

CHILDREN'S CHURCH: A LEADER'S GUIDE

Farmville Baptist Church, March 2008

GETTING STARTED!

Thanks for your help with Children's Worship! While this guide might seem daunting, Children's Church is actually a very simple service that remains constant each week with the exception of the Bible story. If you have never observed a service before, I strongly encourage you to do so before leading. The materials are based on *Young Children and Worship* by Sonja M. Stewart and Jerome W. Berryman, available in our church library. —*Beth Cheuk*

Supplies:

None! You should not need to buy a thing. If you notice that the kids are running out of paper or the markers are going bad, please tell me.



Preparation:

Please read over these materials and read the Bible story that you will tell the children. You will want to practice telling it or at least become very familiar with it.

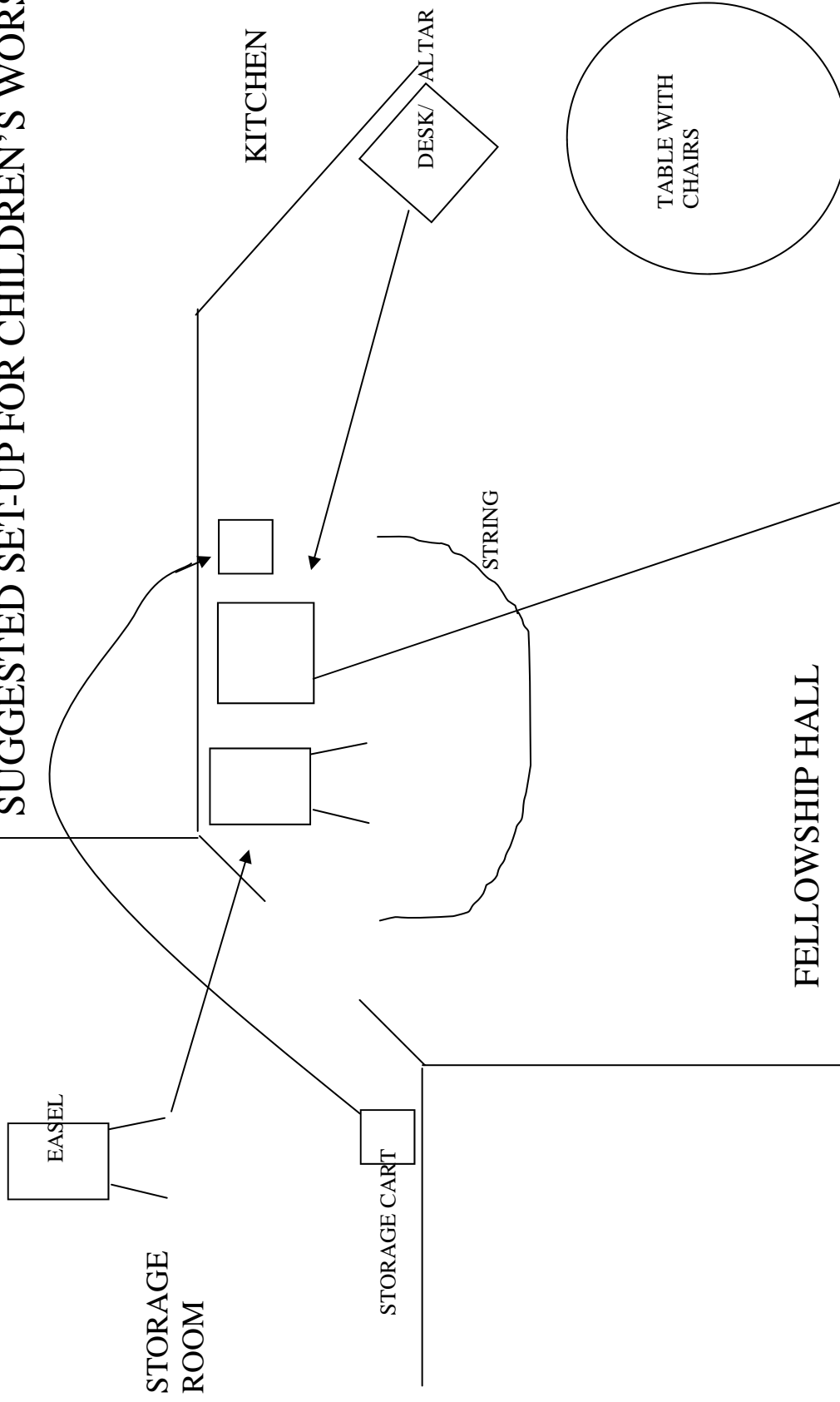
Time for Set-Up:

In the storage room off of the Fellowship Hall are all the supplies, mainly in a rolling cart. Set up the materials before Sunday School or before worship. It only takes a few minutes to set up the supplies, but leave yourself a few more minutes to find the appropriate wooden figures to help tell the story, and to perhaps rehearse the story and center yourself.

