

Ideas for Summer Family Ministry: Intergenerational Worship

Not every church has the ability to run a Vacation Bible School during Summer Break, but that doesn't mean there aren't other fantastic opportunities for ministry with families in your community. Check-out some of these great ideas from different United churches for inspiration.

If your Sunday School program closes for the summer, or your church worships all together on Sundays, consider how to include children in all parts of your worship together.

- Invite children to be leaders taking charge of greeting, name tags, readings, candle lighting, or refreshments.
- Consider a "give and take" table, in which baskets are set out with fun offerings like favourite recipes, stories, art, song lyrics, or scripture verses. Invite community members to bring in veggies from their gardens or fresh flowers, crafts they made that week, or cool rocks they found to share!
- Create activity centers for children to support their worship experience. Hampton United Church NB would have [sensory bins](#) in their "Pray and Play" space for different church seasons.
- Dunsford United created "Jesus and Me" backpacks with weekly children's worship bulletin, a note book, and craft supplies. Children often added in their own treasures! On a table beside the JAM packs were baskets with a juice box, fish crackers or fruit or other snack choices so families could select what was appropriate for their family. (Pew activity bags can also be a simple Ziploc bag with items in it.)
- Include a Worship Bulletin with activities that reinforce the day's theme or biblical story ([Sermons4Kids](#) and [Illustrated Ministry](#) offer some options)
- Consider a play and pray space with little ones in mind. Chose a spot where children can see the action. Add some kid-sized furniture, a comfy chair, floor space to play, a set of plastic drawers with quiet activities and books. Dunsford UC, ON even had a pop-up tent with stuffies in their space one summer!

Ensuring that children know that you thought about them before they enter your worship space is an important part of offering them hospitality. But we don't want to stop there! We want our families to know that they are valuable members of our worshipping body, and that sharing in their experience of who God is benefits all of us.

Share your favourite ideas from your community of with your Growth Animator (jcantwell@united-church.ca). Your gifts of growing might be seeds of inspiration for others!