LEADER: Thank you Pentecost

ALL: Thank you for your Spirit in Jesus.

LEADER: Thank you for your Spirit in the early church.

ALL: Thank you for your Spirit present with us here today. AMEN

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES FOR WORSHIPPING WITH CHILDREN

BOOKS:

CHILDREN IN THE WORSHIPPING COMMUNITY, David Ng and Virginia Thomas, John Knox Press, (extracts from the book available from Kids Friendly)

CHILDREN IN WORSHIP. CONGREGATIONS IN BLOOM, Rev Caroline Fairless. Available from Kids Friendly and the Hewitson Library. See also www.childrenatworship.org

ARTICLES:

WELCOME THE CHILDREN, Pastor Alison Sampson, South Yarra Community Church, download: www.kidsfriendly.org.nz/worship-together/worshipping-with-children/

NO CHILDREN ALLOWED, Ben Freudenburg (available from Kids Friendly)

WELCOMING CHILDREN TO WORSHIP (available from Kids Friendly)

JOY: WHEN ALL AGES WORSHIP TOGETHER , Joan Huyser-Honig (available from Kids Friendly)

[INTERGENERATIONAL MINISTRY BEYOND THE RHETORIC](#) by Brenda Snailum, Fuller Institute.

EXPLORING CHILDREN'S INVOLVEMENT IN CHURCH

[Help! There's a child in my church!](#) is a study paper to help congregations, worship planners, children's ministry leaders and parents involve children in congregational worship.

WEBSITES:

www.kidsfriendly.org.nz/worship-together/
www.childrenatworship.org
www.allageworshipresources.org
thekidsfriendlyblog.blogspot.co.nz

QUESTIONNAIRES/REVIEWS:

CHILDREN IN WORSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE –available from Kids Friendly.
This is a really useful way to engage in quality discussion with a small group regarding where your church is at in regard to encouraging children to worship.

A KIDS FRIENDLY SUNDAY (Kids Friendly Ideals and Self-Review resource) *This is part of the self-review process of becoming Kids Friendly.*

b. Kids Friendly Ministers



When churches work to become Kids Friendly they review themselves against 10 ideals, the last, but not least, being “A Kids Friendly Minister”. While the minister and church leaders cannot and must not accept sole responsibility for the way churches embrace and value children, he/she or they are crucial to cultivating a Kids Friendly culture. Rev Mark Johnston of Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership asked us to provide some

characteristics of a Kids Friendly minister. We consulted with some of our Kids Friendly leaders and drafted an initial but ever evolving wish list.

A KIDS FRIENDLY MINISTER...

- Understands children’s ministry as ministry *with, to* and *by* children of the church and community.
- Sees children’s ministry as the responsibility of the whole church not just a few (often tired) volunteers.
- Works with leaders to develop a vision, strategy and budget for children’s ministry.
- Reminds the congregation of the importance and blessing of children in a worshipping community and encourages and educates them to minister to children.
- Models best practice children’s ministry.
- Intentionally builds relationships with children and their families.
- Recognises and promotes the importance of the parents’ role in growing children’s faith.
- Gets to know children by name.
- Communicates with children – talks to them, phones them e.g. to wish them happy birthday, to invite them to assist with worship.
- Participates in children’s and family social events or outings. (Rev Andrew Norton is the car park greeter clown at St Columba’s Light Party).
- Attends and participates in children’s programmes every now and then. (Rev Ian Guy spent two weeks with the children at Kaikorai to teach them about communion and baptism.)
- Invites children to contribute to worship and develop leadership.
- Listens to children and is interested in what they have to say (gets down on his/her knees so he/she is at their eye level.)