How to Set Up the "Sanctuary" (see diagram, page 2):

1. A white easel holds a pad of paper on which is written the order of worship. (A copy of the order of worship is attached and also available on the church's web site). Move the easel into the fellowship hall along the wall, and flip the pages to the beginning of the service.
2. The white supply cart lives behind the door of the storage room, on the left.
3. A wooden student desk makes a good altar. (One lives by the kitchen window).
4. From the top drawer of the supply cart, place the white tablecloth over the altar, put the candle in the candlestick on the altar, put the candlesnuffer on the altar, and put the Bible on the altar. Place the matches on or near the altar.
5. From the top drawer of the supply cart, take the multi-colored string and lay it on the floor in a large semicircle for the kids to sit on during the service.
6. From the basket of wooden figures on the supply cart, find figures that will tell your story. (There's no "right" answer.) If you need to use blocks to create a building or table, there is a bin of them on the supply cart.
7. You will sit near the altar, on the floor or on a chair.
8. If it is the second Sunday of the month, it is a "feast" Sunday (the Lord's Supper will be celebrated upstairs). The worship & music committee should have bread and juice for you. Gather napkins and cups, the juice and the bread (slice it if necessary). Set it in a handy spot – usually on the service counter of the kitchen.
9. A table with chairs is almost always already set up so that folks can enjoy coffee before Sunday School. If not, set up a table.

SUGGESTED SET-UP FOR CHILDREN'S WORSHIP



On the "altar," place the altarcloth, candle in holder, candle snuffer, Bible, and, if you like, the matches. These things "live" in top drawer of the supply cart.

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During Worship (Upstairs in Sanctuary):

1. It's helpful to sit near the front to help kids find their place in the hymnals, etc.
2. You and the children leave following the children's sermon. (However, if there is a special occurrence – such as a baptism or a special anthem – you might choose to tell the children to sit down on the first rows until you are ready to go downstairs.)
3. As you leave, please be aware of any younger-than-kindergarten children who leave the sanctuary at the same time. Usually, parents (or a designated older sibling) escort these children to the nursery, but be mindful of these kids to avoid a mix-up. Your partner or the Guest Reader can escort any unattended children to the nursery. (Your Guest Reader is an older child, 4th grade to middle school.)

Moving Downstairs

1. As kids walk downstairs, you might remind them that there are two ways to move quietly to the Fellowship Hall – using quiet mouths and quiet feet.
2. Kids will sit on the string. You should sit facing them, near the altar.
3. Kids should place purses, papers, toys, etc. behind them or on the piano bench.
4. If kids play with the string, remind them that it's there to help us, not to distract us.
5. If there are any new children, please welcome them!
6. Pick five reading children to serve as readers 1- 5.
7. Introduce yourself, your partner, and your Guest Reader.

During the Service (see also page 6, annotated Order of Worship)

1. Follow the Order of Worship, letting the children read their parts.
2. Light the candle. You might say, "The light reminds us that God is with us."
3. Your material includes suggestions about hymns that the kids know. If you are not a singer, fear not! Ask your Guest Reader or an older child to lead the singing.
4. Prayers of the People. Remind the children to take a break between the lines of the prayers so that you have a moment of silence to remember a specific person.
5. Presentation of God's Word. This is time to tell the story. See separate notes, below.
6. Response to God's Word. Remind children that they should think about this story by drawing, using play dough, or playing with the figures. Kids can typically find their own supplies, and the Guest Reader can help them, also. You might remind children to be quiet so that they and others can talk to, think about, and listen to God. The curriculum encourages leaders not to police the children, but to engage them in dialogue about the story. If a child is clearly off-topic, you might retell the story or ask that child to tell you the story. If you like, draw or work with play dough!
7. Preparing the Bible. During the response time, take a yellow marker and highlight the specific passage that your Guest Reader will read to the group. If the passage is very long, skip verses to make it manageable. Ask a volunteer to decorate a book mark to hold the place for our story in the Bible.



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During the Service (continued)

8. Clean-up. While the kids are responding to the story, you might step into the kitchen to keep an ear on the progress of the service. By 11:45, give the kids a few minutes' warning that they will need to wrap up their work. Some kids set their drawings in the bottom drawer of the storage cart so that they can work on it next week. After the warning, ask the kids to clean up. They usually do a good job. If they have gotten marker or play-dough on the table (or floor), ask the kids to take care of it, picking up the playdough or wiping off the marks with a wet paper towel or wipe. After clean-up, kids should return to their places on the string to wait quietly. Some kids may need a reminder!
9. Your Guest Reader will read the text out loud.
10. The Candle Snuffer will extinguish the candle. There might be a chart on the cart to keep track of who's had this highly sought-after job.
11. Disassemble "Sanctuary". Assign specific kids tasks to dismantle the worship space: wrap up the string, and put it, along with the Bible, the candle, the snuffer, the altarcloth, into the top drawer. Place the blocks and basket of figures on the cart. Roll the cart to its place behind the door. Put the easel back in the storage room. Move the altar desk to its place by the kitchen's service window. All kids who do not have a job should remain quiet and seated. The round table and chairs can remain in the Fellowship Hall.
12. Benediction. Even if you do not know this song, the kids have it memorized. Just ask your Guest Reader to lead it.

