



October 2015

engage**together**



A resource for assisting those with responsibility for facilitating the Early Word (sometimes known as “Children’s talk”) section of regular worship services, based on the Revised Common Lectionary

Welcome to Engage Together!

This resource has been prepared in response to feedback from ministers, pastors and other leaders in order to assist those with responsibility for the Early Word (sometimes called “Children’s Talk”) component of regular church services.

Engage Together contains three outlines for each week - that can be used, adapted or serve as a launching pad for other ideas - prepared by two very experienced Uniting Church practitioners with children and their families, Margaret Griffiths and Rev Linley Liersch.

In addition, links to three lectionary based resource sites...

[Mustard Seeds](http://seedstuff.blogspot.com.au/): <http://seedstuff.blogspot.com.au/>

[Worshiping with children](http://worshipingwithchildren.blogspot.com.au/):
<http://worshipingwithchildren.blogspot.com.au/>

[Sermons4Kids](http://www.sermons4kids.com/): <http://www.sermons4kids.com/>

...are provided for each week.

Recognising the uniqueness of the customs, practices and flavour of individual congregations, this resource may or may not be helpful for your specific context. Be that as it may, your feedback to chris.barnett@ctm.uca.edu.au would be greatly appreciated as it will assist in the preparation of future Early Word resources.

Yours Faithfully,

Chris Barnett

Children & Families, Uniting Church Synod of Victoria & Tasmania

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engagetgether
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Some key points to consider:

1. Know your audience – consider the ages of all those present and pitch your presentation appropriately. If a mixture of ages and interests, try to find a common theme which is multi-age.
2. Make it short and interesting. If it is too long you will have lost their interest! The talk needs to be multi-sensory – children (and adults) like to be doing something, as well as seeing something.
3. Try to make the presentation something special for the children, although adults will of course be listening and participating as well.
4. Make sure you don't ask questions of children that are too difficult for them to comprehend.
5. Affirm the value of children by using their names as much as is appropriate during times of interaction and engagement. They are valuable contributors to worship.
6. Endeavour to integrate the presentation thematically with the overall content of the service.
7. Know your goals – be clear about the elements you are seeking to holistically engage the children and adults with.
8. Watch the faces of the children, especially, as they will be your best source of feedback – are they interested or looking totally bored?
9. Review and evaluate your presentation as soon as possible after the service – ideally with a trusted, and suitably experienced, friend or colleague.
10. Regularly engage as a team of presenters for encouragement, sharing of ideas and growing in your capacity to effectively lead this aspect of worship.

(offered by Margaret Griffiths, September 2015)

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4th October, 2015

1. This reading about Jesus blessing the children could be done very effectively as a drama. You would need Jesus, one or two disciples, two mothers with children and a narrator.

The children of your congregation could take part by being with the mothers. The narrator could fill in the story with some background – e.g. children in that culture were the underclass and people generally ignored them. Even the disciples did not want children to be presented to Jesus. This was a radical move by Jesus to emphasize his love for all and that children were included in God's kingdom.

You could ask the children some wondering questions about how they would have felt if they had been with Jesus.

2. The importance of different people could be discussed by a visual presentation.

Place 3 chairs out the front or where you have the children and have a few names on pieces of card e.g. prime minister, a T.V figure the children would know, and a child. Invite children or adults to sit on the chairs and be those people. Then ask the question 'who do you think is the most important?' and follow up with 'who do you think Jesus would think the most important?' Lead into the bible reading of Jesus blessing the children and how Jesus thought children were as important as the adults listening to him.

