



AN INTERGENERATIONAL WORSHIP RESOURCE for Fathers Day

In Australia, Fathers Day is observed on the first Sunday in September. The secular practice of honouring fathers on a particular day began about a hundred years ago.

The law given to Moses and the people of Israel some 4000 years ago, commanded God's people to 'honour your father and your mother' not just once a year, but at all times. The law was given at a time when the role of fathers was quite different from the role of fathers in western culture today.

The honour due to parents is not conditional on the culture's definition of parents' roles nor on particular people's parenting skills. Honouring parents is honouring God who provides parents and families as a way of protecting children and preserving life and order among people.

Congregations may shy away from observation of Fathers Day out of sensitivity to families where fathers are not present or where fathers are not fulfilling their role appropriately.

But this worship resource is primarily a celebration of God, the heavenly Father, who loves and cares for each one of us. It can be a part of a tribute to fathers.

ALL-AGE WORSHIP

Worship is an encounter between God and God's people: a dialogue in which God speaks and people respond, both in the worship service and in their lives. All-age (intergenerational) worship is, first and foremost, worship.

Intentionally *intergenerational* worship

- allows this dialogue to take place in a variety of ways
- focuses on a simple theme and connects that theme with the lives of the worshipers
- provides worshipers (young and old) with an experience they can remember and talk about in their homes
- encourages interaction and dialogue among people of the various generations
- takes seriously the understanding that people of all ages worship together in the body of Christ. People of all ages can also plan worship, invite people to worship, and lead worship
- recognises and values the children present in the worshiping congregation and 'the child within' each adult.

Fathers Day is by definition an intergenerational celebration. Worship can

be a significant part of the celebration.

Fathers Day is an opportunity for churches to encourage conversation with God on the topic of fathers and fatherhood.

USING THIS RESOURCE

These notes have been prepared by the Resource Centre for Children's and Family Ministry of the Uniting Church (SA) to help congregations plan a special worship for children and families (including grandparents and great-grandparents).

You may make as many copies of the notes as you need for your worship planners and leaders.

The use of music and other copyright elements is not covered in this permission.

Read through all the material. Discuss it as a planning team. You may use any of the ideas that are appropriate in your situation or you may use the entire sample service.

If you use the resource, we would appreciate your letting us know what you do. Send a brief email to rcfm@bigpond.com

For other intergenerational worship ideas see <http://mrn.sa.uca.org.au> Click on 'Helps', then 'Children's Ministry', then 'All-Age Worship'.

CONTENTS

Theme	2
Worship Planning	2
Invitation and advertising.....	2
Worship space and visuals	3
Music	3
Children's contribution	4
Hospitality	4
Worship leaders	4
Sermon.....	5
Upsizing and downsizing.....	5
Rehearsal.....	5
George's story	5
A prayer	6
A story	7
A blessing.....	8
A command.....	9
An image.....	10
Fathers Day badges.....	11
Quotes about Dads	12
A sample worship plan	13

THEME

The theme for this worship service is the Fatherhood of God, and this is related to fatherhood in general.

Fathers Day is not a 'church' festival. The liturgical readings appointed for the day, have a strong 'justice' emphasis. While justice is a significant aspect of God's Fatherhood — and would certainly be an appropriate topic to explore with men and women, parents and children — these notes take a more general approach.

WORSHIP PLANNING

An all-age worship service is best planned by an intergenerational team, working with the pastor/minister/priest or lay ministry team. If possible the team should consist of at least three people: one representing the youngest third, one, the middle third and one, the oldest third of the congregation.

For this service, include at least one representative of any men's ministry group in the congregation who will be able to add a men's/fathers'/grandfathers' perspective to the planning.

The team may also draw on people who have special abilities, eg in the areas of hospitality, music, drama, visual arts and technology.

In planning this service be particularly careful you don't make inaccurate assumptions

about the families and fathers who will be worshiping with you.

Suggested planning steps:

1. Begin with prayer, and trust God's Spirit to guide your planning.
2. Consider how the theme relates to people in your congregation and community.
3. Look through these notes to see how they can help in planning the kind of service you want to hold.
4. Use these notes together with your regular worship format to develop a worship outline.
5. Flesh out the outline; consider your own people and facilities.
6. Work with worship leaders to plan details: who does what, when and how.

Planning as an intergenerational team can be a valuable experience for all involved.

INVITATION AND ADVERTISING

The first people to notify about your service are the members of your congregation. Begin early to let them in on the excitement of what is being planned. Encourage them to catch the vision of an intergenerational worship event for Fathers Day.

Encourage grandparents and godparents of children who do not worship regularly to see this as an opportunity to organize a special aspect of Fathers Day for the children.

