

Preschool Material

Use this in the week or two leading up to the International Day of Prayer for Children and Youth on Sunday 28 March 2021. It is intended for use with preschool children whose age range will vary depending on your country. Please feel free to modify the material as needed to suit your context.

Children's Material

Use this in the week or two leading up to the International Day of Prayer for Children and Youth on Sunday 28 March 2021. It is intended for use with school age (but not yet high school age) children, ideally within a kids' church programme/Sunday school setting, but feel free to modify and use the material as needed to suit your context.

Youth Material

Use this in the week or two leading up to the International Day of Prayer for Children and Youth on Sunday 28 March 2021. It is intended for use with high school age young people (approximately 13-18 years old, although this may vary depending on your country), ideally within a small group/Bible study/discussion group setting, but feel free to modify and use the material as needed to suit your context.

Adult's Material

Use this in the week or two leading up to the International Day of Prayer for Children and Youth on Sunday 28 March 2021. It is intended for use with anyone older than high school age, ideally within a small group/Bible study/discussion group setting, but feel free to modify and use the material as needed to suit your context.

*Service Planning Guide

This is for corps leaders to use in planning your International Day of Prayer for Children and Youth service on Sunday 28 March 2021. It includes ways to incorporate prayer in the service as well as suggestions for involving your children and young people in the planning and running of the service.

Service Planning Survey

This document contains questions to help your leaders collect suggestions from your children and young people when collaborating with them to plan your service on the International Day of Prayer for Children and Youth.

**Service can also be read in the more traditional sense of a Salvation Army 'meeting'.*

Sunday 28 March 2021 is the International Day of Prayer for Children and Youth, and this year's theme is 'Seen and Heard'. There is a saying, originating in 15th-century England, that 'children should be seen and not heard.' However, we believe that young people should be seen and heard in our churches; we believe the voices of children and youth are vital to the life of the church and that God can and does speak and work through young people to build his Kingdom in amazing ways.

We encourage you to use at least some of the following suggestions to actively include children and youth in your service for that Sunday, as well as in the life of your church going forward. Work with your young people and their leaders to plan this and make sure their voices are heard as part of this process. If helpful, use the 'Service Survey' document as a guide for gathering thoughts and suggestions from your children and youth.

PRAYER

As it is the International Day of Prayer for Children and Youth, it is obviously important to make prayer a component of the service. Here are some different ways you could include this:

- Have the older people in your corps gather around your children and youth to pray for them.
- Prior to the service, speak with the children and youth in your corps to discuss their needs and concerns. Ask them what they see as the major issues facing young people in your community. These could then be displayed during the service and prayed about. You could have the congregation break into small groups to pray for these.
- Have some children and youth write prayers about issues affecting young people that they could pray from the platform during the service.
- If you do not have any children or young people at your corps, spend some time praying for the children and youth in your local community, your country and the rest of the world. Do some research into specific issues facing young people in each of these areas that people could pray about.

TESTIMONY

- Have some young people share during the service about what God has done and is doing in their lives. This could be live or pre-recorded if you have the means to do so.

MUSIC

- Have your young people choose the songs you include in the service. If they are able to and comfortable doing so, they could also provide the music and lead times of worship.
- Include some fun, upbeat songs that the children will engage with and provide basic instruments (drums, shakers, timbrels, maracas, etc.) for them to play.

ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

- Have young people perform a poem, dance, drama, song, etc., expressing what it means for them to have their voices heard and valued.

THE MESSAGE

- Use the Scripture, themes and questions contained in the provided study material to prepare a message that is relevant to your congregation.
- If there is a young person willing to, they could deliver the message. Work with them to prepare this if necessary, and make sure they are feeling supported and encouraged.
- As part of the message, encourage the older people in your congregation to reflect on how they make space for young people to be seen *and* heard in their lives and in your church. You could encourage them to come up with one way they are going to commit to doing this better going forward.



SEEN AND HEARD



International Day of Prayer
for Children and Youth 2021



PRESCHOOL MATERIAL

AIM

The aim of this session is to empower children to recognise that they are full participants in the Body of Christ and to share their experience of God.

THEME

Seen and Heard

We believe children are the leaders, disciples and decision makers of today. We believe children have unique skills and expertise that our church and the world need now. We believe children hear from and are used by God every day. We believe that children are full, active members of the Body of Christ, and they are no less important or vital than any other part.

STRUCTURE

This resource provides a story and some activities that will help your preschool group understand that, even at their young age, they are chosen by God now. However, this resource is designed to be extremely flexible, as we know not all preschool groups are alike. Please choose what you think will work best for your group.

