



Help!

I'm Leading a Children's Sermon

Volume One:
Advent to
Transfiguration
Sunday

by marcia
taylor thompson



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Preface

But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it." And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them. (Mark 10:14-16)

Jesus recognized the importance of children and their trusting faith when he rebuked the disciples who wanted to turn the children away. Children are an important part of the kingdom, though we do not always treat them that way.

Children are a vital part of the worshiping community and need experiences that create a sense of belonging. Children's sermons provide this opportunity and should be events of proclamation. This book contains a collection of children's sermons based on the Common Lectionary Years A, B, and C from Advent to Transfiguration Sunday. They are intended to involve children creatively in worship and proclamation of the Word. You will find two sermons for each Sunday. Each emphasizes Scripture and includes key verse(s) to be read within the sermon. The goal of this book is to help you invite children to participate in corporate worship in a meaningful, creative way by asking questions and using hands-on activities to explain scriptural themes.

The introduction to each sermon lists the title, the Scripture, a key verse or verses, key concepts, and the preparation and materials that you will need for your time with the children. Unique features of these sermons are the use of a key verse or verses within the sermon and the Bible as a visible presence. It is my hope that those who proclaim God's love through children's sermons will focus on the importance of the Bible and the text within the sermon's framework. Another useful feature is the option of two sermons for every Sunday of each lectionary year, along with an appendix of sermons on topics important to the spiritual development of children. You will also want to note that the sermons are written in conversational language.

This book is above all a guide for you to create your own children's sermons. Because each of us has a unique style, the ways we invite the children to join us and the ways we close our time with the children will differ. I encourage you to find your own pattern for your time together. Use these sermons as a beginning point and adjust them in the way that you think will be meaningful for the children in your church. It is important to take time to get to know the children so that you can engage them more fully in this time of proclamation.

Be aware that involving children in the sermon is always risky. Be ready for the unexpected. Often the unexpected enables a more vibrant proclamation of God's Word that is very real for the children (and adults also).

Remember that your primary focus is the children who come forward to participate. There are, however, other children and adults of the congregation who will also be listening and watching. They may even laugh at some of the dialogue. Their reactions let you know they are listening, but do not let them become your focus.

Be cautious in making generalized statements unless you know they are true for all your children in the congregation. For example, you would not want to talk about how all mothers are loving if you know a child in your church has been abandoned. Generalized statements can hurt feelings and create a barrier where children feel that they do not belong and their relationship with you is in jeopardy.

Make sure that as you use sermons with props, you try to include all the children if possible. Make a list of the children you have chosen so that you can remember from week to week which individuals have had an opportunity. There are often a few enthusiastic children who will volunteer for everything. Try to find ways to involve those who sit in the back or are a little shy.

Be creative, spontaneous, and flexible as you spend this important proclamation time with children. Be yourself. Children know when someone is genuine and concerned about them. Take this opportunity to share the good news of God's love and saving grace with the children. They have been entrusted to us and we have a great responsibility to help them grow in faith.

As you prepare for your time with children, let this be your prayer:
*Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable
to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.* (Psalm 19:14) Amen.