Encourage children and young families whose fathers do not worship regularly to see this as an opportunity to invite fathers (and other father-figures) to share a worship experience with them.

You may want to extend the invitation to the event to others in the community. Be sure to include the date, time and location of the service in all of your promotional material.

In your planning and invitation, be sensitive to people who may be marginalised by a Fathers Day celebration, eg

- people whose fathers are not with them at this time — including those whose fathers are serving overseas
- people who have recently lost fathers through death or another circumstance
- fathers who have lost children through death or other circumstances
- couples who would like to have children but have been unable to do so
- people who have been hurt or abused by their natural father or who are

experiencing strained relationships with their fathers

- people who live alone either by choice or by circumstances and will feel excluded by any emphasis on family relationships.

WORSHIP SPACE & VISUALS

A clean, tidy worship area is an inviting space for regular worshippers and visitors alike.

If you expect to have men worshipping with you who may be uncomfortable in your worship centre, consider having the service in another setting, eg your hall — possibly with seating at tables in family groups.

Call on people with technical and artistic skills to create an atmosphere that supports the theme of the service.

You may want to appeal to technical-minded dads by using special technology, or to dads with sporting or outdoor passions with appropriate decoration.

Consider showing a PowerPoint slide show as people arrive, eg

- photos of a range of types of dads
- photos of kids from your congregation with their dads
- kids' drawings of their dads
- kids' messages to their dads.

MUSIC

Most of the music in the service will be congregational singing. All worshippers are invited to participate.

But remember that some people — perhaps visiting dads — may not be happy about congregational-style singing. Make it clear that it is OK just to sit and listen to the music. Invite people to join in the singing when they are comfortable doing so.

Your regular instrumentalists (organist, band) lead/accompany the singing. Display song words in your usual manner.

Include traditional hymns as well as more contemporary songs and songs written with children in mind. You may want to include some more up-beat recorded music (particularly as people are arriving).

For the benefit of children and visitors, explain briefly any obscure images or unfamiliar language in the songs.

Consider ways of involving children who are too young to read or sing the words, eg

- teach Auslan symbols or other actions for some key words in the song and ask everyone to do the actions when they

come to the words in the song (See www.auslan.org.au for a vocabulary of signs)

- teach one or two lines that are repeated in the chorus and give a cue when everyone can join in singing these lines
- give children a percussion instrument to play during some songs.

Small congregations, or congregations that do not have strong musical leadership, may sing with CDs or other electronic music.

SONG SUGGESTIONS

Here are some songs that support the 'Our Father' theme.

Traditional hymns

- *Father, we praise you* (Gregory/Dearmer)
- *Father in heaven, grant to your children* (Niles)
- *How great thou art* (Boberg)
- *Lead us, heavenly Father* (Edmeston)
- *Like a father watching over me* (Hay)
- *My God, how wonderful thou art* (Faber)
- *Now thank we all our God* (Rinckart)
- *Praise and thanksgiving, Father we offer* (Bayly)

Some more contemporary songs to consider:

- *Because of your love* (Fragar)
- *Before the world began* (Fragar)
- *Father we adore you* (Coelho)
- *I'm changed, I'm not the same* (Fragar)
- *I draw near to you* (Zscheck & Morgan)
- *I'm your child* (Bullock)
- *Hear our prayer* (Blank)
- *Power of your name* (Bullock)
- *Thank you Father for everything* (Boucher)
- *We are heirs of the Father* (Owens)
- *You make your face to shine on me* (Zscheck & Fragar)

Some songs for children:

- *Children of the heavenly Father* (Berg)
- *God will take care of us all through the day* (unknown)
- *God's a Father kind and true* (Burrow & Greene)
- *He's got the whole world in his hands* (include verses 'fathers and mothers', 'sons and daughters')
- *I'm God's child* (Traditional/Clare)
- *This is my Father's world* (Public domain)

You may want to use a musical setting of the Lord's Prayer, eg

- *Our Father* (Boucher)
- *Our Father, who art in heaven* (Eastwood)
- *Our Father, you from heaven above* (Letterman)

One place where even the 'manliest' of fathers may be comfortable singing is in the sports club locker room after a victorious match. You might consider concluding your service with a team 'cheer song'.

The tune of the Adelaide Crows song is the 'Marine Hymn'. Yes, a hymn! You might try writing your own words, along these lines:

*We are children of Almighty God
and we come to him in prayer.
We-e know him by his holy name
and approach him without fear.
He-e rules in heaven and the earth
Where e'er his will is done.
He-e gives us what we need to live
today and every day.
He forgives the sins that we have done;
helps us pass forgiveness on.
He shows us all the way to live
and keeps us safe from harm.
We are children of Almighty God
and we come to him in prayer.
We give him love and thanks and praise
A-amen, amen, amen!*

Grunts are optional. But God certainly has more 'grunt' than any sportsperson or any whole team.