- Has a Kids Friendly office (Rev Pauline Stewart of St Heliers has a lolly jar, a special puzzle for visiting children to play with and a friendly puppet in her office).
 - Is a patron of children's creations displaying their work e.g. on notice boards, in their office, on the front page of the bulletin, as a PowerPoint backdrop to songs.
 - Appreciates, values and thanks children for their contributions.
 - Shares children's sermons that relate to their worlds using symbols and characters they understand and love. (Rev Martin Baker captured adults and kids attention for years with his Ken and Barbie parables.)
 - Prays for children and children's leaders regularly and by name.
 - Has a sense of humour.
 - Has a relationship with local groups serving children e.g. schools, Plunket, kindergartens.
 - Is accessible to children and families of the church and community.
 - Asks their children's leaders for advice on how to be a better Kids Friendly minister.
 - Reads books and articles on children's ministry.
 - Lives Jesus' words: *"Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me."*
 - Values and appreciates the people who work with children and tells them so.
 - Shares all information that comes across his/her desk that has anything to do with children's ministry.
 - Encourages and budgets for children's leaders to have supervision and professional development.
 - Plans the children's ministry and Christian education programme with leaders.
 - Advocates for children's leaders ensuring they are invited to sit on session or at least share with session regularly.
 - Ensures the worship time that includes children is planned to engage and involve them.
 - Promotes the children's ministry work and leaders to the congregation e.g. invites them to share successes of their ministry.
 - Has an open door policy for leaders/children's ministers and listens to their concerns.
 - Works as a team.
 - Involves children ministry leaders in all decisions that impact or affect children.
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KIDS FRIENDLY MINISTERS share the heart of this mother (<http://iamtotallythatmom.blogspot.ca>) who wrote this letter:

"Dear Parents with young children in church,

You are doing something really, really important. I know it's not easy. I see you with your arms overflowing, and I know you came to church already tired. Parenting is tiring. Really tiring.

I watch you bounce and sway trying to keep the baby quiet, juggling the infant car seat and the diaper bag as you find a seat. I see you wince as your child cries. I see you anxiously pull things out of your bag of tricks to try to quiet them.

And I see you with your toddler and your preschooler. I watch you cringe when your little girl asks an innocent question in a voice that might not be an inside voice let alone a church whisper. I hear the exasperation in your voice as you beg your child to just sit, to be quiet as you feel everyone's eyes on you. Not everyone is looking, but I know it feels that way.

I know you're wondering, is this worth it? Why do I bother? I know you often leave church more exhausted than fulfilled. But what you are doing is so important.

When you are here, the church is filled with a joyful noise. When you are here, the Body of Christ is more fully present. When you are here, we are reminded that this worship thing we do isn't about Bible Study or personal, quiet contemplation but coming together to worship as a community where all are welcome, where we share in the Word and Sacrament together. When you are here, I have hope that these pews won't be empty in ten years when your kids are old enough to sit quietly and behave in worship. I know that they are learning how and why we worship now, before it's too late. They are learning that worship is important.

I see them learning. In the midst of the cries, whines, and giggles, in the midst of the crinkling of pretzel bags and the growing pile of crumbs I see a little girl who insists on going two pews up to share peace with someone she's never met. I hear a little boy slurping (quite loudly) every last drop of his communion wine out of the cup determined not to miss a drop of Jesus. I watch a child excitedly colour a cross and point to the one in the front of the sanctuary. I hear the echoes of Amen's just a few seconds after the rest of the community says it together. I watch a boy just learning to read try to sound out the words in the worship book or count his way to Hymn 672. Even on weeks when I can't see my own children

learning because, well, it's one of those mornings, I can see your children learning.

I know how hard it is to do what you're doing, but I want you to know, it matters. It matters to me. It matters to my children to not be alone in the pew. It matters to the congregation to know that families care about faith, to see young people... and even on those weeks when you can't see the little moments, it matters to your children.

It matters that they learn that worship is what we do as a community of faith, that everyone is welcome, that their worship matters. When we teach children that their worship matters, we teach them that they are enough right here and right now as members of the church community. They don't need to wait until they can believe, pray or worship a certain way to be welcome here, and I know adults who are still looking to be shown that. It matters that children learn that they are an integral part of this church, that their prayers, their songs, and even their badly (or perfectly timed depending on who you ask) cries and whines are a joyful noise because it means they are present.

I know it's hard, but thank you for what you do when you bring your children to church. Please know that your family – with all of its noise, struggle, commotion, and joy – are not simply tolerated, you are a vital part of the community gathered in worship.”

Stories of Kids Friendly ministers from our churches:

Listening to the children @ Dunedin South



Rev Henry Mbambo minister of Dunedin South Presbyterian Church was sharing the concept of prayer with the children of his church. *"When you pray you are talking to God and you can do that in any position,"* he said. *"You can pray standing, lying down, kneeling or sitting. So how would you like to pray today?"* A pre-schooler piped up *"Lying down!"* So Henry lay down at the front of

the church with children lying around him as he prayed for God's blessing on them.

Wadestown's resident Pukeko



For many years Wadestown Presbyterian Church had a resident Pukeko (fluffy toy) who used to hide in the church each week so that the kids needed to find him as they waited for church to start. Sometimes he was on the organ pipes, sometimes peeking from behind the pulpit and other times in the flowers. Sometimes he helped minister Sharon Ross-Ensor tell a story too.