BIBLE PASSAGE

1 Corinthians 12:18-27

STORY

You may wish to use props or images to help your children engage with the story.

When God made people, he made our bodies with many different parts. He put so much thought into each part of us. God gave us bones so that our bodies can stand up tall. He gave us muscles so that we can move around. He made our eyes to see, our noses to smell, our tongues to taste and our ears to hear. Even the parts of our body that we may not see are specially made by God.

When God made people, he made us all different. But each one of us is special. Just as there are many different parts to our body, there are many different people in the church. Some of us are adults, some of us are teenagers or children, some of us are very old, and some of us are little babies, but we are all special to God.

Alternative stories you may wish to use for your group:

- A children's Bible version of 1 Corinthians 12:18-27.
- You Are Special by Max Lucado.

ACTIVITIES

Prayer Posters

Using whatever craft or art supplies you have available ask the children to make a poster that shows what they love talking to God about.

ABC Prayers

As a group, using each letter of the alphabet, name one thing to thank God for.

Sculptures

Have the children make a play dough or plasticine sculpture of something God loves.



SEEN AND HEARD



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CHILDREN'S MATERIAL

AIM

The aim of this session is to empower children to recognise that they are full participants in the Body of Christ and to share their experience of God.

THEME

Seen and Heard

We believe children are the leaders, disciples and decision makers of today. We believe children have unique skills and expertise that our church and the world need now. We believe children hear from and are used by God every day. We believe that children are full, active members of the Body of Christ, and they are no less important or vital than any other part.

STRUCTURE

This resource provides a story accompanied by 'wondering' questions and 'response time' suggestions, as well as 'talking points' to supplement the story and question time. The story and wondering questions are based on enquiry-based learning principles. This may be a more reflective model than you typically use in your children's ministry.

BIBLE PASSAGE

1 Corinthians 12:18-27

STORY

You may like to use props or images to help your children engage with the story.

When God made people, he made our bodies with many different parts. He put so much thought into each part of us. God gave us bones so that our bodies can stand up tall. He gave us muscles so that we can move around. He made our eyes to see, our noses to smell, our tongues to taste and our ears to hear.

Even the parts of our body that we may not see are specially made by God and are important for making our body work, like our lungs, our stomach and our brain.

There are parts of our bodies that it is polite to cover up. They are important too, even though we keep them private.

When God made people, he made us all different. But each one of us is important. Just as there are many different parts to our body, there are many different parts in the Body of Christ. Some of us are adults, some of us are teenagers or children, some of us are very old, and some of us are little babies.

Some of us have skills that mean we might speak or sing at the front of church/on a stage. Some of us are wise and will help others understand the Bible. Others are very compassionate and care for other people. Others are very hospitable and do things that nobody sees, making life easier for everyone.

Each one of us, no matter how old we are or what our talents are, has a special place in the Church. Each one of us is part of the Body of Christ.

WONDERING QUESTIONS

These wondering style questions are designed to help children think critically and imaginatively about God. You do not need to engage in a discussion about their response; just allow them to answer.

- I wonder what your favourite part of the story is?
- I wonder which part of the story is most important?
- I wonder if you are somewhere in this story, or which part of the story is about you?
- I wonder what skills and talents God has given you?
- I wonder how God might be using you today?
- I wonder how God speaks to you?

After the children have replied to the wondering questions, explain they are going to have a time of response. They can choose any of the activities available to connect with God and express how they feel about the story they have heard.

Pray with the children as they enter a response time; allow children to pray out loud for each other if they feel comfortable doing so.

RESPONSE TIME

It would be good to have several response activities available for the children so they are able to engage with God, however the Spirit leads them. Not all children will use their response time to connect with God, and that is okay—simply feeling happy and safe in play or doing craft within the church is an important part of their spiritual development.

Some ways children may choose to respond are through:

- Colouring pens, pencils, crayons, paints and paper
- Play dough
- Storybooks, including storybook Bibles if you have them
- Figurines or dolls
- Lego or building blocks
- Song
- Dance
- Imaginative play in nature
- Creating and telling stories

TALKING POINTS

- Encourage children to talk about their experiences with God.
- Remind them that God uses them now; he is not waiting for them to grow up first.
- Talk about how important each person's talents are—be sure to mention skills and talents that are not featured in church services.



SEEN AND HEARD



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YOUTH MATERIAL

AIM

The aim of this study is to show that God uses young people to accomplish his purposes and that he wants to work and speak through your young people!