You may also use some instrumental or sung performance or recorded music in the service.

Check out www.chiff.com/home_life/holiday/fathers-day-music.htm for some favourite secular songs for Fathers Day and also a link to Perpetual Playschool's Fathers Day songs for littlies.

CHILDREN'S CONTRIBUTION

Children's contribution to this service could take almost any form; for example, they could

- make invitations and give them to dads and grandpas
- greet worshipers and give dads special gifts or badges
- pray for dads and grandpas
- sing a song for/about fathers
- bless dads
- perform a dance or skit about dads
- decorate the worship area with symbols of their dad's hobbies and passions.

Ideally the children's contribution will come from the children. Let them know that a special worship service is being planned for Fathers Day. Ask them what they might contribute to the service.

As much as possible, use the children's suggestions and involve the children in planning and carrying out the details.

A performance by children can be a drawing card for fathers and grandfathers. But it should be more than this. A children's performance will honour fathers and honour God.

Be sensitive to children who do not have fathers or whose fathers are unlikely to participate in a church event.

HOSPITALITY

Hospitality is the responsibility of all members of the congregation.

People who invite and bring people to the service have the primary responsibility for looking after their special guests.

A designated **HOSPITALITY TEAM** has responsibilities that include:

- being aware of the safety aspects of the worship space, eg location of alternate exits, fire extinguishers and first aid equipment, identity of people with first aid training
- greeting people — particularly the dads — as they arrive
- helping people to get settled
Pay special attention to the very young, the very old and people with handicaps. Seat them where they will be able to see/hear, but not feel conspicuous
- being alert to needs of people during the service, and assisting as required.

You may make Fathers Day a day-off for those fathers who regularly serve as worship hosts and have other duties in worship.

Consider challenging youth and singles to honour fathers by allowing them to sit with their families for this worship service.

Alternatively, you may arrange to have family groups perform these duties together.

Be sure to give every father attending the service a special, hearty welcome.

WORSHIP LEADERS

Your regular worship leader may lead the intergenerational worship service.

Alternatively, the worship can be led by another person or a group of people representing different generations (or genders or ethnic backgrounds).

The sample service involves leadership roles for:

- A WORSHIP LEADER who serves as host (or compere) leading worshipers through the service.
- MUSIC TEAM/SONG LEADER who encourage and lead congregational singing
- HOSPITALITY TEAM
- TECHNOLOGY TEAM
- MODERATOR AND PANEL
- STORYTELLER
- SPEAKER (personal testimony)
- PREACHER
- CHILDREN
- PRAYER LEADER.

SERMON

A sermon in an all-age worship service should be an all-age sermon. This means it's short and simple — generally no more than three points. Stories, illustrations and dialogue can be helpful.

If an adults-only sermon is used, you will need to organize an activity for children to do during the sermon.

It's good to follow the adage: first tell people what you are going to say, say it, and then tell them what you said. If you do each step in a different, engaging way, people of all ages are likely to remember the message.

You may use one of the suggestions on the following pages as a starting point for the sermon:

- 1) A Prayer — the Lord's Prayer
- 2) A Story — the Forgiving Father
- 3) A Blessing — a Father's blessing
- 4) A Command — honour your father
- 5) An Image — quiver of arrows

UPSIZING & DOWNSIZING

This service can be used in large or small congregations. It can also be used in a home setting.

Each planning group will need to adapt the ideas to suit their own particular situation: the people, traditions and facilities.

REHEARSAL

Because this service will be different from your usual service, it requires careful planning. It also requires rehearsal. A complete walk-through will pinpoint any logistical problems, allow the worship leader/s to fine-tune instructions for the worshipers and ensure that the service itself runs smoothly.

Use rehearsal time as an opportunity to pray together.

- Praise God for his love and care.
- Thank God that you, as a team, have the privilege of leading people in worship.
- Ask God to bring people to worship who need to hear the good news.
- Ask God to be with all who worship with you – especially the fathers.
- Ask God to accept your planning and worship leading as acts of love and service to him.
- Ask God to bless your efforts and to work through what you do and say — to his glory and the benefit of all worshipers.

George's Story

When Lois and I started to have kids, we decided it was important to make absolutely sure they knew that we loved them and that God loved them. So we made a point of saying that to them every night before they went to bed.

My kids loved to be hugged and kissed. Even today I regularly grab Sarah by the ears, look into her eyes and say something like: 'God loves you, Sarah. You belong to him. I love you, I think you're absolutely terrific.'

That's easy with Sarah because she's still little and cuddly. She sometimes says 'Right back at you, Dad,' and I feel great. Sometimes she rolls her eyes and says, 'Aw, you always say that', and I feel great.