Support for children's leaders @ St Andrews Geraldine

Rev Ian Hyslop of St Andrews, Geraldine, schedules time to regularly meet with the children's ministry leaders and youth leaders to discuss challenges, celebrate successes, brainstorm ideas and pray together.



Parish mice intrigue children at Otaki Waikanae

The Otaki Waikanae Presbyterian Parish have five resident church mice (of the knitted variety) living on the Waikanae church communion table in their little basket home (sometimes they hibernate under the table if the weather is very cold.) The three mice at Otaki have their home at the front of the church on an old piano stool. They like to see all the action!

The first two mice were rescued by minister Carol GranT from a car boot sale. They looked lonely so she took them on their first trip to Melbourne before introducing them to everyone in church. They wrote about their Australian holiday in a special mouse book including photos of course. Word got out about the mice's life and soon two more mice arrived to join the Waikanae congregation and another joined the Otaki couple.

Now all the mice get to travel all around the world with members of the church family and return with amazing tales of adventure and photos to share. Sometimes their adventures are published in our monthly magazine or read in church by the children. Carol also gets emails and postcards from the mice visiting exotic places to share with everyone on Sunday. Even the local postie has asked to meet the famous church mice!

Sometimes the mice squeak loudly during the service so the children will read them a story or give them a cuddle.

"Our mice are very Kids (and adult) friendly," says Carol, "and great at welcoming visitors, visiting folk in hospital and helping shy children meet each other. They have even been known to escape to join in Mainly Music or Girls' Brigade, or visit church and community groups. They have been photographed at family weddings and celebrations, cuddling new grandchildren, cruising on ships, on tramping trips and even at the Rugby World Cup in South Africa. They especially love the children at our Kiribati service but have to hum the hymns because the Kiribati words are a bit hard to learn. Last Christmas at Waikanae they kept a constant eye on baby Jesus in the Christmas crib."

Celebrating our people @ Omokoroa

Omokoroa Community Church minister Fergus Keith marks important events in their church community by placing a symbol on the communion table (eg. A rose to celebrate the arrival of a new grandchild).

One Sunday a framed certificate stood on the communion table and before the service began some people walked up there to have a look.

During worship Fergus asked the children, "Do you ever dream of going to special places, like a palace? Well, see this certificate! Someone in church today went to a special place to receive it from the Queen's representative. You can see here that it has been signed by the Queen. The Certificate tells us that there is also a medal that goes with it that's called the "Queen's Service Medal". This is a ceremonial medal to be worn on official occasions."

"Now as well as this special medal the person who receives it was given a miniature medal that she or he can wear anytime. Now I want you to go looking at people around the church and find the person who is wearing this medal."



Down one side they all went and halfway back the other side before they found Mrs Gwen Harding wearing the miniature QSM medal. Fergus told them to bring her to the front to share why she had received it. She told them that she and her husband had fostered children through Birthright and Social Welfare as well as looking after their own children.

She didn't need to tell the children or the adults of her passion for teaching the Word of God to children and her years of service here at Omokoroa. But she did say, "*The honour is for God and not for me*".

c. Kids Friendly Sacraments

Kids Friendly Baptism

In a summary of baptism, the PCANZ Worship Directory states:

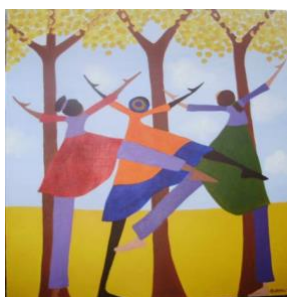
"The Baptism of children demonstrates the grace of God whose love claims people before they are able to respond in faith... Human faithfulness to God needs repeated renewal. Baptism calls for decision at every subsequent stage of life's way, both for those whose Baptism attends their profession of faith and for those who are nurtured from childhood within the family of faith."

The Session/Parish Council is responsible for all baptised children in the congregation being nurtured in understanding of the meaning of Baptism, of the Lord's Supper, and of their interrelation, and that they are surrounded by Christian encouragement and support. The congregation as a whole, on behalf of the Church universal, assumes responsibility for nurturing all the baptised in the Christian life.

Similarly, if parents choose Thanksgiving or Dedication Services for their children, there is still responsibility on the part of the church to oversee the on-going nurture of faith in those children.

What we do on Sundays is to live out a significant part of this nurturing.

