



Children's Resources Acting Together

Young Children and Families

Finding Love at Our House

Jesus knew about being connected and so he told his disciples to love one another. Of all the rules at home, this can be one in the center. Play a game with young children to remind everyone that even when love is hard to find at home, it's there. Hide around the house several sets of alphabet cards with the letters L, O, V, and E. (For families with very young children, pictures of people hugging might suffice.) When someone finds all the letters or photos, remind these little ones of Jesus' command, "Love one another." (You might want to read the Bible passage directly from John 13:34.)

Remember this activity later, perhaps when you're frustrated with one another. Ask your child, "Where did I hide that LOVE, anyway?" You can get God involved and pray to find love even when it seems hidden.

We All Have a Part

Families make it simple by sharing the work at home. Although young children can make cleaning more chaotic, if they start helping at a young age their partnership will pay off later. Set a timer for thirty minutes. Everyone in your family works together for that time. For example, you can clean inside, clean outside, gather up things to share, cook, or clean up school papers. Older kids can understand the math: Four people working for thirty minutes is equal to the work of one person working for two hours. Designate simple tasks for young kids and let them do their jobs every week. This system of a neutral timer and a common endeavor cuts down on drama and stress about shared chores, and allows your household to make it simpler together.

Mirror, Mirror

“Love one another,” Jesus told us. How did Jesus love people? Kids can practice imitating another’s motions by playing a mirroring or follow-the-leader game in partnered pairs. One partner or the teacher can pretend to be Jesus. The other partner mirrors Jesus’ actions of helping or follows Jesus around to imitate Jesus’ helping actions. Talk together about the experience.

We are Connected

Start fashioning a simple paper chain whose links have the names of people in your family. When relatives or friends visit, young kids can add their names to the chain and show them that this family is connected vitally to each other. As an option, expand the possible varieties of links to include neighbors, friends, and people at church. Another option: Involve the congregation in the making and displaying of this symbol of the church.

Lower Elementary

Building Ourselves Into a Church

Invite kids to write their hobbies, interests, and skills on note cards. (You can make a group activity of this, asking each kid to share a word of strength about every other kid in the group.) Next, children work together to build a church out of clay. The children form their clay into square blocks. In subsequent meetings, the class uses these air-dried blocks to construct a church model. The cards with the kids’ names and gifts become the flooring for the church. If the kids love architecture, you can make the model church in the shape of your own church building.

Does your church have the blueprints from the time it was built? Show lower elementary kids. Ask them to make their own blueprints with qualities that churches need to be strong. Share these blueprints at church, perhaps on a bulletin board or other display easel.

Cup A Jesus

Challenge children to run a campaign in which church members will bring their own cups to church for coffee hour. What are the challenges to this system? Find out. Invite a congregation council member or pastor to your class and ask the question: Would it work for people to bring their own cups? While you’re at it, teach early elementary kids about Fair Trade options—for coffee, tea, chocolate, or other products—so they can also find out the kind of coffee served at your church. When kids get the go-ahead, enlist their help to advance the campaign with posters and announcements in the life of the congregation. When the kids complete the campaign, present them with the “Jesus Cup” award. An option: Involve children in bringing special cups that can be used by visitors.

Upper Elementary

Turn Over the Rug

Here's a great chance for upper elementary kids to learn to work together. Gather a group of kids, asking them to stand on a throw rug. Tell them that their task is to turn over the rug without using their hands or stepping off the rug. The "simple" solution is for the group to move to one corner of the rug. A leader reaches out with his or her foot to pull over one corner of the rug and, little by little, the rug gets turned and the group steps onto its other side. The solution works! Talk about the process by which group members determined and carried out their solution(s). What does that say about the nature of the church?

Build a Better Offering Plate

How could we become more faithful givers in church? Upper elementary kids will have some creative ideas about adapting an offering plate for our times. Add a credit card swipe? Place the plate next to an ATM? Change the name? Make it bigger? Have fun with kids as they invent a better offering plate—and build it! Show it to the church ushers for their opinion.

Our Congregation Has an Energy Plan

Invite kids to write and send a letter to an upper elementary Sunday school class in five other congregations in your denomination spread across the United States. Your students can pose these or similar questions:

- Does your congregation recycle? Why? How?
- What's the biggest energy conservation challenge for your congregation?
- How does your congregation see its members as an energy source?
- Does your congregation take advantage of kid power to keep it going? How?

Ask children to answer these or similar questions for your own congregation and compare the results. Invite children to share what they've learned with congregational leaders, perhaps at a special after-Worship brunch. An option: Conduct this activity using the Internet. Another option: Conduct an energy audit of the church building, to see where electricity and heating fuels are being used wisely.