I've also got two boys. Chris weighs 150kg and plays rugby. Andy is just 130kg but he works out at the gym every day and bench-presses nearly twice his weight.

They've moved out of home. We see them fairly often, but certainly not every day. The nighttime blessings have disappeared.

But the other evening as he was heading home, I grabbed Chris and said: 'God loves you. You belong to him. I love you. I'm so proud that you're my son.'

His shoulders began to shake, his eyes filled with tears, and he said, 'Dad, I really needed that'.

And I felt great.

A PRAYER

Our Father In heaven
Hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation.
Deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom and the power and the glory are yours
now and forever.
Amen.

This is the prayer that Jesus taught when his followers asked him to teach them to pray.

You can find it in the Bible in Matthew 6 and Luke 11. The concluding words were added later.

Various Christian churches use slightly different versions — some traditional and some more contemporary — of the prayer.

On Fathers Day we can note several significant aspects of this prayer.

The beginning and ending of the prayer show us to whom we pray.

Our Father. As Martin Luther wrote long ago: 'Here God invites us to come to him and talk with him as children speak with a loving father'.

This God, this heavenly Papa or Daddy is approachable because he made us and loves us and has adopted us as his children through Jesus Christ.

This heavenly Father is at the same time the God who rules heaven and earth, whose very name is holy, whose power and glory are beyond comparison and comprehension now and forever.

When we come to our Father in this prayer, we ask for the things we might ask from an earthly father:

We ask for our daily bread — our daily needs — not just bread, but also nourishing food, adequate clothing, safe home, good friends and neighbours.

We ask for forgiveness when we have done wrong and a model of forgiveness, which we can extend to other people.

We ask for guidance.

And we ask for protection from all kinds of evil.

When we ask these things of earthly fathers we know they can't always deliver.

When we ask them of our all-powerful Father in heaven, we know that he can deliver. We know that it is his will to provide his children with the things he tells us to ask for and trust him to provide. We know that he may use earthly fathers to provide these things for us.

And when earthly fathers pray this prayer they are a part of bringing their family into God's loving kingdom. They can draw on the heavenly Father's power and love — and his forgiveness — as they seek to do his will.

A BIBLE STORY

The Bible — particularly the Old Testament — is full of accounts of what we might consider dysfunctional families whom God used to carry out his purposes in the world. While this fact, in itself, can be comforting, we will not concentrate on them in this service.

We will look at the familiar story of the Forgiving Father (Luke 15:11–32). This story — rather than any other images we may have of fathers — helps us to understand the fatherhood of God for our lives.

Luke 15 contains three stories that Jesus told in response to criticism that he mixed with ‘the wrong sort of people’. The stories of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son each reveal God’s concern for — and Jesus’ mission to — just those people. Each tells about patient searching and waiting and of great rejoicing when the lost are returned to their proper place in the fold or the shepherd or the home of the father.

They give us a picture of the father-heart of God — broken by our lostness, but still overflowing with love.

‘The Forgiving Father’ is also referred to as the story of ‘the prodigal son’, ‘the lost son’ or ‘the two sons’.

The story tells of a father, apparently a well-off farmer, who has two sons.

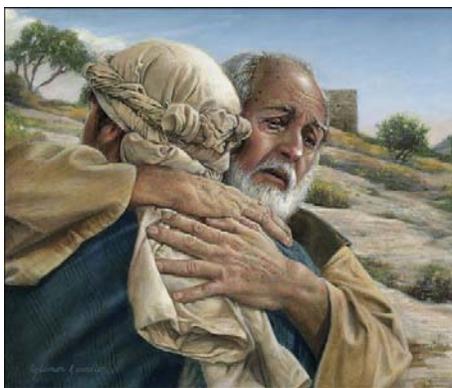
The oldest son obeyed the father, did his duty in looking after the property, and was generally ‘the good and respectful son’.

The younger son disrespected his father in the worst possible ways and ran off with a large portion of the father’s wealth.

He wasted this wealth and found himself in dire straits: no money, no food, no friends, no prospects. He was far worse off than his father’s servants. He could see no way out but to return home, throw himself on his father’s mercy, and ask to be taken on as a servant.

Those are the sons. But this Fathers Day we will concentrate on the father in the story.

The father shared daily work and joys with his older son. He — probably reluctantly — gave in to his younger son’s inappropriate requests.



Most illustrations of this story, like this one by Liz Lemon Swindle, depict the welcome-home moment.

He waited and watched for that son’s return. When the son finally returned, hurting and contrite, the father welcomed him most lavishly.