Resources for a Kids Friendly Baptism



In the PCANZ Worship Directory, it states:

"Those presenting children for Baptism shall promise to provide nurture and guidance within the community of faith until the child is ready to make a personal profession of faith and assume the responsibility of active church membership." (2.3.14 Parental Responsibility)

In exploring baptism of infants there is therefore a great weight of responsibility being placed on the parents with the support of the wider family of faith. How can we adequately portray this both in the liturgy and in other worship spaces in order that all may more fully recognise their role in this sacrament?

Those of us who were baptised as infants cannot remember our own baptism. But, as we experience the baptism of others, we come to

understand the importance of this act in our own lives. Baptism is a sacrament - an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given by God. In the sacrament of Baptism all who are gathered have the opportunity to experience afresh the reality of God's grace, love and forgiveness freely given. So it is vital everyone can see and participate in the baptism of others.

The baptism of children and infants clearly indicates that baptism is God's action. God's love is always with us and will never let us go. God's love towards us is unmerited. It does not rest on any act of ours - even our penitence -for God loved us from the foundation of the world.

Baptism marks the formal beginning of the Christian faith journey. It is here that the community of faith gathers in celebration of God's bountiful grace, pledges support of the newly-baptised, and shares the gifts of the kingdom. Children must be afforded the opportunity to affirm the wonderful gift of their baptism, on an on-going basis, together with the whole people of God.

Whether the one being baptised is a child or an adult, children will be keen to participate.

Some ideas for including children and families:

- *Look at the use of space. Is the font in a visible place for everyone?*
- *Invite all the children to be seated close to the font to participate in the baptism.*
- *Ensure the water is visible to all the congregation.*
- *The water could be scooped from the font with a New Zealand scallop shell – perhaps the family/person to be baptised could have collected one from a local beach in preparation.*
- *After the baptism, everyone could be given a piece of A5 paper and invited to write to the child/adult who has been baptised, their hopes, prayers, drawings etc for them. Make sure some crayons etc. are available for children to use. These can be collected and placed in a clear file or special book during the service and handed to the baptised person or their parents.*
- *A baptism candle lit from the Christ candle could be presented as a gift for the one baptised that can be used e.g. at anniversaries to remember their baptism.*
- *A children's bible could also be presented to baptised children or their families along with their baptism certificate.*

There are baptism liturgies available on the national church website
<http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/for-ministers/worship-resources/special-services/baptism-liturgy>

If the one being baptised is a child:

- *After the parents have made their vows, the minister could ask all the children (who are already up front so they could see everything that was happening) to stand, and ask them: **"Do you, the children of this church, promise to be _____'s sisters and brothers in our church family? Will you remember her/his name and greet her/him when you see her/him. Will you play with her/him and help her/him learn about Jesus?"***
Then the rest of the congregation is asked to make their vows.
- *Consider how else you could invite the family/ies of the baptised one to participate in aspects of the service? E.g. an older sibling carrying in the Bible; lighting the Christ candle; doing a reading.*
- *Involve the family as much as possible, in recognising their significant role in nurturing this child in faith. This might involve asking them why they gave their child the names they did;*
- *Consider giving the child a gift to remember this special day eg a baptism candle that she/he can light each year on the anniversary of the baptism, a children's Bible, a card, baptism certificate (one or more of these could be presented by the children).*
- *Have a special baptism banner which welcomes and names the child/ren being baptised –use letters that you can change –see the "Stories from our churches": St Columba, Tauranga.*
- *Digitally project photos of the baby or person being baptised.*

Helping families remember the event:

Although baptism is a one-off event, remembering it should continue for a life time. To help families celebrate at a later date remind them of the anniversary by sending a "happy baptism" card (see sample insert) to the child including some ideas for celebrating the anniversary of their baptism eg. bring out the memorabilia – candle, gown, photos, certificate etc to remember what happened by talking about where it was, who was there, what happened.

Provide a pray for them to pray as a family e.g.

INSERT FOR HAPPY BAPTISM CARDS SENT ON
 THE ANNIVERSARY OF CHILDREN'S BAPTISMS

Dear Jackson

Happy Baptism for the 24th June 2013. We hope you have a special day and get to light your Christ candle to remind you that you are a child of God and His love never leaves you.

We will be remembering you in our prayers on Sunday.

God Bless.

With best wishes and love
 from your friends at
 St Heliers Presbyterian Church

Dear God, thank you for the gift of Jackson being part of your family through his baptism. Thank you for the love you extend to Jackson. Please bless Jackson and all of us today as we remember and celebrate his baptism. Please continue to shower Jackson with your love and grace and help him to grow more like you each day, Amen.

