

## **Liturgy Boxes**

Liturgy is not just the words we say and hear but involves all our senses as we worship God. It includes the movements, gestures, symbols, colours, smells and tastes encountered in the service.

Young children learn and participate best if they are actively engaged in what they are doing, particularly touching and exploring. Liturgy boxes are designed to help young children worship and participate in a service in a very tactile way.

### **What's in a liturgy box?**

A liturgy box is a box of objects and books that are specially put together to help young children join in church worship. Liturgy boxes can include Christian symbols, Bible story materials, specific Christian worship materials (creed, confession etc), Christian family materials and materials for Communion and Baptism.

### **How to use a liturgy box**

Liturgy boxes are generally used with parents and carers where the child is seated in the church. In churches with children's areas there may be a liturgical play leader who works with the children and the liturgy boxes during the service. In some church situations it may be appropriate for there to be a "cantor" who stands at the front and shows the objects at the relevant parts of the service.

Parents and carers may have created a box with their children, which they bring to church. This creates a link between home and church and gives the child the opportunity to play "church" at home. Other churches create a central store of liturgy boxes which are offered to children when they arrive.

Very young children will use the box randomly throughout the service. They will begin to make connections between the objects and aspects of the worship. Gradually it will be possible for the parent or carer to introduce the liturgy box materials at the correct time in the service. The children themselves will begin to recognise which part of the service goes with which item in the box. The objects in the box may lead children to make their own movements and gestures related to service. Children may be encouraged to join in simple words and phrases related to the liturgy. Children, regardless of age, will still need "free play" use of the box during the service.

## Liturgy box contents for weekly worship

This lists some of the possible items connected to worship and the Christian faith that might be in a child's liturgy box and how the objects might relate to a service of worship. The items may change and develop with the age of the child.

### Gathering

Most services have some form of gathering at the beginning of the worship. As we come together we remember that we are joined together as the Body of Christ. Linking toys (octons, rings, teddies) symbolise our coming together.



Children might use linking toys such as Galt Octons, Linking Rings, Linking Teddies. Children may like to join linking toys together with other people as they arrive at church. Perhaps a whole congregation might join in making a linking toys sculpture to depict gathering together as the family of God.

### Welcome

Most forms of worship have a welcome at the beginning of the service. Some denominations have specific greeting phrases. Children may like to wave a "Hello Flag" with the picture of a waving hand on it and the relevant Greeting, e.g. 'and also with you'.





## Confession

There may be an informal or more formal prayer of Confession where people say they are sorry to God.

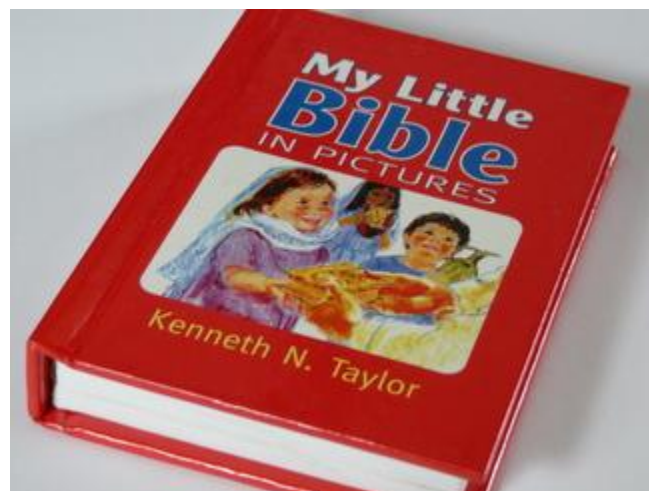
Children may have a "Sorry" book. They may also have a "Sorry" cube with pictures of children being careless or unkind, together with pictures of them putting things right.

After the Confession there may be a prayer of forgiveness. The "Sorry Book" is then put away, possibly in a little bag, symbolizing that the past is behind and that we are forgiven by God. Likewise the picture cube is turned upside down to show the words "You are forgiven".

## Gloria

As Gods forgiven people, some churches may sing in praise to God e.g. the Gloria. Children could wave a small flag with the words Glory to God on it.

They may also wave multi coloured ribbons on a small ring.



## Bible Reading

Most services include a reading from one or more books of the Bible.

The liturgy box might contain a small children's picture Bible or small books of individual Bible stories (if possible, the day's reading) to look at during the reading itself.

## Baptism

Many denominations baptise people into the church. Items relevant to a denomination's Baptism theology might be included.

A small bowl, a small jug, a shell, and a small baby doll may be applicable for infant Baptism.



## Prayer

Most worship services will have some form of intercessions. These might include prayers for the church, world situations, people who are sick, our families and homes and remembering people who have died. A prayer cube showing each of the main prayer headings can be held during the prayers helping the child to focus on different topics during the prayers.

The children could also have symbols for the different topics for prayer: e.g. a small globe, a cross and a church, a play doctor's item for the sick, a selection of little people from different countries, etc.

## Creed

Some denominations say some form of Creed during the worship. During the Creed the children might hold a triangle with symbols for God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

They may like to have small objects instead: a world symbolizing God the Father, a cross for Jesus or a dove for the Holy Spirit.





## Collection

Most churches have some means of collecting the money gifts from the congregation.

Children may like to have a small bag or purse in their box for their collection. The box contains a little bag for the children's collection money.

## The Peace

Some denominations share the Peace at some stage during the service. A card can be included in the liturgy box with the words used. Children can be encouraged to share the Peace.

## Holy Communion

Most denominations share in Holy Communion.

If the children are present for the Communion Service a small wooden cup, plate, play bread and grapes and children's books about Communion could be included. Children make connections between the play items and the actions and story encountered in the Communion.







### **The Agnus Dei (Lamb of God)**

Some denominations sing or say a form of the Agnus Dei: 'Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.'

A small lamb could be included in the box, symbolising Jesus, the Lamb of God.

### **The Dismissal**

Worship may have some form of some closing prayer such as the Grace or Blessing and possibly a congregational response. A "Good-Bye flag" with the relevant words may be included in the liturgy box.