This story does not give specific instructions about parenting. It does give us some insight into the nature of our heavenly Father. Like the father in the story, he says to those who are always with him: ‘all that I have is yours’. And he

welcomes home with open arms anyone who has rejected him, but turns back and returns to him.

The story shows us that God is the person we can return to — no matter what.

It shows us that God demonstrates his love to his children in different ways according to their needs. Most significantly: God demonstrates his great love for all of us in that while we were sinners Christ died for us (Romans 5:8)

It shows us that it is indeed our heavenly Father — far more than the younger son who is ‘prodigal’ — lavishly, abundantly extravagantly generous.

A BLESSING

When Jesus was baptised at the River Jordan, his Father blessed him with the words: 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.' (Matthew 3:17)

These words are a good model of the blessing that every child needs to hear from their father:

It tells their identity ('my Son')

It tells that they are loved ('whom I love')

It tells that their efforts and character are valued ('with him I am well-pleased').

Research shows that every boy needs a father who sees him, loves and affirms him. When a boy knows without a doubt that he is loved, valued and affirmed by his father he has the confidence to take on the world.

A father can bless his sons and daughters with words expressing the five 'A's':

- acceptance,
- affection
- appreciation
- approval
- and attention.

Physical contact (a hug or a kiss) adds immeasurably to the impact of a father's blessing of his child.

A Christian Father's blessing is all this and more. It is a prayer that links the child with their heavenly Father. This blessing is fundamentally a prayer asking God's good gifts for the child.

The Old Testament concept of blessing was that God possesses and dispenses all blessing. Adam, Noah, Abraham and his family and Moses were all blessed by God.

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob each passed on God's blessing to his sons. Moses in turn spoke the blessing to the twelve tribes (Deuteronomy 33).

Right after King David retrieved the ark of God and had finished an incredible time of worship he went home to give a blessing to his family (1 Chronicles 16:43). This family blessing was a high priority for him.

In the Christian life the inheritance we pass down to our children is spiritual blessing.



Jacob blesses Joseph's sons

Christian parents use spoken words to call on the power of God to give blessing to their household, especially their children.

Thankfully whatever your relationship is to your biological father, there is another Father who longs to bless you. God, the heavenly Father has the ability to heal the father wound in you.

A Child's Blessing for a Father

May God bless you today with all good things:

faith and courage,
health and joy.
love and laughter
peace and justice.

Amen.

A Father's Blessing for a Child

May God bless you with faith,

May God give you
the wisdom to know his will,
the courage to choose his will,
and the strength to do his will.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

A COMMAND

Honour your father and your mother so that you will live a long time in the land that the Lord your God is going to give you. (Exodus 20:12 CEV)

The Ten Commandments are listed in Exodus 20 as part of the account of the tribes of Israel becoming a unified people through 40 years wandering in the wilderness. To this day, God's people see the Ten Commandments as a summary of God's law — the way he directs and expects us to live in relationship with him and with one another.

One of these commandments is particularly significant to us on Fathers Day: Honour your father and your mother.

Here are some implications of this commandment.

Why should we honour parents?

(1) God tells us to honour them. So honouring them is obeying and honouring God.

Children, obey your parents as the Lord wants, because this is the right thing to do. (Ephesians 6:1)

(2) God promises good things to those who honour their parents.

This is the first command that has a promise with it — then everything will be well with you, and you will have a long life on the earth. (Ephesians 6:2,3)

Obeying God by honouring parents brings not so much living to a ripe old age, but enjoying the blessings of happiness, health, family, peace, good government, etc. for several generations.

(3) Parents represent God in our lives.

It is our duty to show the world that we are grateful for all the good things we have received from our parents. They are the ones through which God has given us so much — physically, materially and spiritually.

How should we honour fathers?

Honouring parents involves such things as: loving them, obeying them, serving them, doing cheerfully what they ask us to do

and repaying them with kindness and love for their care of us.

We are to control ourselves when we speak to them.

We should show by our attitude that we look on them as having the highest status after God — no matter how humble, poor, frail and odd they may be. They don't lose their honour because of their way of life or their failings.

We are to honour them by being of service to them, giving them a helping hand and looking after them when they are old, sick, frail or poor. We do this respectfully as a thing that is done in God's eyes and enjoy doing it.



Nothing is to count more than the will and word of parents.

However, we are to refuse to obey our parents when they command us to do what is sinful.

We must obey God, not human

authority! (Acts 5:29)

What does God require of parents?

God requires that parents are worthy of love and respect.

Every parent is to bring up his children above all to respect and know God.

Such parents do not make their children angry, but raise them with the training and teaching of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4)

Who are the 'fathers' we honour?

We honour four kinds of parents:

- parents by blood relationships,
- parents in charge of a household,
- parents of their people, eg teachers, employers, government leaders,
- spiritual parents who encourage and guide us by God's word.

