

# NEC Coming of Age Service

Celebrating the Milestones...



The first smile...the first steps are precious milestones which as Parents we celebrate with glee; after all we are the greatest cheerleaders; so often lost for words as we shed tears of joy. The North England Conference, Children's Ministries Department, holding to the Divine Mandate of Deuteronomy 6, spoken to Parents and Israel, the faith community at large, seek to help Children embrace their identity as 'Children of God'. We seek to accomplish this through the village concept, of the Church working with Parents and the entire family, as 'it takes a village to raise a child'. 'The Coming-of-Age service' is needed more than ever, giving children a sense of their worth, as Churches celebrate, thanking God for the children, each amazing in their own way. This service focuses on two main groups: 4- to 5-year-olds and 11- to 12-year-olds. 4 to 5-year-old children have the daunting task of starting school, whether home schooled or venturing out to school for the first time, learning to read and write, count and do sums, of building friendships with teachers and peers. Some children easily adapt, others find it a little more challenging, but it's not long before everyone is settled, enjoying a good time.

The 11 to 12-year-old child is typically full of life and vitality, with physical growth at a rate faster than any time in life, except infancy. Hormonal changes take place in preparation for puberty. They possess increasingly advanced cognitive skills and emotional maturity. They have an amazing capacity for learning, the ability to think hypothetically, reason and use the skills they develop. It is a time of transitioning from

primary school to secondary school; of moving from childhood to youth. It is little wonder that "Among the Jews the twelfth year was the dividing line between childhood and youth." (*Desire of Ages*, p. 75)

The 'Coming of Age Service' will take the form of a thanksgiving service, giving a number of parents/guardians the opportunity to give thanks to God for their child and for the church family to also give thanks, culminating in a number of children responding in thanks to God, their parents and the church family for their loving care.



Coming of Age packs will be required for each child. The 4-5-year-old pack will include 'Jesus Loves Me in 28 Ways' and a Bible Story book, this pack which would usually retail at £7.50, is offered at the subsidised price of £2.50 per pack +postage. The 11-12-year-old pack features 'What We Believe - For Teens' Fundamental Beliefs of the Church and 'Humble Hero', the Teens version of *Desire of Ages*, together with other books, which would usually retail at £19.95, is offered at the subsidised price of £6.95 per pack +postage. Please contact the North England Conference Children's Ministries Secretary to place your order.

Churches outside of the NEC will be required to pay the full price.

## The Coming of Age Service

### Sabbath School

- Welcome
- Prayer
- Hymn (choose one): SDA Hymnal #92 'This Is My Father's World'  
SDA Hymnal #93 'All Things Bright And Beautiful' SDA Hymnal #190 'Jesus Love Me This I Know'  
Contemporary Songs: Here I Am to Worship How Great Is Our God If I were A Butterfly
- Scripture Reading: 1Samuel1:9-28
- Testimonies from Parents of 4-5-year-olds: (Select three to four parents allotting them 2 minutes, to share photos etc. of their child, praising God for His leading in their life and home.)
- Special Item
- Testimonies from Children: (Choose three to four 4–5-year-olds (to thank God for their gifts and abilities and for their families- 1 minute each)
- Testimonies from Parents 11-12-year-olds: (Select three to four parents allotting them 2 minutes, to share photos etc. of their child, praising God for His leading in their life and home.)
- Special Item Testimonies from Children: (Choose three to four 11/12-year-olds to thank God for their gifts and abilities and for their families- 2 minutes each)
- Time of Prayer: Offered by two parents and two 4–5-year-olds
- Time of Prayer: Offered by two parents and two 11–12-year-olds
- Lesson Study Summary
- Offering
- Hymn: SDA Hymnal #652 'Love at Home'
- Prayer