INTRODUCTION

There is a saying, originating in 15th-century England, that 'children should be seen and not heard'—the thinking being that children did not have anything valuable to offer to discussions. However, we believe that the voices of children and youth are vital to the life of the church and that God can and does speak and work through young people to build his Kingdom in amazing ways.

ACTIVITIES

Use one or both of the following activities, or come up with your own, to demonstrate the importance of being heard.

Body Language

Split your group in half and send the two teams to either side of your room/space. Either give teams predetermined messages or give them one minute to create a message of their own. The message should be an instruction, and the other team's job is to then carry out the instruction. The teams must communicate non-verbally, either acting out or spelling out the message somehow (they may not simply do the action they are trying to communicate). Once the other team thinks they understand the message, they must energetically do the action communicated to them.

Debrief:

- How difficult was it to figure out the message being communicated?
- What made it challenging?
- What could have made it easier?
- What does this teach us about communication?

Team Chant

Split your group in half and ask each team to spend one minute coming up with a chant. This can be to communicate a message, or something completely random. After the minute is up, ask both teams to face each other. On the count of three, ask both teams to scream out their chant as loud as they can. Afterwards, ask each team what the other team had said. If they don't know, repeat the exercise and then ask them again.

Debrief:

- How difficult was it to hear what the other team was saying?
- What made it challenging?
- What could have made it easier?
- What does this teach us about communication?

DISCUSSION

Ask someone to read the Bible passages out loud to the group. If you have time, you could ask someone to read them again from a different translation. Use the questions provided below to encourage discussion. Feel free to add your own and ask follow-up questions as people share to keep the discussion flowing.

To begin, we will look at some examples of faithful young people being used by God to accomplish his will:

David

Read 1 Samuel chapter 17.

- What stands out to you from this passage?
- What reasons does Saul give for not wanting David to face Goliath (v33)?
- What is David's response (v37)?
- What do we learn from this passage about how God operates? *God is willing and able to work through young people—he does not always choose those most qualified in the eyes of people.*

Mary

Read Luke 1:26-38.

- What stands out to you from this passage?
- What was Mary's response to the news that she would give birth to Jesus?
- How easy do you think you would find it to trust God if you were in Mary's place?
- What does God choosing Mary tell us about who he is? *Again, God uses those with little earthly power and influence to accomplish great things for him. They just have to be willing.*

Pollard and Wright

On 27 March 1883, two young English Salvation Army officers, Captain George Pollard and Lieutenant Edward Wright, arrived at Port Chalmers, New Zealand. In 1882 several New Zealanders had written to Salvation Army co-founder, William Booth, asking him to send officers to the colony, which was in the middle of an economic depression. Pollard and Wright, aged 20 and 19, respectively, were sent and the Army 'opened fire' in New Zealand on Sunday 1 April 1883. They held four meetings at Dunedin's Temperance Hall and crowds soon packed the Army's gatherings.

Pollard quickly established a presence in Auckland, Christchurch and Wellington, with rescue homes being opened in these main centres. By the end of 1884, The Salvation Army had 30 corps and more than 60 full-time officers in New Zealand!

Imagine how different Israel's story could have been if King Saul had denied David's request to face Goliath based on his age and inexperience. Would the Church as we know it even exist if Mary had resisted God's plan for her? What if William Booth had not trusted Pollard and Wright, or the people of New Zealand had refused to listen to or be led by them because of their age?

- Have you ever felt unworthy to take on a task or that your voice did not matter because you were too young or unqualified, etc.?
- Based on the examples we looked at, what do you think the prerequisites are for serving God and speaking on his behalf?
- Are any unnecessary prerequisites or barriers that you think our church, our leaders or ourselves put in place that keep people from more fully serving God?

- Are there any specific ways you feel God calling you to serve him?
- Is there anything preventing you from doing this?

You could write down the responses to the following questions to present to and discuss with your church leaders.

- Can you think of any ways that your church family could support you to more fully serve God and meaningfully contribute to the life of your church?
- If you were writing a letter to your church explaining how they could make you feel more valued and heard, what would you say?

SUMMARY

Young people are valuable to God! He often uses young people to speak for him and accomplish his will when they trust and submit to him. God wants to use you, so look for opportunities to speak out and act in obedience to him.

PRAY

Pray together with the young people for courage for them to boldly speak out and live for God in the ways that he leads them, regardless of any perceived limitations. Pray that your church would be a community that embraces young people and makes space for their voices to be heard. Thank God for where this is already happening and for where he's at work in the lives of your youth.