Paul wrote: 'Through the Good News I became your father in Christ Jesus.'
(1 Corinthians 4:15)

And the good news

No human parent can, by himself or herself, completely fulfil their God-given role.

No child can, by himself or herself, completely fulfil their duty as a child.

Jesus was a perfect Son of a perfect Father. Yet he chose to pay the penalty for our shortcomings and our wilful disobedience.

Because of this, we are restored to the roles God intended for us in our relationship with God and with one another.

AN IMAGE

**Children are a gift from the Lord; babies are a reward.
Children who are born to a young man are like arrows in the hand of a warrior.
Happy is the man who has his bag full of arrows. — Psalm 127:3-5 (NCV)**

A quiver is a pouch for a hunter's or warrior's arrows. A full quiver of arrows means a man is equipped to take on his enemies and provide for his family.

This rather strange image from the psalms can give us some things to think about on Fathers Day.

Children are a blessing and reward from God. They are gifts and rewards; blessings, not burdens.

Blessing from God can be transmitted through children.

Children are an asset for at least three generations: their parents, their children, and their grandchildren.

The arrows in a quiver may be different sizes, shapes, and styles and for different purposes. The number of arrows in each quiver will be different. So too, children in a family have different personalities and abilities.

How straight an arrow flies depends on how it is constructed and how it is aimed.

A hunter wouldn't expect an arrow that was fashioned improperly to fly straight and true, and we can't expect our children to do what is right without being trained.

There are three parts to an arrow: the point, the shaft, and the feathers. Like an arrow, children need a sharp point. They need a way of looking at things that can pierce through the clutter of this world and see things from God's point of view.

An arrow also needs a strong shaft that won't break. This shaft is like the unchangeable Word of God.

The feathers of an arrow are what keep it going straight and from veering off in the wrong direction. For a child, the discipline of Godly parents and teachers are like feathers, steering them to serve their heavenly Father with all their heart and to love their neighbours as themselves.

The first verses of Psalm 127 speak about building a house (or a home or a family): unless God is the builder, we labour in vain — our efforts are worthless.

Parents can see God working in our families. They can find peace and rest when they believe that God controls all things, even building families, and trust him to do so.



FATHERS DAY BADGES

If you are honouring fathers at this service, you may want to give each father a badge of recognition.

Children could make badges the week before and give them to fathers on the day.

Alternatively badge-making can be part of a family time before the service. Offer fathers (and all worshipers) a cuppa — or even a pancake breakfast.

Set up the badge-making materials on a table in the hall and encourage people to make them on arrival at the service.

QUIVER BADGE

Psalm 127 speaks of children as being like arrows in a man's hand or in his quiver. Using that image, you can make quiver badges.

Make the quiver itself from



- felt (cut a square, fold it in half, stitch down the open side and across the bottom)
- card (cut a square, fold it in half, glue or staple along the open side and the bottom)
- an envelope (seal it and cut off one end)

Paper quivers can be decorated with designs or with the name of the father.

Make arrows from plastic drinking straws cut to a length about $1\frac{1}{4}$ times the depth of the quiver.

- Cut a slit in one end of the straw.
- Cut out a paper 'feather', write on it a child's name. Insert the feather in the slit of the straw.

Don't worry about points for the arrows. The points will be hidden in the quivers.

Children put their arrow in their father's quiver.

Any of these quiver designs can be attached with safety pins.

VARIATIONS

1. Since many fathers are likely to wear shirts or jackets with breast pockets, you may want to use a plastic pocket-protector as a pattern for your quiver. Dad can put the quiver in his pocket so there is not need to worry about attaching it. Dad's name (or the word 'Dad') could be on the flap that shows on the outside of the pocket.

2. Design the quiver with arrows as a magnet. It can be attached to shirts with a magnet inside and outside the shirt. It can then become a fridge magnet at home as a reminder of the Fathers Day worship experience.

3. Each worshipper can make their own straw arrow and put it in the quiver of their own father or of another man in the congregation who has been in some way 'like a father' to them.

OTHER BADGES

There are many possible designs for a badge. You can purchase or make 'Fathers Day' or '#1 Dad' badges.



QUOTES ABOUT DADS

The father who does not teach his son his duties is equally guilty with the son who neglects them. — *Confucius*

I cannot think of any need in childhood as strong as the need for a father's protection. — *Sigmund Freud*

One father is more than a hundred Schoolmasters. — *George Herbert*

It is easier for a father to have children than for children to have a real father. — *Pope John XXIII*

He didn't tell me how to live; he lived, and let me watch him do it. — *Clarence Kelland*

I observe this Fathers Day not just as a father grateful to be present in my daughters' lives, but also as a son who grew up without a father in my own life . . . In many ways I came to understand the importance of fatherhood through its absence — both in my life and in the lives of others . . .

