

Unit 2 The church as sacred space

The suggested activities for the act of collective worship are summarised below, together with reference materials.

- a) Meet and greet your visitors in the porch, and say goodbye to them at the end of the service. This is an important part of the 'service'.
- b) Use chime bars at the back of the church as a reflection of the bell ringing that calls people to worship. Give the children a set that will harmonise together, like C, E and G.
- c) Ask one of the children to light a candle at the beginning of the act of worship, and someone else to greet the visitors. Make sure that the candle is safely on a stand, and practise doing this in silence.
- d) Make a beautiful cross, the symbol of Jesus, and place it at the front as the focus of the worship, where it can be seen but not touched. You could use one of the pictures from A-cross the world (pub. CMS www.cms-uk.org for details) as inspiration.
- e) Prepare a short dance using strips of ribbon attached to small lengths of dowel (or crepe paper attached to art straws) and beautiful music, like 'Adiemus' from 'Songs of Sanctuary' by Karl Jenkins, or to a lively song, like 'This little light of mine' on tape or CD.
- f) Read a story from the lectern, using an appropriate children's bible, like that of David and Goliath, allowing the children to use simple miming actions. My very first Bible (pub. Lion 0-7459-4592-9) has an excellent account on pages 82ff and this ties in well with the use of a Psalm of David as a prayer. This reflects the miracle plays that were performed in churches when most people could not read.
- g) Bring gifts that have been prepared for an offering, like biscuits made by the children, to be given to old folk in the area, or to the playgroup children. If the priest is willing to help you, s/he may receive them at the communion rail and place them on the altar as a sign that they are offered first to God before being distributed.
- h) Sing a praise song that the children know well, such as 'God is so great' from Come and Praise Beginning, no. 2. This one has actions to accompany it, which will help the children to remember the words. Some of the children can stand in the choir stalls to sing, and musicians can play in the sanctuary as a sign that some Christians offer their praise to God in this way.
- i) Prayer based upon Psalm 139 ~ you can ask volunteers to say just one line each, and then everyone joins in the refrain.
- j) Give a time for specific reflection following the prayer, before closing the act of worship. It may be a good time to play quiet music, inviting children to look at the candle before it is blown out at the end.

Back in school, think about how the church is used for worship, and what the children found meaningful in the different activities.

Psalm 136: 1-9 (a psalm or song of David)

Give thanks to God for he is good;

His love goes on for ever.

He made the heavens above;

His love goes on for ever.

He made the earth below;

His love goes on for ever.

He made the sun and moon;

His love goes on for ever.

The sun to shine by day;

His love goes on for ever.

The moon to shine by night;

His love goes on for ever.

