



CHILDREN'S SABBATH

RESOURCE
2019



Seventh-day
Adventist Church™

New Zealand Pacific



CHILDREN'S SABBATH RESOURCE



New Zealand Pacific Union Conference 2019

Compiled by Victor Kulakov and Carly Moore
Layout & Design by Jacinda Turnbull-Harman

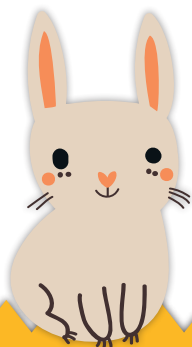
WHY CHILDREN'S SABBATH?

Jesus said it beautifully when He spoke to the disciples after they rebuked those who brought the children near for prayer. "Let the children come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the Kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." (Matthew 19:14)

Earlier in Matthew, Jesus called a child to illustrate an important point. 'He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. And he said: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.'" Matthew 18:2-4. Clearly, children are precious to God. Not only does he encourage them to come in close to Him, He tells us to BECOME like little children.

Children are noisy, messy and sometimes, hard work! However, Jesus reminds us in these verses that they are valuable and precious. Their simple faith, their inquisitive minds and their energy for life are all great reasons for us all to value the children in our congregation (and perhaps learn a thing or two from them along the way!).

Children's Sabbath is a great opportunity to get our children involved, invite their friends and welcome them in, just like Jesus did.



WHY INTERGENERATIONAL CONNECTIONS?



As illustrated above, Jesus valued intergenerational connections. There is always something we can learn from people who are older and wiser or younger and more energetic! In addition, strong, enduring faith formation has been shown to occur most effectively when all ages in the church community are working together to grow into Christ (The Faith Shaper Guide to Intergenerational Connection and Participation).

An important note from Ivy Beckwith: “a church program can’t spiritually form a child, but a family living in an intergenerational community of faith can” (Postmodern Christian Ministry. P14.). The message we want you to hear is that this Children’s church is a great platform to launch the concept of intergenerational connections. However that is all it should be- a launch into something that is lasting. NZPUC is focusing on this topic in 2019 and we would love to see you join us in making intergenerational connections stronger. What does this mean? The reality of life today is that the faith community is one of the very last places left where all ages still come together. However we can make these connections stronger. Sometimes in our churches the children, youth and adults all pass each other by with little connection. Let’s use our churches as hubs for meaningful intergenerational connections, building stronger ties between generations and a defining feature of who we are and what we do.

We would strongly encourage you to read the Faith Shaper Guide to Intergenerational Connections & Participation to find out more.



IDEAS FOR INVOLVING CHILDREN IN YOUR CHURCH...

What a brilliant opportunity to practise exactly what we are encouraging you to preach! Consider teaming up children with youth and adults to take part in the church service. Watch the amazing creativity and wisdom that will come from intergenerational connection. Here are just a few ideas:

- Praise and worship (let the children sing or play instruments with some of the older teens or adults)
- Offering (let the junior deacons have a child take up the offering with them)
- Prayer (invite a whole family to pray up the front of church)
- Ask some of the older children if they would like to share a short sermonette, testimony or story as a part of the church service. They may need assistance in getting their ideas organised. There is also an attached sermonette outline included.
- Run an interview panel or Q & A as part of the service (see attached suggestion)
- Invite some children to work alongside the sound or data team, this is a great place for them to learn new skills and often they are super proficient in these areas as they are growing up in a digital world.
- Invite some children to be on the welcome/greeting team and invite their own ideas for creative ways to welcome people into church.
- Ask some children to work as ushers and give out the church bulletin to people as they come into the sanctuary.
- Organise a drama or puppet show and involve children in this. You will find a suggestion in this resource but feel free to ask the kids if they have some ideas.
- Have a child do the scripture reading or ask a small group of children to read a verse each and record it to play during the service if they are too nervous.
- Give the children a pack of pencils and ask them to draw something during the sermonette that stood out to them.
- Encourage the preacher to invite the children to count how many times he uses a specific word during the sermon (i.e. water when the sermon is about the woman at the well).