Reading

Mark 10: 2-16

Jesus blesses the children

Song Suggestions:

You are Welcome (Snack Music)

Who can trust in Jesus (Find Out)

Father welcomes all his children
(Together in Song)

Offer some percussion instruments to enhance participation



Links:

[Worshiping with children](http://worshipingwithchildren.blogspot.com.au/2015/09/year-b-proper-22-27th-sunday-in.html)

<http://worshipingwithchildren.blogspot.com.au/2015/09/year-b-proper-22-27th-sunday-in.html>

[Mustard Seeds](http://seedstuff.blogspot.com.au/2012/09/proper-22-ordianry-27-b-october-7.html)

<http://seedstuff.blogspot.com.au/2012/09/proper-22-ordianry-27-b-october-7.html>

[Sermons4Kids](http://www.sermons4kids.com/they_are_precious.htm)

http://www.sermons4kids.com/they_are_precious.htm

Image: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/anantablamichhane/450690627/> - Creative Commons





3. This is a story that explores the idea of a person's importance. It would work well with older children and adults.

"The Pope arrived in Australia and climbed into the back of the popemobile (show a picture of the popemobile). The Pope stands in the back of the car, the car drives along at 10 km an hour, and the Pope waves to all the people watching as he was passing by. After a while the driver hears tapping on the glass behind him. It is the Pope telling the driver to go faster. So the driver says to himself 'this is the Pope I better drive faster' so he starts driving at 25 km an hour.

After a minute or two he hears the Pope tapping on the glass again, telling him to go faster. So the driver now speeds up to at 50 km an hour. A third time the Pope tells him to drive faster. So the driver is now driving 65 km an hour, and as he knows that he is in a 60 km zone he is getting nervous.

The Pope knocks on the glass a fourth time and this time tells the driver just to pull over. The driver pulls over and gets out to let the Pope out of the back. The Pope tells the driver that he would like to drive. Since he is the Pope and a very important person, the driver shrugs and lets the Pope drive. Now there was nowhere else for the driver to sit so he had to climb up into the back of the popemobile under all that glass.

So the Pope drives at speeds up to 80 km an hour. The Pope is driving 20 km over the limit and he is having a good time. But of course it was only a matter of time before a motorcycle policeman sees the vehicle speeding and waves the popemobile down. They both pull off to the side of the road. The policeman climbs off the bike as the Pope lowers his window and asks 'What's the problem, officer?' The motorcycle policeman is startled and quietly walks back to his bike and radios Police HQ.

The policeman asks HQ "What do you do if you pull over someone really important for speeding?" HQ asks "How important?" The motorcycle policeman says "I don't quite know!" So HQ asks "Is this person as important as the State Premier?" "No, No, This person is way more important than the Premier?" HQ asks, "Is this person as important as the Prime Minister?" The policeman replies "No, No. This person is way more important than the Prime Minister?" HQ asks "Is this person the Governor General then?" the policeman replies again "No, No. This person is way more important than the Governor General". HQ is very confused and cannot think of anyone more important than the Governor General. Sick of all the guessing HQ finally says "Just tell us who is it!" The motorcycle policeman replies... "I don't know! But the Pope is his driver!"

[Read Mark 10:13-16]

Jesus tells the disciples that seeing the children is important to him because children are important to God! How important are children to God? Very important! (In fact you could not be any more important if the Pope was your driver.)





11th October, 2015

1. Give out two large cards with a happy face and sad face. Suggest that most people who Jesus met were very happy to have been with Jesus. (Show happy face). Last week the children were very happy to have been blessed by Jesus – invite everyone to smile with a happy face. Lead into the reading of the rich man who had followed all the rules, but was still uncertain about God loving him.

Jesus looked at him and knew what was his greatest love; all his money. This was his treasure. Jesus suggested that if he gave away his money to the poor people and followed Jesus he would be happy. BUT the man went away sad because he didn't think he could give away his money. I wonder how good we are at sharing?

2. A very good children's story is 'Herbert & Harry' by Pamela Allen. This could be read by the leader if a small group, or alternatively scanned and used as a visual. (I have used Penguin books before. I asked permission and as long as it was only used for the worship service it was alright.)

The story is about two brothers who lived and worked together. One day when they were out fishing they hauled up a great treasure. They argued about who owned the treasure and one brother pushed the other overboard. Harry swam safely to shore, but Herbert spent all his life watching over his treasure, frightened that someone would steal it. Harry who didn't have treasure enjoyed his life with his grandchildren. Herbert couldn't sleep watching over his treasure. The text makes the very good point about what is treasure. Some wondering questions could be asked and explored e.g. I wonder who you think was the happiest?

