

Children's Space in Worship

Activity Ideas

Many churches are on a journey to make spaces that are more inviting and developmentally appropriate for children and families in worship. Often these spaces have been called *praygrounds* or *family worship areas*, and they are designed with young children and their families in mind. But what do we put in those spaces beyond furniture?

Often these spaces get filled with things to distract our children and keep them quiet. The goal isn't to simply put the church nursery inside the sanctuary, rather, the hope is to use resources to curate the space to engage children in worship and grow in their faith. This resource is a list of activity ideas tested over the years that children really enjoy and are quiet enough. They are curated items and toys that engage children in worship experiences, help them become familiar with faith stories, and invite children to love God and neighbor.

As you look at the resource list consider the following: Do not put them all out at the same time and clutter your space. Rotate items seasonally, weekly, or monthly so children reengage with new items to draw them into worship. There are also tried and true items you may wish to include weekly like crayons, paper, and chenille sticks.

- **Children's Worship Bulletins & Coloring Sheets**
Create an activity bulletin for your children to use around the themes and scriptures in worship or use one of the many companies that create these based on the lectionary. One recommendation is Illustrated Worship Children's Bulletins and Coloring Pages.
<https://www.illustratedministry.com/>
- **Wooden Puzzles of Bible Stories**
12-24 piece puzzles are a good size for young children in worship. Also, designate each puzzle a number and write that number on the back of each puzzle piece that belongs to it, that way it is easier to sort them back into original puzzles when they get all mixed up. Look for art representation that is inclusive and diverse of God's creation.
- **Water Wow! by Melissa and Doug**
This is not messy since it uses just a bit of water and kids love them! The company makes many themes from animals to transportation, and they also have a Bible-themed one. The downside of the Bible one is that most of the people are presented as white/Caucasian, which is not historically accurate and does not display the diversity of God's people.
- **Reusable Sticker Pad Set: Bible Stories by Melissa and Doug**

These are fun as they can be reused multiple Sundays. They do have a shelf life, as after many uses the stickers can get lost and reshuffled so much they are too unorganized to use. Again, the downside is that most of the people are presented as white/Caucasian, which is not historically accurate and does not display the diversity of God's people.

- **Wooden Peg People**

These are fun to have in baskets and invite children to use the peg people to retell the Bible stories they hear in worship.

- **Ribbon sticks**

For non-readers, one way to worship during the hymns is to dance and ribbon sticks invite kids into this movement and dance during the hymns.

- **Felt Board**

It is fun to have felt boards and felt story sets for children to use to re-tell Bible stories.

- **Prayer Magnet Words and Boards**

There are prayer theme magnet words that you can make a basket of with small magnets boards and invite children to use the words to create prayers in worship. You can also make your own by laminating words on cardstock and using stick on magnets.

- **Books**

Have a bookshelf or basket that includes faith-based children's books and storybook Bibles with tie into the liturgical seasons or scripture in worship. [Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible](#) is one example along with books from [Flyaway Books](#) or [Frolic Board Books](#).

- **LEGOS**

Have a basket of LEGOS with instructions for children to make symbols they see in worship or create a scene from the scripture.

- **Play-Doh**

You can use like the LEGOS above or print and laminate these cool Play-Doh mats designed by <http://flamecreativekids.blogspot.com/p/play-ough.html>

- **Pop It Fidget Toys**

There are heart shape and cross shape pop its that can be paired with a prayer for children to say while using the pop it. They do make a little noise, but they remain a kid favorite.

- **Quiet Books**

These are soft books filled with quiet activities. On Etsy there are some Bible-based ones, but they are also many non-Bible ones, and if you have crafty people at your church, they may be able to make you some.

- **Seasonal Bible Toys**

A few special nicer wood toys like a nativity set, Noah's ark, holy week story kit are nice to pull out for special weeks to peak the children's interest. This company makes beautiful wooden

story sets that you may add to your collection to use when appropriate.
<https://www.worshipwoodworks.com/>

To learn more about spaces for children in worship, see [Creating Space for Children and their Families in Worship Compass Points](#).

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