The sky is the limit, there are countless ways children can be involved at church and you may well be surprised at how capable they are when given the opportunity!





DRAMA SCRIPT: IF ONLY YOU KNEW...

BY CARLY MOORE

Cast:

JOHN OR JANE:

Older man/lady who is a church attending member and doesn't think young people have any idea.

JOHN OR JANE'S THOUGHTS-OUT-LOUD:

A voice over that speaks out loud what John/Jane are thinking.

MIKE OR MICHELLE:

Older child (probably between 12-15) who thinks older people are completely disconnected from their own reality in the modern world.

MIKE OR MICHELLE'S THOUGHTS-OUT-LOUD:

A voice over that speaks out loud what Mike/Michelle are thinking.

John is going for his morning walk in the local neighbourhood. As he walks across the stage he notices Mike, looking frustratedly at his phone.

John's Thoughts: Ah look, its little Mike from church. I guess he isn't so little anymore. Typical, sitting on his phone. Wonder what app he is using? The last thing I feel like doing is making small talk with a kid, most of all today...

John: Hey there Mike, whatcha doing?

Mike's Thoughts: Great, here we go, lecture 101, bet he can't wait to tell me phones are evil...

Mike: Hi Mr Danes. Oh, nothing much, just, you know, playing on my phone...

Mike's Thoughts: trying to FIX my phone actually. Bit of pointless information I won't say out loud!

John: Oh, well okay then. Have a good day (*John is trying to move across the stage and away as fast as possible without being rude*) and I guess I'll see you around.

Mike: Looks up suddenly. Hey Mr Danes, I haven't seen you at church the last few weeks. Mum said you were probably just busy with, you know, whatever it is you do once you retire...? (*cringes at his own words*)

Mike's Thoughts: Argh, did I just say that out loud? Way to go Mike, make him feel really old why don't ya!

John's Thoughts: (*Stops, slowly turns around, surprised look on his face.*) Someone noticed that I wasn't at church? A kid?

John: Yeah, well, being retired does keep one busy, as you say (*Mike cringes again*). I, ah...well let's see. I guess I was away there for a week or so visiting my daughter. And last week, well, I wasn't there either. Thanks for asking Mike. Bye now...

Mike: Wait, Mr Danes!

John's Thoughts: Nearly got away that time. This kid is persistent, I'll give him that. Whatever happened to leaving an old man alone?

Mike: Is everything okay?

John's Thoughts: (*turning around again*) How do I answer that? This kid's biggest issue is probably finding some more pocket money for a new game on his phone. Maybe I should just be honest. That will be the end of the conversation!

John: Well kid, if you want the truth, let's just say I'm not that happy with God right now. He feels very distant, my prayers are hitting the ceiling and bouncing back. (*puts his hands up in the air, exasperated*) Life isn't all roses that's for sure.

Mike: Tell me about it. When Dad left, I totally felt like maybe God couldn't hear my prayers. But then I realised that I had to let my faith be stronger than my doubt. Somehow, my life made more sense when I trusted Him. I still don't get why Dad left. But I try to remember that God said to be strong and full of courage. He said he would never leave us or forsake us. That is a pretty cool promise I think. (*turns back to his phone, seems irritated*)

John's Thoughts: I think I underestimated this kid. That's some serious wisdom right there!

Mike: Ah, this phone is so frustrating!

John: What's the problem?

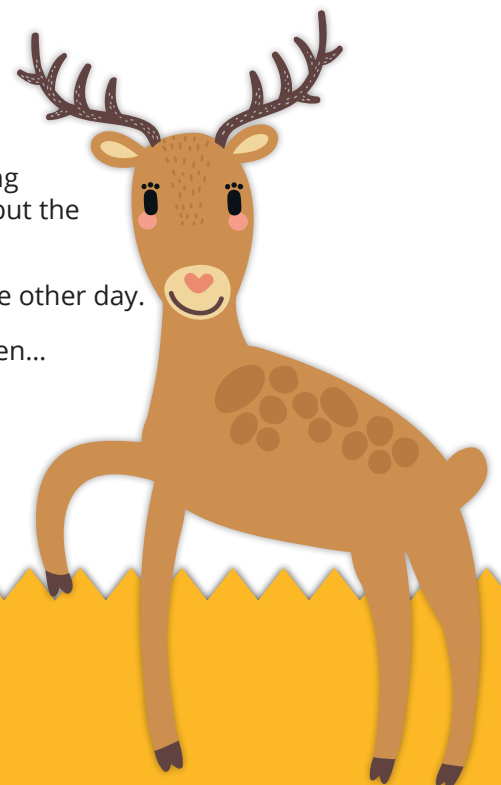
Mike's Thoughts: Really? Will you even understand what I'm saying?!

