

# NEC Coming of Age Service

Celebrating the Milestones...

The first smile, the first steps are milestones and milestones are to be celebrated. The North

England Conference, Children's Ministries 'Coming of Age service' affords Churches time to pause, reflect and give thanks to God for the children within the congregation, each one of them 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, of learning to read and write, count, add and subtract, 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 and having 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 the realm of 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.

Churches conducting this service will be required to purchase a pack of books for each 4-5-year-old child and each 11-12-year-old child. These may be ordered via the NEC Children's Ministries Department, at a discounted price for churches within the NEC. The 4-5-year-old pack will include 'Jesus Loves Me in 28 Ways' and a Bible Story book, at the subsidised price of £2.50 pack. The 11-12-year-old pack which would normally retail at £19.95 is subsidised by the Children's Ministries Department so that churches only pay £6.95. The pack of books will be presented to the children during the Worship Service. Churches outside of the NEC will be required to pay the full price for the 'Coming of Age,' pack of books.

- ❖ Arrange special times each month for the 4-5 year olds to study 'Jesus Loves Me in 28 Ways,' their 28 fundamental beliefs with the Children's Ministries Team. Also arrange special times each month for the 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 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.

## Sabbath School

- Welcome
- Prayer
- Praise & Worship
- Hymn (choose one):

SDA Hymnal #92 'This Is My Father's World'	Contemporary Songs: Here I Am to Worship
SDA Hymnal #93 'All Things Bright And Beautiful'	How Great Is Our God
SDA Hymnal #190 'Jesus Love Me This I Know'	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 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'
- Prayer of Consecration

- 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

