

# 0-5's in Churches

Create a notice in the church to indicate that all children of God are welcome. It can read like this.

Children do not instantly know how to take part in worship, so we want to help both parents/carers and their children feel welcome and when children feel truly welcomed, they are happier to be in church and will want to take part in worship.

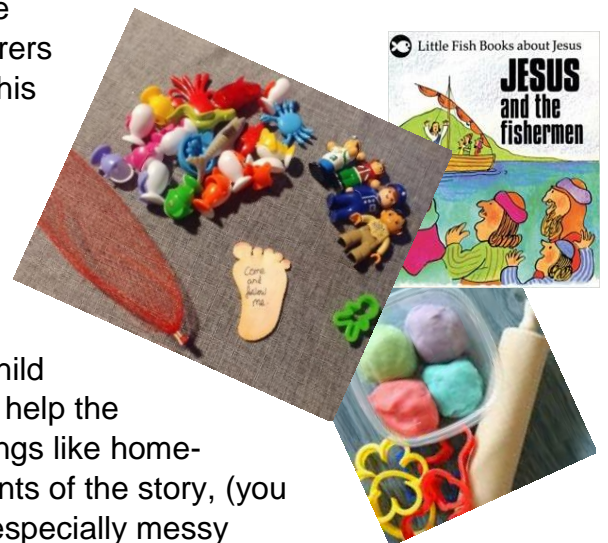
Why not create spaces which are just for them scattered throughout the church. These can be child friendly pews, or quiet spaces with some books and quiet toys for the children to engage with the theme of the service.

You may even wish to have a space where after the service the children can play whilst the parents/carers can join in some coffee and fellowship together. This can have toys and books suitable for a variety of ages, it may be that you have some sensory activities for the under 5's to engage with.

Creating a quiet space with a story bag, which engages the children in the theme, engages the child spiritually whilst exploring through play. It will also help the parents to engage in worship. You can include things like home-made play dough, for the children to create elements of the story, (you may wish to have a play mat to sit on if including especially messy items), it may be that you create a sensory box for them to explore the theme. Include things like a holding cross, musical instruments, a battery operated candle as elements of worship.



*Children are a gift from God. Jesus welcomed the little children, and so do we! We can abide with a little 'joyful noise' or "wandering wise ones". We are excited you're here and believe children's voices are the sound of new life in church.*



If creating quiet spaces with wigwams or play tents, make them a sensory experience for the children. Place some battery operated lights on the top which will reflect through, creating interesting shadows.

Within these spaces, use baskets made of natural materials, with some small cardboard books, some blocks and shapes and some intentionally chosen items which are tactile and encourages a sensory exploration.

You can make some quick and easy sensory bags for babies to be placed on a play mat or inside the wigwam.



Sacred spaces in church for children to explore during worship. These can include some story bags or play sets, remember that these can fit with the theme of worship. Use some baskets of natural materials, books and wooden blocks and shapes. These 'open ended' resources should be intentionally chosen because of their tactile nature and so that children can use their ingenuity and imagination to create, make and play freely; using and constructing the materials in lots of different ways.

Include musical instruments and soft fabric, or ribbons which can be played with during hymns and songs throughout the service.



**Infant feeding** – Churches should adopt an Infant feeding Policy (the URC policy is on its way.)

Alongside the policy you may wish to consider a space which is dedicated to feeding infants, which can be used by anyone who may require to feed a baby.

*Equipment which may be helpful:*

A comfortable chair without arms which is suitable for feeding a child in (nursing type chair).

A quiet space using a small play tent, a wigwam or a simple rug for older siblings, with a box of books, and some age appropriate quiet toys.

Facility to warm a bottle.

Facility to keep milk cold.

Make sure you have a sign to say where it is.

You may also wish to have a sign at the door of the church to say that infant feeding is welcome here and that there is a space provided for your babies to be fed.



**Toileting**

Within your toilets you can also create a baby changing facility, and toddler seating and steps for the toilets. This should be a space where anyone can access to toilet a child. So, it may be your disabled toilet is the most suitable gender-neutral space.