On this Fathers Day, I am recommitting myself to those duties that all parents share: to build a foundation for our children's dreams, to give them the love and support they need to fulfil them, and to stick with them the whole way through, no matter what doubts we may feel or difficulties we may face. That is my prayer for all of us on this Fathers Day.

— *Barak Obama, Parade, 21/06/09*

I don't care how poor a man is; if he has family, he's rich. — *M*A*S*H, Colonel Potter*

It is a wise father that knows his own child. — *William Shakespeare*

When I was a boy of fourteen, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be twenty-one, I was astonished at how much he had learned in seven years. — *Mark Twain*

Small boys become big men through the influence of big men who care about small boys. — *Unknown*

4 years: 'My Daddy can do anything!'

7 years: 'My Dad knows a lot...a whole lot.'

8 years: 'My father does not know quite everything.'

12 years: 'Oh well, naturally Father does not know that either.'

14 years: 'Oh, Father? He is hopelessly old-fashioned.'

21 years: 'Oh, that man; he is out of date!'

25 years: 'He knows a little bit about it, but not much.'

30 years: 'I must find out what Dad thinks about it.'

35 years: 'Before we decide, we will get Dad's idea first.'

50 years: 'What would Dad have thought about that?'

60 years: 'My Dad knew literally everything!'

65 years: 'I wish I could talk it over with Dad once more.' — *Unknown*

The most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother. — *Unknown*

One night a father overheard his son pray: Dear God, Make me the kind of man my Daddy is. Later that night, the Father prayed, Dear God, Make me the kind of man my son wants me to be. — *Unknown*

A man never stands as tall as when he kneels to help a child. — *Unknown*

My father gave me the greatest gift anyone could give another person, he believed in me. — *Jim Valvano*

Train up a child in the way that he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it. — *Proverbs 22:6*





A SAMPLE WORSHIP PLAN

Suggested wording for worship leaders is in *italic print*

1. ARRIVAL, BEFORE WORSHIP

As people arrive the **HOSPITALITY TEAM** invites them into the hall where **YOUTH** from the congregation serve a cuppa and biscuit and help children to make quiver and arrow badges for the men they are attending worship with. They may make additional badges for fathers or grandparents who are not worshipping with them.

For about five minutes before the service begins:

- the **TECH TEAM** shows photos of dads and grandparents from the congregation interacting with their children in various ways.
- the **MUSIC TEAM** plays some of the music that will be used in the service.

HOSPITALITY TEAM welcomes people to the service and helps them settle into seats.

2. WELCOME / INVOCATION

WORSHIP LEADER: *Happy Fathers Day! Welcome to (name of church).*

We are here on this special day to worship God, who has made himself known to us as the Spirit who brings us together in faith; as Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour — and as our all-powerful, perfect, loving, forgiving heavenly Father.

We'll begin our worship with a song praising our heavenly Father. Feel free to join with the music team if you want to do so.

3. OPENING SONG

MUSIC TEAM leads people in singing the first song: *'We are heirs of the Father'* or another song of praise to God, the Father.

4. A COMMAND

TECH TEAM shows a slide of the commandment about honouring parents.

WORSHIP LEADER (or another **MODERATOR**) conducts an interview in which various people respond to the questions:

- Where did this law come from?
- Why do we honour parents?
- How do we honour parents?
- What does all this have to do with our celebration of Fathers Day?

This presentation may be scripted (use the notes on page 9 as a starting point), rehearsed and presented by a panel of three or four people of any ages.

Alternatively the **MODERATOR** can draw the responses from the congregation. It is probably best if several people have been pre-warned that this will happen and have had a chance to read page 9. Other people may give spontaneous answers.

5. CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

WORSHIP LEADER: *Hands up if you have (or have ever had) a father.*

WL: raises own hand.

WL: Keep your hands up if you are honouring your dad today.

Keep your hand up if you always honour your dad the way God wants you to honour him.

WL: (and probably everyone else) puts hand down.

WL: *I love my Dad, but I sometimes groan about his 'dad jokes'. I suspect God does too.*

It's worse than that. I don't always respect and obey Dad the way God wants me to.

I sometimes think and say unkind things to him and about him. I sometimes take him for granted and feel that the time I spend with him is a bit of a burden. I get upset when he asks me to do something I don't want to do.

I don't know what your relationship is with your father. I hope it is generally a good one. But I'm pretty sure each of you has some things in your relationship that are not perfect.

Now is a time for you to think of your dad, and quietly, in your heart, tell your heavenly Father about anything that is bothering you.

The music team will play some music while you are thinking about your Dad.

