

## **The Children's Sermon**

The Children's Sermon is the newest part of our worship service.

In the 1960's and 1970's there was growing concern about the spiritual nurturing of youth and children. Many people realized how the worship service is mainly focused on adults, so different ideas emerged to include children in the worship service more. The Children's Sermon is one of those ideas.

The Children's Sermon proclaims the Word of God in a way that children can relate to.

In some congregations, the Children's Sermon is after the Gospel reading and before the regular Sermon. Some other congregations have the Children's Sermon at the beginning of the service after the Entrance Hymn so the children can be sent to Sunday school.

Here at Community Lutheran Church, we have the Children's Sermon after the Prayer of the Day and before the Scripture readings are read. This does present a challenge to the preacher who wants to preach in accordance to the Scripture readings for the day when they hadn't been read yet when the Children's Sermon is delivered.

The effectiveness of Children's Sermons has been debated for some time. Some pitfalls are:

- The Children's Sermon is designed for children who are from 5 to 8 years old. Younger children learn more from one-on-one experiences than from a public lecture. And older children feel embarrassed being around the "little kids".
- Sometimes moralisms that teach what is right and wrong are emphasized more than proclaiming the gospel of God's love through Jesus.
- Sometimes rewards or prizes are used that distract from the message. Kids come up more for the treats than the message.

- Sometimes gimmicks are used. Too many gimmicks can be distracting from the message.
- Sometimes adults listen more to the children's sermon than children do and sometimes children listen more to the regular sermon than adults do.
- Having a children's sermon along with a 'regular sermon' may give children the idea that the rest of the worship service really isn't for them.

But many people find that the Children's Sermon is very helpful in proclaiming the Word of God to children.

Read the Scripture readings for Reformation Sunday (October 25<sup>th</sup>):

Jeremiah 31:31-34

Romans 3:19-28

John \*:31-36

- Which of these readings would be easier to explain to children?
- What kind of examples could be used to get this point across to children?

In light of this Sunday being Reformation Sunday, Martin Luther strongly advocated teaching children to read the Bible and learn the teachings of the church because the gospel message of Jesus' salvation is as much for them as it is for the rest of us.

Close with your own personal prayer for the children in your family and life and for the needs of all children throughout the world.