Suggest they light their baptism candle and share a special meal or dessert together.

Baptism stories from our churches:

Infant Baptism/ Dedication at St Andrews, Geraldine

At St Andrews, Geraldine baptised children are presented with a Beginners Bible and a patchwork cushion made by the women of the church. The presentation is made by a child of the church. This cushion is embroidered with the child's name and date on it.

Infant Baptism at Highgate Presbyterian



Judy and Jason Goroncy spoke to their minister about involving children more intentionally in the baptism of their son Samuel including inviting the children to make baptism vows to love and welcome Samuel in the family of God. Together they decided to move the font to the aisle at the back of the church and have people gather around with the children sitting at the foot of the font. This created a wonderful sense of community and of their family being welcomed, rather than being on show. It also captured Samuel's "entering into the church" as the font was close to the entrance. Samuel's mother, Judy, said *"The children's response was beautiful. Of course some of the younger kids didn't quite get it but I'm sure they felt included and the older children*

responded with much enthusiasm."

Infant Baptism at Kohimarama Presbyterian

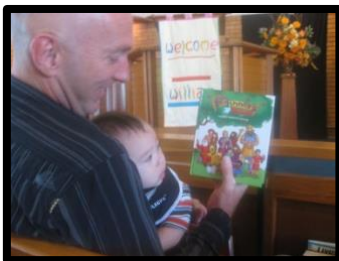
Rev Nikki Watkin is constantly overwhelmed by the wonder of it all when, after the baptism, she holds a child and reads these words:

"N has now been baptised in obedience to Christ's command, and is now received into the one, holy Catholic Church. From this moment, as child and as adult, she belongs to the family of God.

Little child, for you Jesus Christ has come; He was born for you; He has lived for you; for you He has endured the shadows of Gethsemane and the sufferings of Calvary; for you He was raised from the dead and has ascended into heaven; for you He prays at God's right hand; all for you little child, even though you do not know it. May you come to confirm the witness of the apostle John. We love because God first loved us."

She then has the congregation sing the blessing to the child as she brings the child to meet the family of God represented there. This generally takes at least 3 repeats of the song for everyone to add their blessing to this new member of God's family 😊.

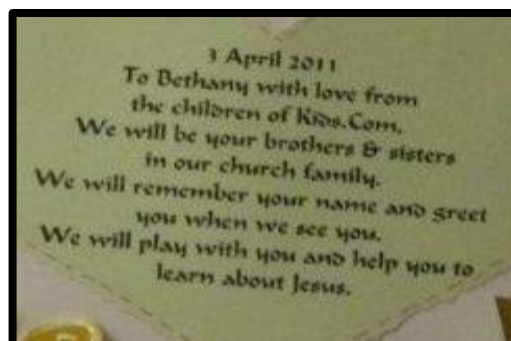
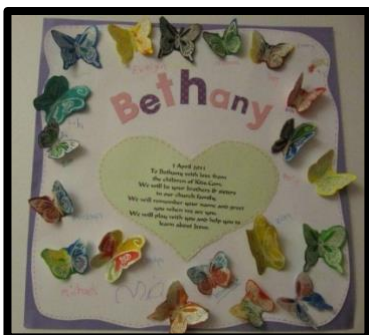
Thanksgiving Service at St Columba's, Tauranga



When celebrating a service of Thanksgiving for a child, Donald Hegan, minister at St Columba's presents the parents with a Children's Bible to read to their children. They also have made a special banner to hang on the pulpit, saying "Welcome _____." The letters at the bottom are removable and changed for each child. Parents often have a family photo after

the service standing next to the banner. They see it as a great welcome.

Infant Baptism @ Flagstaff Community Church, Dunedin



During the baptism of a child at Flagstaff, the children say their own vows. To affirm this, the children then go out and make butterflies to attach to a card that includes the vows they made and their names. The

boy version of the poster has tractors and trucks around the edge. The children present the card to the child at the end of the service.

Some more ideas:

- One congregation recently gave the family a “faith box” after the baptism. They were really pleased! (the family had two older children as well as the baby).
- When a grandparent is a regular church member, have them carry the baby around to introduce them to the congregation. (if not ask the family’s elder to carry the baby around the congregation). While this happens, one congregation has a PowerPoint display of photos from the child’s life to that point.
- In another congregation in keeping with the theology of grace, the baby is baptised before the parents and congregation say their vows. *“It’s God’s initiative and demonstration of welcome and grace - not because of anything we have done to deserve/earn it,”* said the minister.