3. Hand out to the adults & children a range of emojis from mobile phones and see if they can identify them.

:) happy :(sad :D laughing face ;) wink
:(teary face :\ unsure lol – laugh out loud |: speechless

The emojis are used on the phone to allow the receivers to know not just what we are saying but how we are feeling when we sent the message to them. So that they will not misunderstand what we say. Often people can respond in many different ways to the same message. When Jesus asked the disciples to drop everything and follow him they did. When he tells the rich man the same thing he walks away sad. We all react differently. Invite response, using the previously handed out emojis, to questions like...

How would you feel if Jesus asked you to give up all your money?

How would you feel knowing all your money was going to the poor?

How would you react knowing you have riches in heaven?

Reading

Mark 10: 17- 31

The sad rich man

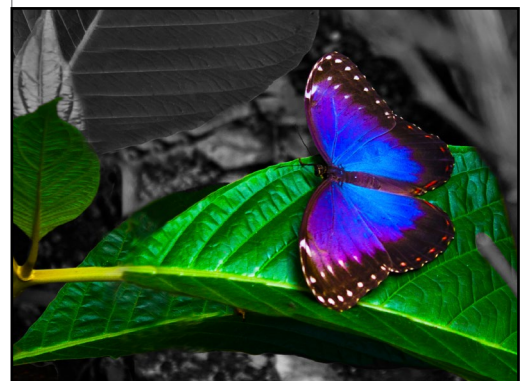
Song Suggestions:

We are marching in the light of God
(Together in Song)

Encourage suitable actions/adapt words if desired eg. We are happy in the love of God.

The Greatest Treasure (Colin's Favourites)

Who's the one who's number one? (Find out)



Links:

[Worshiping with children](#)

<http://worshipingwithchildren.blogspot.com.au/2015/09/year-b-proper-23-28th-sunday-in.html>

[Mustard Seeds](#)

<http://seedstuff.blogspot.com.au/2012/10/proper-23-ordinary-28-b-october-14.html>

[Sermons4Kids](#)

http://www.sermons4kids.com/god_of_the_impossible.htm

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18th October, 2015

1. This reading focuses on a selfish request made by the two brothers, James and John. The other disciples were very cross when they heard about it. Many children in families (and many of the adults in the congregation too) could relate to feelings of injustice when one member appears to be more favoured than others.

This idea could be explored by using a cake (a round sponge from a supermarket). Ask questions about how you should cut it up. Should you make them even or should the bigger people get a bigger slice?

Relate the story of James and John who wanted special places next to Jesus in heaven. It could be pointed out that Jesus came into the world to help people, and not to give out special places in heaven.

2. After the children are settled down, possibly sitting down the front of the church, show them a large jar of mixed lollies – you don't need to have the jar full, just enough to be able to reach in the top. Tell them they may all have one, but they must not take one for themselves. I wonder how we can manage that! The idea is that we must serve each other.

This leads into the reading of James and John and their discussion with Jesus. Jesus wants us to look after others and not be concerned with thinking about ourselves. Suggest that the children could take turns in offering a lolly to the adults.

3. Many churches have one large throne-chair in the centre of the sanctuary surrounded by two or more chairs to the right and the left. The significance of these chairs is often forgotten so it is good to talk about it with the congregation.

Wander around the sanctuary and ask: Does anyone usually sit in these chairs? (Answers will depend on local custom)

Who might sometimes sit here? (In many instances the minister/elders may sit there during Communion)

Does anyone ever sit on the middle throne-chair? (usually "No")

Whose throne might the middle chair represent? (Jesus/God)

Why might no-one usually sit in the middle chair? (Sign of Respect; saving the seat for Jesus to be in our worship; for when Jesus comes again!)