Mike: Well, for some reason, the GPS on my phone isn't working properly. I was trying to figure out a short cut to school but the whole app has crashed.

John: I think I know how to fix that, I had the same problem the other day.
(*Walking off the stage*) ...if you just go into the settings, then...

Mike's Thoughts: Huh...you think you know a person!

Lights out.

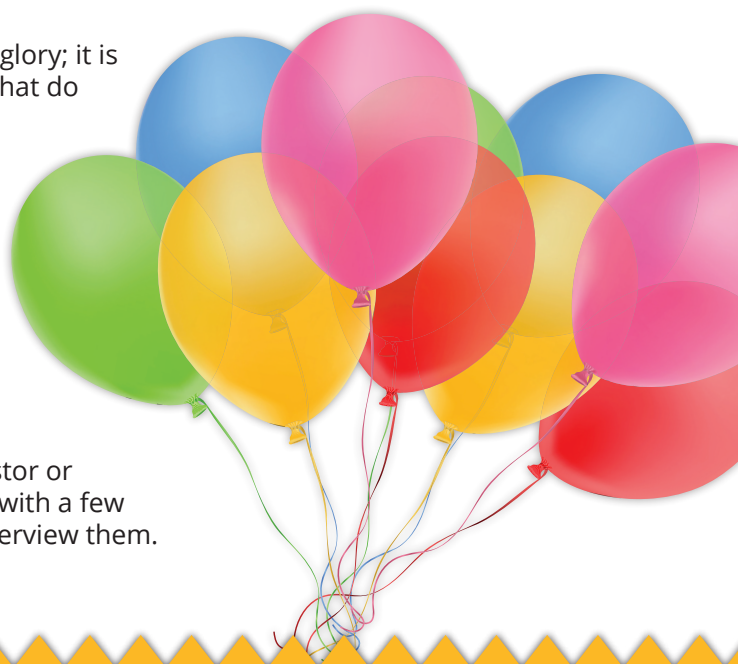


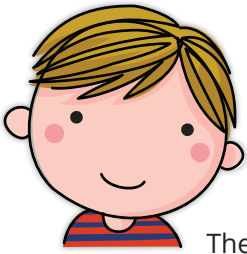


Q&A SESSION IDEAS:

THERE ARE A FEW WAYS YOU COULD DO THIS:

1. Invite a child to conduct an interview with a new family, another child, a teen or an older adult. They could ask questions like:
 - a. Where were you born?
 - b. What is the best thing about being your age?
 - c. What have you learned about God so far in your life?
 - d. What do you think is the best age and why (ask this to an adult or older adult)
 - e. Who is your favourite bible character and why?
2. Organise a small group of people with different ages (an older child, young person, adult, older adult) and have them all up the front for a 10 minute panel discussion. You might ask them a few questions (let them know ahead so they can consider how they want to answer. You will also have to choose people who value and understand the concept of intergenerational connection) and let them have a chance to have a panel discussion about them. Here are some suggested topics:
 - a. Is it better to be older or younger? Why?
 - b. In the bible it says that "Grey hair is a crown of glory; it is gained by living a godly life." Proverbs 16:31. What do you think that means?
 - c. Do you think it is valuable to have all ages in a church? Why?
 - d. What do you think the younger generation can learn from older generations?
 - e. What do you think the older generation can learn from younger generations?
3. If there is a visiting speaker (or even if it is the local pastor or a church member), have a couple of children come up with a few questions to ask them before their sermonette and interview them.