A family’s Baptism celebration

Rev Dr Jason Garoncy, father and Lecturer and Dean of Studies, Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership, writes about one thing his family does to remember and celebrate their baptisms:

“One of the ‘rituals’ that we celebrate with particular enthusiasm and without fail is the various anniversaries of our baptisms. So, five times a year, usually after dinner – or between main course and dessert, depending on where clan members are on the sanity-ometer at that particular moment – we clear the table, light a candle, put out a small bowl of water and recite the liturgy together (drawn, with some modification, from the excellent [Uniting in Worship 2](#), a liturgical resource produced by the Uniting Church in Australia). We rotate the leader from occasion to occasion. The words in bold are said by all.”

For more explanation and the actual resource. Read more about this at: <http://cruciality.wordpress.com/2013/06/04/on-the-anniversary-of-our-baptisms>

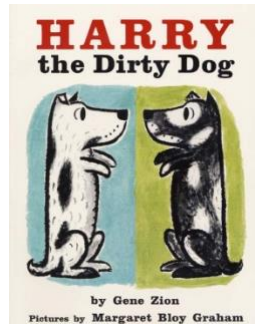
Explaining Baptism to children at Lawrence/Waitahuna Presbyterian Church

"We read children the story "Harry the Dirty Dog" by Gene Zion," says Rev Andrew Harrex.

If you don't have a copy of this book available, it can be downloaded being read on youtube.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oOhwMTZ5_90

Then we chat about it:



"Harry was a bit naughty in this story wasn't he? He did some bad things. First he stole the scrubbing brush, then he ran away, then he got into all sorts of situations where he got dirtier and dirtier. He realised in the end that he would have to go back home and get clean again. Sometimes we can be a bit like Harry. Just like Harry, we sometimes do naughty things in our lives and life can make us all dirty just like it did for Harry. But just like Harry, we can come home. We can come home to Jesus and ask him to give us a bath to make us all clean. Have a look at this gravel (show some gravel). It's pretty dirty. Our lives are a bit like this gravel. We do many different things; some of them are not good things. We can't make our lives completely clean by ourselves.

Now look at this clear, pure water (show water).

Jesus is pure and only he can help us be really clean.

Let's pour the water over the gravel. Look how it's getting cleaner and shinier as it's washed with the water.

Today, N_____ is going to have clean, pure water poured over her. She's going to be baptised. When someone gets baptised they are letting Jesus wash their lives clean and they are saying to everyone, "I want to follow Jesus and be his friend"

It's a very special thing and we're going to stay and watch N_____ do this today.

Including children in baptism at St John's in-the-city, Wellington

The Baptism, generally takes up the "children's talk" slot. Children are invited up the front of church to sit around the font so they have a good view. 1 child is invited at the appropriate time to pour the water into the font as part of the Baptism ritual. (If the child being baptised has an older sibling, the older sibling will be the child to pour the water).

A quilt made by one of the women in the congregation is made for every child and is presented by another child at the Baptism – a gift from St John's.

Once the baby/child is baptised the Minister will carry the baby around the church to 'present' them to the Congregation while the Aaronic Blessing is sung.

Children have their own child friendly "Order Of Service" so much of this is explained with words and pictures. The Minister also explains to the children what's happening.

c. Kids Friendly Sacraments

Kids Friendly Communion:

The PCANZ Directory for Worship states:

"All who are baptised are welcomed to the Table. None shall be excluded; it is a privilege for the undeserving. When we welcome, we recognise that our understanding will differ according to maturity, but we will all have some understanding. We can all understand that God loves us and invites us. We can all understand that we need to say sorry and renew our commitment to love and serve God. We can all understand that when we share this meal we share with the Church worldwide and across time."



How do we make children feel welcome at the table?

Children know they are welcome at the table when they are fed there. We don't sit children at the table at home and not offer them food. We would not think of holding back physical nourishment from our children because they do not yet understand its importance. And so the church, from ancient times, has learned that it cannot withhold the broken bread of God's love or the precious blood of Jesus from its children. As stewards of these amazing gifts, we are to share the richness of them with our children. Whether we hold their hand as we walk forward, or teach them to "make a cradle for Jesus" (overlapping hands, cupped) to receive the bread, we open the gifts of God to them.

Some Questions to Ponder:

- * Think about your own childhood or early experiences of Holy Communion.
- * What new thoughts have you had about children and Communion?
- * What messages might we be giving to children about their place in our churches, and God's kingdom, by our approach to Holy Communion?

