

# PLANNING AN INTERGENERATIONAL SERVICE



*When we come together, we more beautifully become the story of God and the gospel story in our worship by all the generations present.*

**Valarie Grissom**

## Why Intergenerational Worship?

- Research from 2016 suggests that some of the key reasons children and young people stick in church is down to a culture of building intergenerational relationships and churches being inclusive of all ages in both leadership and worship
- There's also a Biblical Basis – children would have been present when Jesus was teaching and also in the early church meetings (Acts 2: 44-46).
- It gives us the opportunity to build community - when we worship and learn together we dispel the idea that worshiping is for adults and learning is for children.
- It is a way to be missional within the community - families can come as they are and stay together within the service.

# Choosing a Theme

When thinking about the theme for your service there are a number of things to consider.

- What is going on in the churches year or in the community?
- Are there any anniversaries, saints or special occasions?
- How are you going to link biblical material to the theme? Is it going to generate the theme or support the theme?
- Don't shy away from big topics but be mindful of who is present and adapt language to reflect this.
- Keep the message simple - pick one message or theme for the service and stick to that. If you can't sum up the theme clearly in a sentence, then you're probably trying to say too much!!

Example planning sheet:

**What Bible reading/s will be used?**

**What's the big idea for this service? How do the Bible readings link?**

**What is the main message for the service?**

# Structure

Try to keep to the same structure each time you do an Intergenerational Service - this will help with planning and will help people to feel at ease during the service. Familiarity helps people be more relaxed and therefore participate more.

There can still be freedom and flexibility within the structure to add more creative elements.

Below is an example of a structure you could use and the elements that could be included.

## **We Gather Together**

How will you create a sense of community and a sense of sacred space? This section should include something that is the same each time and could include:

- Call to Worship - this might include a call and response style prayer
- Gathering Prayers
- The Collect

## **We Say Sorry**

Think about creating space for people to bring all their emotions: regret, sadness, anger. You might include:

- A time for Confession either using an authorized prayer or a simple symbolic activity (or both!)
- Actions, a physical response or a time for reflection

## **We Share God's Story**

Think about how are you going to tell the story? How will it be made accessible to everyone? It might include:

- A dramatised version of the story using members of the congregation (Bob Hartman has some great resources for this).
- A suitable video version of the reading
- Reading from a suitable translation

## **We Respond**

Think about how the congregation might respond

- Talk/Sermon - keep it short and have one main point. Consider how to keep it engaging - this might include the use of wondering questions, visuals, props or a question for people to reflect on.
- Intercessory prayers - these could be led by young people/families or be interactive.
- Interactive response - prayer stations or something like the Explore together resources to explore the theme of the service.

## **We Share Communion**

Holy Communion can be included in an Intergenerational Service. Things to think about:

- How are children and young people included?
- Which Eucharistic Prayers you might use - Additional Prayers 1 and 2 have been written with children and young people in mind.
- How you might frame elements of the service which might be less familiar to the people attending.

## **We Are Sent Out**

How are you going to bring an ending? You might include:

- Sending out prayer and blessing – again using authorised prayers or others depending on the context. Like an opening prayer it is a good idea to keep this the same each time.
- A challenge – is there a question the congregation could ponder in the coming week? Is there something physically they can do?

## **Music**

- Don't think you have to only do modern worship songs or children's songs - hymns are just as appropriate. It's more important to consider the words of a song and how easy it is for the congregation to sing.
- If you want to add new songs only add one at a time and repeat them! If you want to include action songs think about the meaning - using British Sign Language is a good way to do this.

# Planning Sheet

You can use this planning sheet to gather your ideas for an Intergenerational Worship Service.

**We Gather Together**



**We Say Sorry**



**We Share God's Story**



**We Respond**



**We Share Communion**



**We Are Sent Out**



# RESOURCES

Websites:

**All Age Worship Resources** - [www.allageworshipresources.org](http://www.allageworshipresources.org)

**Church of England Additional Eucharistic Prayers** -

[www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/holy-communion/additional-eucharistic](http://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/holy-communion/additional-eucharistic)

**Engage Worship** - [www.engageworship.org](http://www.engageworship.org)

**Messy Church** - [www.messychurch.org.uk/](http://www.messychurch.org.uk/)

**Messy Church Communion** -

[www.messychurch.org.uk/resource/holy-communion-messy-church](http://www.messychurch.org.uk/resource/holy-communion-messy-church)

**Muddy church** - [www.muddychurch.co.uk/](http://www.muddychurch.co.uk/)

**Prayer Spaces in School** - [www.prayerspacesinschools.com](http://www.prayerspacesinschools.com)

**Roots on the Web** - [www.rootsontheweb.com](http://www.rootsontheweb.com)

**Worship for Everyone** - [www.worshipforeveryone.com](http://www.worshipforeveryone.com)

Books:

**Multi-Sensory Prayer/Scripture** - Sue Walker

**The Lion Storyteller Bible** - Bob Hartman

**The Act Along Bible** - Bob Hartman

**Preaching with All Ages** - Ally Barrett

**The Tell It Together Gospel** - Paula Gooder and Bob Hartman

**Explore Together Books** - Scripture Union