SERMONETTE

READ MATTHEW 18:1-3

The lesson given here is one that I am sure many of us can recognize; the need to have our priorities in proper order.

The word “converted” means turned, changed, or recovered. The disciples were going in completely the wrong direction and unless they made a complete about-turn, they were going away from the Kingdom of heaven and not towards it.

Their opinions and feelings about the kingdom of the Messiah had to be changed. They had supposed that he was to be a temporal prince. They expected he would reign as other kings did. They supposed he would have his great officers of state, as other monarchs had, and they were ambitiously inquiring who should hold the highest offices. Jesus told them that they were wrong in their views and expectations. No such things would take place. From these desires they must be turned, changed or converted, or they could have no part in his kingdom. These ideas did not fit at all the nature of his kingdom.



As long as man considers his own self as the most important thing in the world, his back is turned to the Kingdom, and, if he wants to reach the Kingdom, he must turn around and face in the opposite direction.



MAIN PART

Jesus required that the disciples turn, that is, that they change from their worldly ambition and selfishness and develop the characteristics of a child, specifically humility. There are three great things we can all learn:

1. WE MUST BECOME AS HUMBLE AS A CHILD (VERSE 3)

This is the main emphasis of the whole passage. A child does not seek to put themselves first or seek prominence. It is only as the child grows up and gets involved in a competitive world that his instinctive humility is left behind.

The follower of Christ must learn to humble himself as a child, giving up the pretence of prominence or pre-eminence within the Kingdom.

Read Mark 9:33-35 and note v 35 in particular: “If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.”



2. WE MUST BECOME AS HUMBLE AS A SERVANT

Romans 12:3a (NASB) “For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think”

True humility means knowing yourself, accepting yourself, and being yourself, your best self, to the glory of God.

It means avoiding two extremes: thinking less of yourself than you ought to (as did Moses when God called him, Ex. 3:11), or thinking more of yourself than you ought to (Romans 12:3).

The truly humble person does not deny the gifts God has given him but uses them to the glory of God.

We are to aim to have the mindset of Christ: Read Philippians 2:3-8. By nature, all of us are rebels who want to be celebrities instead of servants. It takes a great deal of teaching for us to learn the lessons of humility. An unspoiled child has the characteristics that make for humility: dependence and trust.



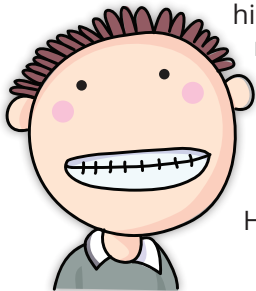
3. WE MUST AIM TO CULTIVATE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A CHILD

Dependence is natural to a child; they never think they can face life alone. They are perfectly content to depend on those who love them and care for them. If men and women would turn to God and place their dependence on Him, they will move closer to the Kingdom.

Matthew 6:30b - 33 (NASB) ...You of little faith! "Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' "For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

Just as the child is dependent on his parents or guardians, so he trusts them to meet his needs. Children cannot provide their own food, clothing and shelter, yet they never doubt that they will be clothed and fed, and that there will be comfort, warmth and shelter when they come home.

Dependence and trust go hand-in-hand. Depending on God to meet our needs requires that we trust in Him to do so, in the way that is in our best interest. Matthew 7:7 - 11 (NASB) "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. "Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? "Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!



Dependence and trust in God will enable us to put our whole lives, heart, mind, body and soul into the hands of God. Knowing that He will determine what is best and needed in our lives.

We need to put our whole focus into humble trust and dependence on God as we seek to serve His will and follow His commandments.



CONCLUSION

The disciples wanted to know who was greatest in the kingdom. But Jesus warned them that, apart from humility, they could not even enter the kingdom! They had to be converted, turned around in their thinking, or they would never make it.

These then are the necessary qualities we should have if we are to enter the kingdom of heaven. Humility is the pattern of the Christian's behaviour towards all brethren and his fellow man, while dependence and trust is the pattern of the Christian's attitude towards the Almighty God, the Father of us all and our Saviour through Jesus Christ our Lord.

