

Praying for Children

A Prayer Activity to help us to understand that God speaks to us - and judges the world - through the voices - and cries - of children

Depending on the age of the children you are working with, you may wish to check with their parents whether it is OK for them to be included.

Beforehand

If your church is lucky enough to own a manger, get it down from the attic. Otherwise borrow a pram, small cot or Moses basket.

You will need a cross which fits in the manger/ pram and some Blu-tac. This could be a largish wooden one, or you could make one out of cardboard/ wallpaper

Buy a variety of newspapers during the week - do remember that some 'newspapers' publish images you might not want to include in worship!

A good choice is *First News*, (<http://www.firstnews.co.uk/>) but this is not available in all newsagents, so you may need to shop around or order it well in advance.

On the day

Put the Manger/ pram at the front of church, clearly on display with the cross/ blu-tac hidden inside

Give out newspapers so that everyone has at least one between three people. Invite everyone to look through the paper to find stories about, or which relate to, children. Warn folk that some of the stories might be distressing.

When they have found stories, ask them to tear them out and bring them to the front - any children present could collect them for those who are less mobile.

As the stories arrive, stick them onto the cross using the blu-tac. It doesn't matter whether they cover one another up.

God who spoke to us through Samuel
We offer to you the voices of children throughout your world.
So often silenced.
So often ignored.
You call us to bring the little children to you.

We offer you their voices this morning/evening
We offer you their pain
We offer you their joy
We offer you their innocence
We offer you their suffering

[Silently lift the cross so everyone can see it]

God, you hear the voices of children
Even when we don't.
Teach us to listen
and hear our prayers for the sake of your Son,
who was born a child
and lives forever to challenge us into action.
Amen

You may wish to display the cross in church, or in the entrance, or another room where activities take place during the week.

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