Whose chairs are on the right and the left of Jesus? (Disciples; elders)

One day two of Jesus' disciples asked to sit on Jesus' right and left in heaven. They wanted to be in the best seats in heaven. Jesus tells them if they want to be great in heaven they need to be servants of all. How might the chairs at the front of the church help our thinking about these words? (possibilities might include...a) Not seeing anybody sit in these "important" chairs, reminds us not to be concerned about being the most important person b) Minister/elders use these chairs when they are serving others)

Reading

Mark 10: 35 – 45

Jesus came to serve.

Song Suggestions:

Brother, Sister, let me serve you
(Together in Song)

When I needed a neighbour, were you
there (Together in Song)

Hey Ho (Find out)

Mark 10:45 For the Son of Man did not
come to serve (Boom Chicka boom)



Links:

[Worshiping with children](#)

<http://www.worshipingwithchildren.blogspot.com.au/2012/10/year-b-proper-24-29th-sunday-in.html>

[Mustard Seeds](#)

<http://seedstuff.blogspot.com.au/2012/10/proper-24-ordinary-29-b-october-21.html>

[Sermons4Kids](#)

http://www.sermons4kids.com/to_be_like_jesus.htm

Image: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/artotemsco/3713942772/> - Creative Commons





25th October, 2015

1. This reading can be done as a short drama, with a narrator explaining that he/she will tell the story as it is being acted out.

There was a blind beggar sitting by the roadside and when he heard that Jesus was passing by he began to shout out 'Jesus, please help me' – *the children sit as by a roadside and shout out 'Jesus help me'.*

The people around told him to be quiet. *The children all say 'be quiet'.*

The beggar shouts louder 'Jesus please help me'.

The children shout louder 'Jesus please help me'.

Jesus asks him to come closer and says 'what do you want'.

The children say 'come closer and tell me what you want'.

The blind man says he wants to be able to see again.

The children act as Bartimaeus and say 'I want to see again'.

Jesus healed him and he was so happy that he followed Jesus.

The children can jump up and say 'I can see' and follow Jesus.

After the drama some wondering questions could be asked e.g. I wonder what the crowd thought?

[Alternatively, this could be adapted so that adults take on the crowd role, children take on the Bartimaeus role and the narrator takes on Jesus' role]

2. Have a small cloth bag with different objects inside which children could feel but not see. Explain that you could only feel from the outside (this would eliminate any objects falling out). Objects inside the bag would need to be familiar items children might recognise e.g. teaspoon, pencil, pencil sharpener, teabag, large paper clip, plastic toy, small book, beads, rubber, glue stick, or your own choice. Don't make this segment too long. After all have had a feel, show them what the items were.

Suggest that because we couldn't see inside the bag, we had to feel what was in the bag. The bag could be offered to some of the congregation. Relate the story of Jesus and Bartimaeus. Discuss with the children how it might feel to be blind. Wonder whether anyone has seen a person with a stick or a seeing eye dog. Jesus was a very caring person, and we can try to be caring like Jesus.

Reading

Mark 10: 46-52

Jesus heals the blind man Bartimaeus

Song Suggestions:

The blind man sat by the road
(Together in Song)

Oh Have You Heard (Snack Music)

Jesus knows all about me (Find out)



Links:

[Worshipping with children](#)

<http://www.worshippingwithchildren.blogspot.com.au/2012/10/year-b-proper-24-30th-sunday-in.html>

[Mustard Seeds](#)

<http://seedstuff.blogspot.com.au/2012/10/proper-25-rdinary-30-b-october-28.html>

[Sermons4Kids](#)

http://www.sermons4kids.com/speak_up.htm

Image: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/br5ad/16280146119/> - Creative Commons





3. *I am going to tell you the story of a man who shouted out to Jesus. This man was blind and could not see anything. He could only listen to the world around him. So as I tell the story you are going to be the sound effects. If I say the word ... You respond with this sound... Jesus (Hooray); money (clink, clink, clink); footsteps (stamp, stamp, stamp); blind man (tip tap) of his walking stick; crowd (Ahhh) ; quiet (shh)... animal noises too.*

There once was a poor blind man (tip, tap) who we call Bartimaeus. Each day Bartimaeus sat by the side of the road and hoped someone would put money (clink, clink, clink) in his begging bowl.

