

Principles for the Inclusion of Children When Present at the Liturgy

Good children's liturgy recognizes that children are formed in faith through all of their faculties (generally considered such things as: reason, memory, perception, will, intuition, imagination) including the spirit, intellect and senses.

Good children's liturgy is:

Simple in that it builds on simplicity in language, symbols, and songs.

Brief in that it accommodates for short attention spans with fewer or shortened readings, omitting anything non-essential when children worship with adults for an entire service.

a. While it may seem like content loss, doing less and doing it well actually improves engagement and decreases overall frustration.

Pedagogically-rich in that it embraces a broad range of learning styles; for example, is kinesthetic in its incorporation of tactile and visual elements and in its use of movement and music.

a. These tactics improve engagement for all, children and adults alike.

Multi-generational in that it enables parishioners of all generations to worship together, ensuring that "all-age liturgies" are actually for all ages.

Orthodox in that it incorporates and builds on the rich and foundational beliefs of the Church.

Experiential in that it focuses the entire congregation on participation in the liturgy.

a. The congregation is then not passive and the liturgy is not a "performance".

Versatile in that it uses a broader range of liturgical forms from the Eucharist to Morning and Evening Prayer.

Inclusive in that it is attentive to engaging and including children, working on the assumption that children are fully capable of participating in the fullness of worship including silence, music, ritual, and other aspects of the liturgy.

a. Children should assume roles appropriate to their age and gifts in the customary liturgy of the parish.

Formational in that it recognizes liturgy as a key component of catechesis, foundational to discipleship and affording many instructive moments.

Open to new learning in that it affirms that we can learn from children if we are willing to welcome their involvement and the exercise of their baptismal ministry amongst us.

a. Children offer the worshipping community great gifts. They bring energy, enthusiasm, wonder, and joy. They worship with their whole selves, including their bodies. Activity, fidgeting, noise etc. can all be, with some creativity and experimentation, harnessed and incorporated into worship in meaningful ways.



Not belittling in that elements of our liturgical practice that demean or provide “humour” for adults, as sometimes may occur in “children’s talks”, no longer occur.

Relational in that wherever possible children are partnered with an adult leader in the liturgy seeking to foster mentor relationships within the community.

For additional information on revision of liturgy see: Principles for Liturgical Revision at:
<http://www.anglican.ca/faith/worship/pir/>

