



## Intergenerational Worship

While this workshop will present the values of intergenerational worship, this includes all ages, the applications will be mainly in relationship to children due to it being presented to Children's Ministry leaders.

**“We will not hide them from our children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, His power, and the wonders He has done. He . . . Commanded our forefathers to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born and they in turn would tell their children. “**

**Psalm 78:1-4**

### 1 - Getting The Values Right:

#### a) Community

What is the first picture that comes into your mind when you think of the word 'church'?

To value intergenerational worship we must first value community.

Seeing the value of community over self.

Developing a church model that is based on 'community on a mission'.

"If our children are to have faith we need to make sure that the church becomes a significant community of faith."

John Westerhoff

"Faith doesn't develop in a vacuum. It happens through doing life together – through eating, praying, crying and singing . . ."

George Koehler

"Begin with a faith community which invites children to belong and which demonstrates how Christians behave. In such a community children grow to understand and embrace its beliefs and adopt the Christ-like behaviours they have seen demonstrated."

Lausanne Paper – Children and Evangelism

"If the church could accomplish only one thing with a child through the first five years of life, it should seek to help the child firmly sense that he is loved by the people at church. The child . . . Sees the church as a group of people who love God and love one another."

Wes Haystead

"Unfortunately, in many churches today, almost all activities for children are with their peers and the few adults who lead the programs. When they graduate . . . they go off with their peers to find a spirituality that suits them, leaving behind the congregation to which they never belonged."

May, Scottie; Posterski, Beth; Stonehouse, Catherine; Cannell  
Linda, *Children Matter*

## **-Ideas For Moving Your Church Toward Inclusive Community**

## **b) Discipleship – Growing Beyond Consumerism**

If we are not growing people beyond consumerism then they will always be looking for their needs to be met which works against intergenerational worship

-Growing consumers to core (people who live beyond themselves)

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**“What we build into a child's life prior to the age of 13, represents the moral and spiritual foundation that defines them as individuals and directs their choices for the remainder of their life.”**

**George Barna, 2005**

## **c) Children**

-Value of children for who they are - not only for what they can achieve for adults.

Larry Fowler *Rock Solid Kids* outlines four views of children:

Children are a bother

Children are a tool

Children are our future

Children are people

### God's Value of Children:

Jeremiah 1:5 "Before I formed you I knew you".

Deuteronomy 29:29 "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things revealed belong to us and to our children."

Matthew 21:15,16 "From the lips of children and infants you have perfected praise."

Joel 2: 28-29 "Gather the people . . . Bring together the elders, gather the children, those nursing at the breast . . .

Mark 10:13-16, Let the children come.

Matthew 18: 5, When you welcome a child – welcome me

Matthew 18:10, Beware that you don't despise a single one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels are always in the presence of my heavenly father

### **d) Worship (It's not about me)**

While we are blessed and encouraged through worshipping God our goal, when we worship, is to bring pleasure to God, not ourselves. If you have ever said, 'I didn't get anything out of worship today,' you have misunderstood worship. Worship is for God.

Old Testament Worship was a family and community based process  
2 Chronicles 20:13 - All Judah stood before the Lord, with their little ones, their wives, and their children.

Joshua 8:34-35 – Joshua reads all the words of the law to the whole assembly

Matthew 21: 15-16, Children shout in the temple area

Children will pick up family and other adult attitudes toward worship

### **Spiritual Pathways**

#### **I Connect Best To God When...**

**..Relational – I am with others**

**..Intellectual – I learn**

**..Worship – I worship**

**..Activist/Serving – I serve**

**..Contemplative – I am in silence**

## ..Creation – I am in nature

**Intergenerational Worship is all about tolerance, inclusiveness and choosing to experience God outside of your preferred style.**

**e) Families** The building blocks of intergenerational worship

The values of multi-generational worship need to be modeled in the family.

Children learn to worship by worshipping. Teach the songs that will be sung.

Talk to them during the service – explaining what is happening

At home ask questions about their experience and perceptions of the service.

“The future of the church depends on its ability to build strong homes, for strong homes will be the future of a strong church. How does your church say “Families are welcome here?”

Ben Freudenburg

“Parents are the primary Christian educators in the church, and the family is the God ordained institution for building faith in young people and for passing on faith from one generation to the next.”

Ben Freudenburg

## 2 - Blending an Intergenerational Worship

Blended worship – for and against

For:

- Children get to hear and see the faith of their parents – a shared experience
- They have an uninterrupted time with their families – building spiritual memories
- They hear the message of the day, the vision building of the pastor, the shared prayers, beliefs and traditions of the church.

Against

- Not as targeted in terms of content and experience "Blended worship equally offends everyone"
- Takes a lot more time and thinking in preparation
- Other targeted environments need to be created

### **3 - Practical ideas:**

*"Tell me and I'll forget  
Show me and I may remember  
Involve me and I'll understand"*

How can we shape our worship to be inclusive of children?

- Think through how our children experience church the worship service?  
See, hear, move, touch, taste.
- Think through how are our children a part of the church community?