Each day Bartimaeus would listen to the sound of the world around him. Early in the morning he would hear birds chirping (chirp, chirp) & cows mooing (Moooooo). And sheep too (baaa!) Sometimes he would only hear the sound of footsteps (stamp, stamp) without the sound of any money (clink, clink, clink) dropping into his beggar bowl. Later in the day he would hear many footsteps (stamp, stamp, stamp) of people walking. Bartimaeus would listen for the sound of money (clink, clink, clink) dropping into his beggar bowl. Maybe he would get enough money (clink, clink, clink) to buy some food to eat.

Then one day something very special happened. Bartimaeus was sitting by the road side as usual when he heard, many many footsteps (stamp, stamp, stamp). "There must be a crowd (Ahhh) of people coming this way!" he thought, "I wonder what is happening?" The blind man (tip, tap) listened carefully. The crowd (Ahhh) was getting bigger. Over the sound of many footsteps (stamp, stamp, stamp) Bartimaeus heard the crowd (Ahhh) talking about Jesus (Hooray). "I have heard about Jesus (Hooray) of Nazareth" thought Bartimaeus to himself "Jesus (Hooray) loves people. I want to meet him. But how could I let Jesus (Hooray) know that I am here behind the crowd (Ahhh) sitting on the ground.

The blind man (tip, tap) knew what to do. He shouted "Jesus! (Hooray) Son of David! Have mercy on me!" Many of the people scolded him and told him to be quiet (Shh). The blind man (tip, tap) knew what to do. He shouted "Jesus! (Hooray) Son of David! Have mercy on me!" Many people scolded him again and told him to be quiet (Shh). But he shouted even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus (Hooray) stopped and said, "Call him." So they called the blind man (tip, tap). "Cheer up!" they said. "Get up, he is calling you." So the blind man (tip, tap) threw off his cloak, jumped up, and came to Jesus (Hooray). "What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus (Hooray) asked him. "Teacher," the blind man (tip, tap) answered, "I want to see again."

"Go, your faith has made you well." Jesus (Hooray) told him. At once the blind man (tip, tap) was able to see. He could see Jesus (Hooray!) standing right in front of him and he shouted and sang for joy! He could really see! From that day on Bartimaeus would follow Jesus (Hooray).





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Additional Song Suggestion Information

[Brother, Sister, let me serve you](#)

<http://www.hymnary.org/hymn/AHBII/650>

[Father welcomes all his children](#)

<http://www.hymnary.org/hymn/AHBII/491>

[Hey Ho](#)

<http://www.suvic.org.au/shop/find-out-music-book/>

[Jesus knows all about me](#)

<http://www.suvic.org.au/shop/find-out-music-book/>

[Mark 10:45 For the Son of Man did not come to serve](#)

<http://store.colinbuchanan.com.au/collections/christian/products/boom-chicka-boom-cd-mp3>

[Oh, Have You Heard](#)

<https://www.snackmusic.com.au/products/oh-have-you-heard/>

[The blind man sat by the road](#)

<http://www.hymnary.org/hymn/AHBII/579>

[The Greatest Treasure](#)

<http://store.colinbuchanan.com.au/collections/christian/products/colins-favourites-songbook>

[We are marching in the light of God](#)

<http://www.hymnary.org/hymn/AHBII/666>

[When I needed a neighbour, were you there](#)

<http://www.hymnary.org/hymn/AHBII/629>

[Who can trust in Jesus?](#)

<http://www.suvic.org.au/shop/find-out-music-book/>

[Who's the one who's number one?](#)

<http://www.suvic.org.au/shop/find-out-music-book/>

You are Welcome

<https://www.snackmusic.com.au/products/four-plus-three/>