SERVICE PLANNING

Sunday 28 March 2021 is the International Day of Prayer for Children and Youth. Discuss with your corps leaders how young people can be included in the service and given a platform to be heard as part of this. If they can be included, you might like to spend time in this session doing any necessary preparation and planning with the youth.



SEEN AND HEARD



International Day of Prayer
for Children and Youth 2021



ADULT'S MATERIAL

AIM

The aim of this study is to highlight the value of having children and youth as active contributors to the life of your corps/community and to help you reflect on how you can make space for them to do this.

INTRODUCTION

There is a saying, originating in 15th-century England, that 'children should be seen and not heard'—the thinking being that children did not have anything valuable to offer to discussions. However, we believe that young people should be seen *and* heard in our churches; we believe the voices of children and youth are vital to the life of the Church and that God can and does speak and work through young people to build his Kingdom in amazing ways.

DISCUSSION

Use the questions provided to encourage discussion. Feel free to add your own and ask follow-up questions as people share to keep the discussion flowing.

To begin, we'll look at some examples of faithful young people being used by God to accomplish his will:

David

Read the story of David in 1 Samuel chapter 17.

- What reasons does Saul give for not wanting David to face Goliath (v33)?
- What is David's response (v37)?
- What do we learn from this passage about how God operates? *God is willing and able to work through young people—he does not always choose those most qualified in the eyes of people.*

Mary

Read the account of Mary being visited by the angel Gabriel in Luke 1:26-38 and Joseph's reaction to her news in Matthew 1:18-24.

- What was Mary's response to the news that she would give birth to Jesus?
- If you were Joseph in that situation, what do you think your response would have been?
- Although the Bible doesn't mention her age, it's likely that Mary was in her mid-teens when God chose to use her. What does this reveal about God? *Again, God uses those with little earthly power and influence to accomplish great things for him. They just have to be willing.*

Pollard and Wright

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Imagine how different Israel's story could have been if King Saul had denied David's request to face Goliath based on his age and inexperience. Would the Church as we know it even exist if Mary had resisted God's plan for her or Joseph had chosen to divorce and not support her? What if William Booth had not trusted Pollard and Wright, or the people of New Zealand had refused to listen to or be led by them because of their age?

- Based on the examples we looked at, what do you think the prerequisites are for serving God and speaking on his behalf?
- Do you think there are any unnecessary prerequisites or barriers that the Church's structure, its leaders or ourselves put in place that keep people from more fully serving God? If so, what are some of these?

1 Corinthians 12:12-27 describes the Church as one body with many parts. Although the parts are different and serve various purposes, the passage asserts that all parts are important and should be valued and embraced as part of one united Body of Christ.

Another key biblical idea that is embraced by The Salvation Army is that the church is a 'priesthood of all believers' with Christ as our High Priest.

- Do you think these pictures of the Church include children and youth? Why/why not?
- If so, how does your corps/community actively embrace young people as part of the Body of Christ and the priesthood of all believers?
- What are some of the unique perspectives and gifts that young people contribute or could potentially contribute to the life of your corps/community?

Writer and activist Arundhati Roy once said, 'There's really no such thing as the "voiceless". There are only the deliberately silenced, or the preferably unheard.'

- How does your corps/community make space for young people's voices to be heard?
- Is there anything that your corps/community does or doesn't do that may silence young people, deliberately or otherwise?
- Can you think of any ways it could improve in this area?
- How can you personally contribute to this?
- How willing are you to sacrifice your own comfort, space, influence, etc., in order for young people to be more included, more influential and increasingly seen *and* heard in your corps/community?

SUMMARY

Young people and their voices are valuable to God and to his Church! He often uses young people to speak for him and accomplish his will when they trust and submit to him. We, as his Church, must encourage and make space for young people to have their voices heard as they serve God in their unique way as valued members of the diverse Body of Christ.

PRAY

Pray together that your children and youth would have the courage to boldly speak out and live for God in the ways that he leads them, regardless of any perceived limitations. Pray that your church would be a community that embraces young people and makes space for their voices to be heard. Thank God for where that's already happening and where he is at work in the lives of your young people. Pray that he would reveal how you can best support and 'hear' young people in your church family going forward.



What worship songs would you like us to sing as part of the service?

Are there any games/activities you think we should include?

What issues relating to children or youth do you think people should pray about as part of the service?

Are there any ways you could use your particular gifts and talents to contribute to the service?

What else do you think should be included in the service?