## **The Worship Service**

- Invocation
- Welcome/Introduction
- Praise & Worship Hymn: SDA Hymnal #653 'Lead them, My God to Thee'
- Scripture Reading: Luke 2:41-52
- Praise & Worship Hymn:
- Prayer
- Offering
- Children's Story: Gen. 18:1-15; 21:1-7 (Tell this story in your own words, sharing the meaning of Isaac's name -'laughter', and the joy that children bring into the home. Pray for the children, thanking God for the joy that they bring to the church family)
- Special Item
- Sermon: 'Jesus Comes of Age'
- Based on Luke 2:42-52, also read the corresponding chapter from the Desire of Ages: The Passover Visit, pp. 75-83. Use together with other study aids.
- Hymn: SDA Hymnal 309 'All to Jesus I Surrender'
- Prayer: (A prayer of praise to God for this very special milestone)

### **Alternatives:**

Scripture Reading: Daniel 1:1-4

Children's Story: Daniel 1:3-21

(Tell the story in your own words of how three youths chose to stand for God)

Sermon: 'Standing for God' (based on Daniel 2 and 3). Again, use the study aids as you prayerfully consider the text. Peer pressure is evident in this text and our youth often struggle to go against the tide of negative peer pressure. Relate this account to them and deal with the issue of identity

**Or,** Scripture Reading: 2 Kings 5:1

Children's Story: 2 Kings 4:1-7

(Tell the story in your own words of how God intervened through Elisha).

Sermon: A Little Girl Who Knew God. 2 Kings 5 - The account Naaman healed of leprosy and the role of a special little girl. Take time to consider the type of home this little girl must have come from and the situation she found herself in. Bring out the fact that God is with His children irrespective of the situation, relate this to the school context, etc.

### **Afternoon Service: 'Praise & Consecration'**

The afternoon provides the opportunity for the '11'/12. year olds and the entire church to praise God through song, music, poems, Scripture readings, etc. Items may be presented by family groups or youth groups, etc.

- Welcome
- Prayer
- Praise & Worship
- Hymn: SDA Hymnal #92. 'This is my Father's World'
- Scripture Reading: Matthew 6:1.9-34
- Time of Praise: Poems, music, songs, Scripture, etc. (Allocate 30-40 minutes to this)
- Responsive Reading: SDA Hymnal #82.8 'Youth'

- Special Item
- Charge for children who receive their welcome packs:

**We charge you to study the Word, let it be a lamp to your feet, a light on your path. Hide God's Word in your heart, treasure it and grow in faith day by day. Gain understanding and wisdom from spending time with God in prayer and through the study of His Word (Psalm 2:19; 2 Thessalonians 1:3).**

- Presentation of the 'Coming of Age Packs'
- Charge for children who have completed their year of study:

**We charge you to 'Love God, your God, with your whole heart: love Him with all that's in you, love Him with all you've got! (Deuteronomy 6:5 Message Bible). Study His Word and it will be a lamp to your feet, a light to guide your path. You're here to be light. Let your light shine before others that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16).**

- Presentation of 'Coming of Age' Certificates
- Song: 'Into My Heart' Into my heart, into my heart, come into my heart, Lord Jesus Come in today, come in to stay, come into my heart, Lord Jesus Out of my heart, out of my heart, shine out of my heart, Lord Jesus Shine out today, shine out always, shine out of my heart, Lord Jesus
- Prayer of Consecration: (For the 11-12. year olds and the church)

## **A Time to Study**

- Arrange designated times each month for 4–5-year-olds to study 'Jesus Loves Me in 28 Ways,' their 28 fundamental beliefs with the Children's Ministries Team. Likewise, do the same for 11–12-year-olds to study the 'What We Believe - For Teens' Fundamental Beliefs book at church, together with the DBS Bible Studies for 7- 12-year-olds, or the Amazing Facts 28 Fundamental Beliefs Bible Studies (This may be ordered directly from Stanborough Press).
- Encourage Parents to read the Bible story with their 4-5-year-old child. Encourage parents to read the Conflict of the Ages book with their 11-12-year-old child at home: Patriarch's and Prophets, Prophets and Kings; The Desire of Ages; Acts of the Apostles or The Great Controversy.
- The other books in the 11-12-year-old pack may be read by the child (you may wish to form book club, enabling the 11-12-year-olds to share what they have read).
- The Youth Department could plan a programme based on the 'Body Beautiful Book.'
- The 4-5-year group and 11-12-year-old group will receive their graduation certificate the following year during the 'Coming of Age Service, after completing their year of study.