MUSIC TEAM plays a quiet instrumental interlude.

WL: *No human father can fulfil his God-given role as parent perfectly.*

No child can fulfil their duty as a child perfectly

Jesus was a perfect son of a perfect Father. Yet he chose to pay the penalty for our shortcomings and for our wilful disobedience.

Because of this, when we are sorry for what we do wrong and tell God about it, God forgives us. And God helps us live as parents and children the way he planned for us.

6. SONG

MUSIC TEAM leads people in singing 'Because of your love' or another song about God's forgiveness.

7. A BIBLE STORY

WORSHIP LEADER: *One of my favourite stories from the Bible shows how forgiveness worked out in one family.*

Present the story of The Forgiving Father (Luke 15:11–32) in the most effective way you can. Consider:

- A skilled reader reads the story directly from the Bible.
- A father invites the children to the front and reads the story from a well-written Bible story book. Illustrations from the book may be displayed on a screen.
- Use a video of the story, either a commercial one or a video of a dramatisation you have made yourselves.
- A narrator tells the story with 'actors' pantomiming the action.

7. A FATHERS DAY STORY

A member of the congregation who is willing to do so, can tell briefly of a personal experience of healing in the relationship between father and child.

Alternatively a child or group of children can present a tribute to their fathers — either one they have prepared themselves or a published song, rhyme or skit.

8. SONG

MUSIC TEAM leads the congregation in singing 'Praise and thanksgiving, Father we offer' or another song about God the Father.

9. SERMON

WORSHIP LEADER or **PREACHER** develops one of the Fathers Day themes outlined on pages 6–10.

10. SONG

MUSIC TEAM leads people in singing 'He's got the whole world in his hands (include verses 'fathers and mothers', 'sons and daughters') or another song that will particularly appeal to children.

11. ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORSHIP LEADER makes any necessary brief announcements. Include explanation about how the offering will be collected and how the offering money will be used. Also give guests permission to refrain from giving an offering.

12. OFFERING

The offering is collected in your usual manner.

13. A PRAYER

TECH TEAM displays the words of the Lord's Prayer on screen. Use the version your congregation is most familiar with.

WORSHIP LEADER: *Our Heavenly Father invites us to come to him and talk to him the way children talk to a loving earthly father.*

These are the words Jesus suggested we use and the things Jesus suggested we talk about with our heavenly Father.

A representative father reads the prayer and inserts comments and additions that explain the special meaning of the prayer for fathers. See page 6 for some starting points.

FATHER: *When I pray this prayer as a father I think about . . .*

A representative older child, youth, or young adult reads the prayer and inserts comments and additions that explain the special meaning of the prayer for children. See page 6 for some starting points.

YOUTH: *When I pray this prayer as a child, I think about . . .*

The prayer leader reads the prayer and inserts comments and additions that relate to concerns in the community and the wider world.

PRAYER LEADER: *When I pray this prayer for the world, I think about . . .*

Let's join in praying this prayer together.

CONGREGATION reads (or sings) the Lord's Prayer.

14. A FAMILY BLESSING

An individual (or a family) of the congregation can tell briefly of their practice of parents blessing children — possibly at bedtime or each morning.

Alternatively, a reader can read George's Story (page 5).

AND/OR

WORSHIP LEADER or a representative of your family ministry team can tell about a plan/resource you have that will help parents form the habit of blessing their children regularly.

For example Faith Inkubators' *Faith Five* plan:

Every night in every home

(1) talk about highs and lows of the day;

(2) read a portion of God's word;

(3) talk about how that word from God relates to your highs and lows;
(4) pray for one another; and
(5) bless one another ('God loves you and I love you' or other words).

A bookmark with the 'Faith Five' is available from Lutheran Tract Mission
175 Archer Street, North Adelaide SA, 5006
Email: tracts@ll.org.au
Tel (08) 8360 7200.

Families with no young children can use the resource themselves or with others in their household.

15. BLESSING

TECH TEAM displays these words on screen.

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine upon you
and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favour,
and give you his peace. Amen.

Numbers 6:24-26

WORSHIP LEADER: *At the end of worship, we often use these words of blessing.*

I particularly like them because they remind me that God is my heavenly Father

- *who blesses me with everything I need — and many good things I don't really need*
- *who takes care of me*
- *who loves me so much, his face lights up when I come to him and he smiles at me*
- *who gives me peace — in myself, in my family and in the world.*

We're going to pray that blessing on one another now.

Those of you who are parents or grandparents may like to hold your child or put your hand on their head as we pray.

I'll say each line; you can repeat it after me.

WL AND CONGREGATION pray the prayer of blessing.

18. SONG

MUSIC TEAM leads the congregation in singing 'You make your face to shine on me' or another song for the close of worship.