To read some thought provoking ideas on why and how we can welcome children to the table see our Kids Friendly website (www.kidsfriendly.org.nz) under the "Worship Together"

What children can understand about Communion

- **Infants** develop a sense of trust in their parents or guardians as their caregivers hold them, rock them, provide clean and warm clothing for them, and feed them. All of this builds a foundation for the child to

trust God and to receive the Lord's Supper as an expression of God's trustworthiness.

- **One to Three-Year-Olds** are developing language skills, so parents or guardians can begin to talk with them about the communion service. These children can begin to understand that communion is a very special meal, God's meal. They can learn that communion helps us remember a time when Jesus shared a meal with his friends and that it is a time for thanking God for our blessings.
- **Three to Five-Year-Olds** will be curious about the physical aspects of communion - the table, the cups, the bread, etc. They can grasp the concept of the church as a family sharing a meal together.
- **Six to Eight-Year-Olds** are beginning to think historically. They can begin to grasp the relationship between the Last Supper and the communion service. These children are also developing the ability to think symbolically. They can begin to understand that the bread represents Jesus' love for us. They can see that in the Lord's Supper the minister and people are performing the same actions Jesus and the disciples performed at the Last Supper. They have a deeper understanding of the church as family. As a result, at this age they can also begin to feel excluded if they are not receiving communion.
- **Older Children** are beginning to be able to grasp more of the meanings found in the Lord's Supper. They are more skilled at abstract and symbolic thinking. They have good reading skills and can make clear sense of the prayers and words associated with the sacrament.

See the Children and Communion Book from Covenant Presbyterian Church (2008) for more ideas:

https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/9ddb6d_a9f85c78fa7642b299b2e0b7e392b8ef.pdf

Some ideas for teaching children about Communion

- Help children make a small booklet describing the meaning we give to the different parts of the Communion service. Fold a piece of paper in half and put a title on the front cover, and then make a page for foot-washing, one for the bread, and one for the juice. Provide pre-cut shapes that children can stick on the pages with different texts and words that they can write into the book to help them understand.
- Invite older children to research the symbols of bread and wine used in Passover and Communion. Help them make a presentation of their discoveries in a creative way during a Communion service.
- Have a piece of string, a pad of Post-it notes and a cell phone with a calendar on it. Read 1 Corinthians 11: 23-25 *The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in*

remembrance of me. "In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." Ask if you have trouble remembering things... Perhaps when your mum asks if you have tidied your room, you say "I forgot" or when you are asked if you have taken the rubbish out, you say "I forgot". Give an example of you forgetting something recently. People have lots of ways to help them remember things. One of the oldest tricks is to tie a piece of string to your finger so every time you look at your finger you know there is something to remember. Or we can use post-it notes –we can write something down to remember it. But then we might forget to look at the post it note! Or we can go more high tech and put a reminder in our phone and set it so it will remind us at a particular time with an alarm. Being forgetful isn't new though –it has been around since just about the beginning of time. The night Jesus was betrayed, he was eating with his disciples. He knew he would soon be leaving them and he wanted them to remember him after he was gone. So he did something to help them remember. As they were eating, he took a piece of bread and broke it and said "This is my body which is broken for you. When you eat the bread, remember me." Then he took a glass of wine and held it up and



said, "This is my blood which is shed for you. When you drink it, remember me." It has been almost 2000 years since that night and we still use that same way to remember Jesus. When we take communion, we eat the bread and drink the cup to remind us that Jesus suffered and died on the cross so that we might have life. As we eat the bread and drink the cup, we remember him. **Prayer:** Dear Jesus, we remember you today. We remember that your body was broken and your blood was shed so that we might have life everlasting. Thank you, Amen.

For more ideas on teaching children about communion see our Kids Friendly website under the worship together tab/children and communion.

On the lighter side...

A four-year-old was in church when the wine and bread were passed out. He was very interested in this, and started to get up. His mother leaned over and told him that he was not old enough to partake in the Communion.

Later, when the collection plate came by, he ignored it. His mother again leaned over and tried to coax the gold coin out of him. He steadfastly refused, stating, "If I can't eat, I'm not paying."

Stories from our churches:

Children's Talk on Communion at Lawrence/Waitahuna Presbyterian Church

Christine Harrex of Lawrence Presbyterian shared some symbols on PowerPoint with the children and asked what they meant. She used symbols for McDonalds; wheelchair access; school crossing; recycling; parking; toilets; and a cross.