FEAST

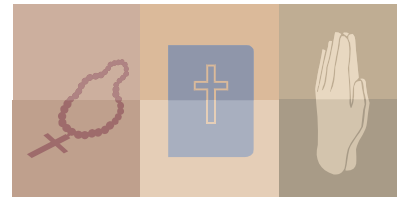
(Second Sunday of each month)



During the feast, the children crowd around the table for bread and juice. Enjoy this as a pleasant time to talk and be together. This feast is different than the Lord's Supper that the grown-ups celebrate upstairs – this feast, like many in the Bible, reminds us that God provides for us, that God wants to be with us, that God has prepared a celebration for us. Often, on feast weeks, the story is about a Biblical meal or celebration. During feast weeks, wrap up the response time around 11:40. Then by 11:50, start cleaning up from the feast.

Returning to Worship

1. If you have lost track of time and families come to the Fellowship Hall to retrieve their kids, don't worry!
2. When you're ready to go upstairs, pick a Line Leader.
3. Remind children to go upstairs quietly (quiet mouths, quiet feet).
4. The Line Leader will take the kids to the doors that lead to the front of the sanctuary.
5. When the organ is playing (typically the offertory or doxology), enter the sanctuary. Kids can choose to sit with you or return to their families.
6. Thank you!



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Presentation of God's Word

1. This is the story-telling time. A script will be mailed to you (and it is also available on the church's web site, as are the scripts for other weeks, if you are interested.)
2. If you do not like the script, just read the passage a few times from the Bible and tell the story in your own words. If there are troubling aspects of the story, use your own judgment about how to tell them or whether to skip them.
3. You don't need to memorize your story, but familiarity and comfort is good.
4. You do not need to be dramatic or funny or gimmicky. In fact, the curriculum encourages us to try to stick to the Bible story and use simple, child-friendly language. The atmosphere is quiet and reverent.



5. You don't need to move the figures too much. Some stories might call for the figures to move, such as when Abraham follows God and leaves his home. Other weeks, the figures might stay put. The script should have some suggestions about how to use the figures.
6. During the presentation, children should not talk. If kids raise their hands for comments or questions, shake your head, and, if necessary, remind them that it's your turn to talk. Even during the "I wonder" questioning time at the end of the presentation, it is still not time for kids to talk out loud. This allows the kids to answer the questions on their own, perhaps triggering an idea for them to pursue during the response time. If kids have questions during the response time, of course you may discuss them then.

All this material, including the story scripts, is available on the church's web site at:

<http://farmvillebaptist.wordpress.com/2008/03/06/childrens-church-2008/>

Or you can find a link to this page from the home page of the church's blog at <http://farmvillebaptist.wordpress.com>

To get to the blog from the church's web site (<http://www.farmvillebaptist.org>), click on "church news."

ORDER OF WORSHIP (with notes for leader)

Before worship:

- Students sit on string
- Students place distracting items behind them or on piano bench
- Adult Worship Leader greets students and introduces helpers
- Adult Leader assigns Worship Leaders 1-5

Call to Worship

Leader One: Let's worship God!

All: We worship you because we love You.

Leader One: God, please be with us as we worship You.

Lighting of Candle (Adult Leader or Guest Reader) (We do this to remember that God is here with us.)

Hymn (Led by Adult Leader, Guest Reader, or older student)

Prayers of the People

Leader One: We pray for your people ... (silence)

Leader Two: the ones who need healing ... (silence)

Leader Three: the ones who need food... (silence)

Leader Four: the ones who need friends ... (silence)

Leader Five: the ones who need peace ... (silence)

All: the ones you need You. (silence)

Leader One: We pray also for ... (silence)

Leader Two: our teachers... (silence)

Leader Three: our leaders... (silence)

Leader Four: our families... (silence)

Leader Five: our friends ... (silence)

All: our enemies... (silence)

Leader One: We pray in the name of Jesus. Amen

Presentation of God's Word (Adult Worship Leader – kids listen silently)

Response to God's Word (Students choose quiet activity on floor or at table)

Reading God's Word (Guest Reader reads passage from Bible)

Leader Two: This is the word of God for the people of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

Feast (during Feast weeks, second Sunday/month; enjoy snack of bread and juice at table)

Offertory Prayer

Leader 3: God, as we go back upstairs, please accept our offerings of love, money, and ourselves. Amen.

Hymn (Led by Adult Leader, Guest Reader, or older child)

Extinguishing of Candle (Done by Candle Snuffer)

Disassemble "Sanctuary" (Children return altar & materials, easel, storage cart, string, etc.)

Sing Benediction
Go now in peace; go now in peace
May the love of God surround you
Everywhere, everywhere, you may go.

After worship:

- Line up to return to sanctuary, following Line Leader
- Silently wait outside sanctuary until organ plays