



IDEAS IN

ChildhoodMinistry

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My Personal Worship Service

Say "quiet time" to some children and they hear "silent confinement." These same children will think punishment, time out, and boring. So rather than encourage children to have a quiet time each day, I challenge them to take time for their own "personal worship service."

Collect several different worship bulletins or programs from your past worship services. Discuss each section of the Sunday morning worship. Look for a theme, evaluate whether the music styles change as the service progresses, examine to see if the music sets a tone for the message; and discuss which songs the class enjoys singing most. Ask, "why is taking an offering part of worship?" Always allow plenty of time for several responses. People remember the conclusions they draw; much longer than answers that are supplied.

Once you have thoroughly explored a church worship service, either as a large group or as small groups of three to five students design a church worship service. If you are working with younger children you may need provide them with suggested Bible passages. Every age will benefit from a list of hymns or praise songs from which to choose. As time allows, give each group the opportunity to show their creativity and their favorite aspects of worship service.

Assuming your church has an invitation, talk about what purpose it serves. Explain that the invitation is a time for people to confess their sins, to make a commitment to change their attitudes and behaviors, to pray for others that they know that need God's help. Emphasize the importance of listening to God and not doing all the talking.

Now that the foundation has been laid, you are ready to explain that to grow as a Christian it is important to have a personal worship service each day. Everyone needs to take time to think about God, to praise Him, and to thank Him. This can be done in prayer or it can be done by singing aloud or to oneself. How it is done is not as important as the fact that it is done.

Ask, "In a personal worship service what would you do for the sermon?" Distribute devotional books and magazines, explaining that these are designed to be quick "sermons" for their personal study. If that doesn't appeal to some, suggest they pick a book from the Bible and read a few verses each day. Challenge the students to practice saying a different verse from memory each week.

What about taking up an offering? Again let the students brainstorm how they can incorporate those aspects of the service into their service. Suggest that rather than giving God some money, they could decide to give God some of their time, by helping another person each day. When we give to God, we give cheerfully and with a thankful heart. Also as part of their offering they may want to spend time praying for others. There is no better gift you can give someone than to pray seriously for them.

Remind the children that they will want to have an invitation in their personal service. Maybe God will show them through the "sermon" or the prayer time of something in their lives they need to change. Recommend that the children write down in a notebook the day's date, the Bible verses, prayer requests, things God puts in their minds and anything else they want to remember. Explain that by keeping a journal, they will see the ways they are growing spiritually; just as looking at their Kindergarten papers help them see how they much their writing has improved.

Using a little humor, suggest that each one of them will want to have an hour long worship service everyday. Assure the students that a personal worship service can happen in 5 minutes. Looking at the verses 1Thessalonians 5:16-18 point out that a personal worship service will help them accomplish the commandments in these verses. For example "pray without ceasing," happens when we let the words of Christian music, and of Bible verses float in the back of their minds; Highlight that listening to Christian music on their iPods helps them to keep their hearts focused on God.

Ask, "what kind of attitude do you think you would have if you worshipped God everyday?" Share from personal experience what this means to your life. Stress that some people may do this in the morning, some at night and some may when they get home from school. Admit that this will not make their problems go away, but it should help them to have more peace in the middle of their troubles. Share that you sometimes miss a day; but that doesn't make you stop. You just start where you left off and begin again. No one does it perfectly, but a personal worship service is a very wonderful habit and they are not too young to begin.