#### **Ideas:**

- Activity bags for toddlers
- Adult support for single parent families
- Rethink the value of the cognitive, word laden 45 minute sermon (Keep sermon length shorter: 20-30mins)
- Rethink seating arrangements
- Rethink order and content of service
- Involve children in serving in the worship service  
Greeters, Announcements, In praise team, In worship band, Scripture reading, Prayer, Shaking hands at end
- Plan memorable experiences that help them understand an abstract concept – object lessons
- Tell stories to illustrate points
- At the beginning of the sermon ask the children to write or illustrate their definition for a key word
- Use drama
- Have families involved in a part of the service – prayer etc
- Use sermon handouts
- Use children's bulletins
- Be visual – objects, data projector, video clips
- Include sounds, smells and movement
- Talk to children in sermon
- Use illustrations about children and their world
- Ask children to share a brief message in the sermon.

- Have children distribute gifts that relate to the sermon message – bookmarks, balloons, flowers
- Acknowledge rites of passage e.g starting school
- Family preparation helps. Prepare children for the concepts of the sermon

## Resources

Barna, George, *Transforming Children Into Spiritual Champions*, Regal, 2003

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Brown, Carolyn, *You Can Preach To the Kids Too!* Abingdon Press, 1997

Cattleman, Robbie, *Parenting In the Pew*, Intervarsity Press.1993

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Tetz, Myrna, Hopkins, Gary, L., *We Can Keep Them in the Church*, Pacific Press, 2004

## **Giving Church a Friendly Feel**



**BY NOELENE JOHANSSON – NAD Children's Ministry Director**

Ephesians 2:14-18 tells us that through the cross, Jesus is drawing us together into one community of peace. Because we believe this, we want to be inclusive when we gather at the foot of the cross each Sabbath morning at 11:00. We exclude children when we ignore them or speak over their heads.

The following are suggestions for deliberately including children:

- Plan memorable experiences that help them understand a sermon's abstract concepts. Making a massive ice cream Sundae or a humongous baked potato with generous toppings can demonstrate the extravagance of God's love. Making and waving a heart can draw their attention to grace and connect it to His love.
- Tell stories to illustrate points being made throughout the sermon. Adults will also appreciate these windows that let in the light.
- When quoting Scripture, let children stand as soon as they have found it. If they all use the same modern version, they could read the text together. Otherwise, choose one child to read at a roving microphone.
- Use a version of Scripture that people today understand.
- At the beginning of church, ask the children to write their definition for a key word you will use later. Collect the definitions and read some of them at the appropriate time in the service. This not only injects a little humor into the service, it draws everyone's attention to the concept.
- Involve children in the service. Have a children's story and a children's offering every week. Have Pathfinders help the deacons.
- Use drama. For instance, while the Scripture is read, have teens pantomime a skit that parallels the Scripture in meaning. Teens might dramatize the children's story or an object lesson.
- Have a group come up to do part of the pastoral prayer. Include a child.
- Have families come up as a family to do part of the service.
- Honor families by reporting a witness opportunity they were involved in.
- Offer a church nursery where parents can hear the service while children age 2 and younger can play quietly.
- Provide children's church for ages 3-10, once a month or at least once a quarter. The pastor can save his deepest thoughts for these Sabbaths!
- Use children's tithe envelopes. The pastor can read off the names of children who tithe, honoring their faithfulness. When a kindergarten child tithes for the first time, mention it as a grace note in church. Research the source of the money being tithed so you can tell where it came from (birthday, allowance, etc). Honor the receipts for just pennies and nickels. Someday the same child will be faithful with thousands of dollars because their stewardship is affirmed today.

For more child friendly ideas, see: *Through Children's Eyes*, by Ben F. Freudenburg (Concordia); *Family Friendly Ideas Your Church Can Do* (Group); see also: [www.family-friendlychurch.net](http://www.family-friendlychurch.net).



	Oral Culture-Liturgical Church ? B.C.-A.D. 1500	Print Culture-Reformation Church 1500-1950	Broadcast Culture-Celebration Church 1950-2010	Digital Culture-Convergence Church 2010-
HOW WE BELIEVE	Ancient	Modern	Postmodern	Convergent
<b>Worship</b>	<p><b>Liturgical:</b> A mystical, experiential ritual reenactment.</p> <p>The ceremony centers on a mystical ritual reenactment of sacred and eternal events. It creates the context for leaving the common world to enter into a sacred time and place.</p> <p>For example, the ritual journey of the Catholic mass prepared one to enter the sacred moment of the Eucharist, where the wine and bread are transformed into the spiritual body and blood of Christ.</p>	<p><b>Meeting:</b> An orderly reinforcement of the principles of faith and presentation of the gospel.</p> <p>The service, centered on preaching, provides an orderly reinforcement of the principles of faith and presentation of the gospel.</p> <p>The worship portion centers on singing hymns that confirm scriptural and doctrinal truth. Content is more important than style. The sermon is the focal point of the service.</p>	<p><b>Event:</b> A dramatic presentation and celebration of the gospel.</p> <p>The service centers on praise and follows a large-event entertainment format. The worship team or leader energizes the audience. The songs center on an up-tempo praise style of worship.</p> <p>The worship leader or team defines the worship experience.</p>	<p><b>Gathering:</b> An interactive, intimate, multisensory, improvisational, immersive, mystical, highly engaged experience.</p> <p>A spiritual conductor creates an open-ended experience, exploring a wide range of ways to express worship. The ritual, preaching, and praise of earlier eras are used as elements to create a highly engaged and unique experience. The audience responds to that direction.</p> <p>The pastor uses stories and personal experiences in the sermon to connect to the audience.</p>

