

Worship at Home

Here at St Aldates we believe that spending time with God isn't limited to the time we spend in Children's Church. It is our desire to see children incorporate God into their whole lives, learning how to claim their faith as their own so that they may journey with Him into their adult lives. In every Children's Church session, we share the word and love of God through play, worship, prayer and teaching. Outlined below are ideas you can use at home to spend time with God as a family.

Playtime

In Children's Church, play is an important way for children to get to know one another and see church as a place where they are free to have fun. In your homes, playtime is a great way for your children to practice community from an early age as they learn to get along with siblings and friends. Craft is a really fun way to include faith in your child's playtime, encouraging them to use their creativity to draw closer to God through making something they can keep for a long time. This could be as simple as getting them to draw something from the bible, or you can use any extra resources you may have in your house (eg. cooking ingredients, play dough, hama beads, things from the garden, cardboard tubes) to bring biblical characters and stories to life in a fun and engaging way. You could even make instruments with things you find around your house to use in worship times.

Musical Worship

We love to worship God through music, and at Children's Church we spend time doing that every Sunday. Our times of worship include fun songs that declare truths about God and our faith. We sing and use actions to understand and remember what we are singing. This is a fun and interactive way of worshipping God and learning about Him. We have put all of our favourite children's worship songs into a Spotify playlist called 'Children's Church dance party' for you to use at home. Why not get creative and encourage your kids to make up their own songs and actions? If your child plays a musical instrument, why not encourage them to learn how to play their favourite worship song, or use their rehearsal times as an act of worship to God? If you have younger children who aren't yet able to sing and dance themselves, you could play worship music while using visual aids to keep them engaged – for example, blowing bubbles, waving fabric, or using a nature YouTube video.

Prayer

We believe that prayer is a really important way for children to develop a personal relationship with God. Through a mixture of your example and having the freedom to talk to God in their own way, children will become more confident in approaching God themselves, without the help of a leader. We encourage you to spend time praying with your children in a way that inspires them to seek God for themselves and the wider world. Some helpful frameworks for prayer include the teaspoon prayer (**T**hank you, **S**orry, **P**lease), ACTS (**A**doration, **C**onfession, **T**hanksgiving, **S**upplication) and CHAT (**C**onfession, **H**onour, **A**sk, **T**hank). We encourage the kids to talk to God in the same way they would talk to you as their parents and guardians, and it is important to remind them that God loves to listen to everything they have to say, whether it's a big request or a small comment on something that happened in their day. Take time to listen to God with your kids, and encourage them to share stories of how God has spoken to them. Why don't you keep a prayer journal as a family to see all the ways God answers your prayers? Prayer can also be fun! For many children it is helpful to use

their interests as fun ways of communicating with God. You could try using a basketball to pray, writing prayers then turning them into paper aeroplanes, make prayer bracelets, for older kids try getting them to pick topics to pray for that come up when they're watching television.

Teaching

You do not need a theology degree to teach your children about God! Teaching your kids can be as simple as reading the bible together with your children and talking to them about what they think about the passage – you will most likely learn things from them at the same time, as we do every week. You can also use creative ways to teach the bible to kids, such as baking with them to discuss the times Jesus shared food with his disciples; treasure hunts in your house or garden to find things to tell stories with or gardening together while you talk about creation. We aim to email families on our mailing list at the start of every term to share our plans for what passages we are going to be exploring in Children's Church. If you would like to journey with us and talk to your kids about what they've learned in Children's Church, that repetition can be a great way to consolidate what they have learned. For younger children in particular, repetition of key concepts is the best way to help them learn about God. You can incorporate stories into their playtime by using their toys to act them out, then find ways of repeating stories later throughout the day or week by using videos or story times.

Resources

If you are looking for more material to inspire you, we recommend:

- Children's Church videos – all episodes of the Children's Church video series remain available at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLIQaTWxoHP2iESYM6u-nyI5xIAQmuCoyE>
- BeSpace – for creative ways to pray and reflect on God, <https://bespace.be/resources/prayer-space-activities/>
- Parenting for Faith – excellent resources designed to equip parents in raising God-connected children and teens, <https://parentingforfaith.org/>
- Saddleback Kids – a YouTube channel filled with fun and creative videos sharing God's word with children, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEbM1vIWVubIANRR54YuS0g>
- Kids Talk with Colin - a video series from Compassion Australia featuring short talks, Bible readings, music and prayer, <https://vimeo.com/showcase/colin>
- Worship for Everyone: Family at Four – an all age video series of worship, bible study, and prayer with children's songwriters Nick & Becky Drake, <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLC0zKawnsa9O-61qbV-jRTBDogAx7yd8->
- St Andrews Bookshop – the online face of our local bookshop is a great place for those of you looking for extra Christian reading material for your children, <https://standrewsbookshop.co.uk/product-category/childrens-books/>
- Little Worship Company – an online store with family worship resources, <https://littleworshipcompany.com/>

If you want to discuss in more depth how you can worship God as a family, or want to share stories of how you and your kids enjoy seeking God at home, please get in touch by emailing children@staldates.org.uk.