Then she put a picture of bread and wine on the screen – two very important symbols that Jesus used to explain to his friends what would happen to him. Christine shared how every year God's people ate the Passover meal together to remind them of how God had saved them from slavery in Egypt.

The night before Jesus died it was Passover so he and his friends gathered to celebrate this meal together in an upstairs room. It became known as 'The Last Supper' because Jesus gave it new meaning that night. (Christine then showed Leonardo de Vinci's last Supper painting.)



Here is a picture of the upstairs room, she said. "You can see Jesus and all the disciples sitting around. The Passover meal took on a new meaning that night. Jesus broke the bread and handed it round. "This is my body," he said. He passed round a cup of wine, "This is my blood. When you eat the bread and drink the wine, think of me."

Have a look up here on the table – there's bread and wine. Jesus shared bread and wine with his friends and he told them to always share bread and wine and to remember him in this special way.

We still do this today. Later we are going to pass around this bread and wine and remember that the bread was broken and the wine was poured out to remind us of Jesus' body being hurt and his blood being shed when he died on the cross.

Let's say a prayer together. Can you say this: "To remind us of Jesus"
(Have the following words available for all to read:)

*We break bread together
To remind us of Jesus.
We share a cup of wine
To remind us of Jesus. Amen.*

A Sample Liturgy:

One way to encourage understanding is to include in the liturgy some words of an elder and a child that "unpacks" what is happening.

Here's an example.

When the elders come forward to serve communion, so too does a child and another elder (perhaps a respected grandparent figure). They sit together on one side.

Child: What makes this morning different from other mornings?

Elder: Today we've come together to share in a special meal that reminds us of Jesus' time on earth, long ago, and helps us to remember our connection both to God and to all of God's family throughout the world - people who have already lived and died; people who are living now; and people who are yet to be born.

Celebrant: All who want to follow Jesus are welcome at God's table... Neighbours and strangers, young and old, you and me. During the service, the congregation is invited to respond to some of the things I'll be saying. Don't worry if you don't know the responses. If you are able to read, they're printed in the bulletin. If you can't read them, don't worry!

Celebrant then moves on with the communion liturgy.

After the shared words: "*It is right to give God thanks and praise*":

Child: When we sit down for a meal, we try to remember to say grace... to say "thank you" to God for the food that God has given us. Do we say thank you for this food?

Elder: Oh, yes! We give thanks to God, not just for the food, but for everything that God has shared with creation... every part of our lives.

Child: Is the minister the only one who thanks God?

Elder: Oh, no! We all have a chance to say, "Thank you!" But we believe that the minister's voice and our voices join with the voices of everyone who loves God and all of creation.

Child: So, communion is a time to celebrate!

Elder: It is a time to celebrate... but it is also a time to remember some sad things, as well, God's people haven't always been very good at listening to God's call. Sometimes we have not listened and done our own thing. But we remember that no matter what, God still loves us.

Celebrant goes on with liturgy...

Child: God has loved us in so many ways!

Elder: Yes... and we can see that most of all in Jesus –in his willingness to live in a way that showed us the way to God. And he even died to show that love too. So we remember especially the night before he died.

Celebrant: On the night before he was put to death, Jesus gathered with his friends for a special meal...

Child: What does s/he mean - eating Jesus' body and drinking his blood!?!

Elder: When we eat the bread and drink the juice, we see these things as symbols of all that Jesus gave to the world. We're taking in part of Christ's spiritual body to help us remember that we are part of that body.

Child: But... it's just bread and juice, right?

Elder: It's bread and juice... ordinary food made special by God's love for us and our love for God.

Invocation (Epiclesis & Anamnesis)

...Send your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts...

Breaking the Bread and Pouring the Wine

Celebrant: *...Come, for the table is prepared...*

Child: Now everything is ready?

Elder: Yes! We are going to stay in the pews. The bread and the juice will be served to us, one at a time. When we get the bread, we'll hold on to it, until everyone is served... and then we'll all eat it together. We'll do the same thing with the juice. *(or describe what the process is for your congregation)*

Child: I know! We eat and drink at the same time to remind us that we are all part of the same family - all parts of God's house and Christ's body!

Elder: Exactly!

Communion is shared...



Remember that there are also lots of Kids Friendly communion liturgies available on the Kids Friendly website: www.kidsfriendly.org.nz/worship-together/children-and-communion/

For more information or advice:

CONTACT:

To contact a Kids Friendly Coach or Advisor check our website:

<http://www.kidsfriendly.org.nz/about/contact-us/>

