

# 10 Ways to Connect with Kids, Families on Christmas Eve

Kids can be some of our toughest critics.

Are you ready to welcome them to your church this Christmas?

Churches have such an opportunity during the Christmas season and especially during Christmas Eve services to welcome new faces - whether they're dragged there by family, feel obligated to come out of a sense of tradition, got an invitation from a friend to your church or are drawn to the Christmas story.

In particular, this creates such an opportunity to show your church's heart for younger generations.

Most people's stereotype of church is that it is full of old people. Christmas Eve services give you an opportunity to go above and beyond to show you're welcome and ready for all generations.

How can you make sure younger generations, kids in particular, feel truly welcomed at your church on Christmas Eve?

1. Have a kids' pack - little packages for kids at the door with a few crayons, coloring pages or other things to help them engage in the Christmas story from their seats.
2. Create an atmosphere of celebration by treating people as your special guests on this special night.

Could you give out hot chocolate and cookies as people arrive? Have a Christmas-themed photo booth for people to take pictures with their phones? Have a welcome card that explains where the nursery is, where washrooms are, what to expect during the service?

3. Be intentional about the age on stage.

This shows who you value - aim to have different ages and people from different backgrounds and ethnicities on the stage during the service.

Include a variety of people in the worship, doing readings, in any videos shown and so on. Consider using different languages from the stage to represent your community.

4. Welcome children directly.

Make sure greeters acknowledge and greet the kids directly, not just the adults. From the stage, thank everyone, and kids specifically, for being there.

5. Remember that announcements are for the guests.

It can be tempting to think this is the time to tell everyone all the stuff you do the rest of the year and go into great detail about your kids' program and more. Don't do it - it'll feel cheap and they won't remember it anyway.

The best advertisement, what they will remember, is how you treated them and their kids while they were there.

Think of the three to four things you'd really want to know if it were your first time at a new event and leave your announcements to that.

Invite everyone back specifically to join you at Sundays in January. It's the equivalent of when you have someone in your home saying, "We really enjoyed your company. Let's make a plan to do this again."

6. Involve and talk specifically to kids and youth.

Ask them questions during the service to engage them. Acknowledge the presence of the younger generations and that you understand a little bit of the space they are in.

If you do candle lighting where each person holds a candle, let the kids have one too. Trust parents to monitor them. Sing at least a couple songs (Christmas carols) that even those that don't come to church regularly are likely to know.

7. Have a seating plan.

Consider having ushers seat families with young kids near the front so kids can see what is happening easier.

At the entrance, have a pile of pillows or booster seats (you might be able to borrow some from a local theater) for kids.

8. Keep it short.

With all ages present on a busy, exciting night for all, it does not help anyone or leave a good impression to drag out the service, especially the sermon.

9. Link your Christmas offering to a cause.

Younger generations will be impressed if it is clear you're using the money to make a difference in the community. Let people see you are serious about loving your community.

10. Preach the gospel in a way that is understandable for all ages.

It is good news for all ages and we need to hear it. God has come to us! God through this Christ child is reconciling us to God and to each other. This is great news for all people!

Do not make any assumptions that people know the true message of Christmas - connect with people where they are and invite them to consider the message of Christmas.

Preach as if it is the first time someone has heard about Jesus and they don't know the amazing news of Christmas. Work to make your message connect with non-Christians of all ages.

Make sure your message is understandable to someone who knows nothing about the church and Christianity. What a beautiful opportunity to show and tell the good news!

Christmas is a wonderful time for connection with your neighbors and neighborhoods. Use it well!

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