

Family Friendly Home Church Sample Models

Family friendly home churches are meant to allow parents and children to participate in home church together. These home churches can take on a variety of forms to help accomplish this goal. Here are samples of three different family friendly home church options as well as suggested outlines for how to run each model.

Family Friendly Basic

In this format, there is either childcare (adults rotating, or a paid/volunteer sitter) or kids present in a place where parents can view them. Whatever the childcare scenario is, Plan-to-Protect guidelines are followed and those who supervise are security cleared.

Though this format is informal, creating a schedule helps children feel this time is about them, and not just a waiting period until they can be with their parents again. If they are occupied in a positive way, behavioural issues are reduced, and children feel as though the times moves more quickly. A basic schedule could be as follows:

0:00-0:15	- Free Play
0:15-0:45	- Video or Game
0:45-1:00	- Snack/Free Play
1:00-1:30	- Video

Family-Integrated

In this format, children are involved in the fabric of the home church while there is space and availability for them to be separate at some points. Children and adults are together for an introductory time, prayer time, music, or other brief points of discussion (e.g. Beginning the time with: "What did you learn this week at church?" and allowing adults and children the space to hear from one another.) The sample schedule below has additional information that may help to paint a picture of what this type of home church could look like, however, the suggestions are not exhaustive.

0:00-0:10	- Welcome
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Children and adults begin together for welcome, announcements, and opening prayer. If your home church includes musical worship, extend this time together to create some musical worship that incorporates children in some way (hand out musical instruments, create some actions to songs, etc).

0:10-0:20 - Snack and Transition

Grab a snack and head to breakout groups.

0:20-1:00 - Breakout Groups

Kids have their own breakout group with adult leadership; adults head to breakout groups for discussion at same time. If your home church has older kids, and the subject matter seems age appropriate, you may choose to do breakout groups while including the older kids in the adult discussions (this may not be an "all-the-time" thing, but something to try every now and then). There are resources posted each week on The Parent Blog and in the Elders folder on Google Drive to help facilitate kids breakout groups. There is one document for preschool ages (0-5) and one document for kids (grades 1-5). These preschool and kids home church resources function in a similar fashion to home church notes and questions for adults in that there are "hangout," "hear," and "huddle" sections. The "hangout" section often includes an activity to do; it is suggested to re-watch the teaching video for kids during this time. The "hear" section often has a verse to look up.

Home church is a wonderful time to help kids learn how to navigate their Bibles well. Take the time to help them learn to do this. If your group has preschool children and grade school kids together, depending on the age and maturity of the preschool children, you may choose to do only the kids midweek content, or if all the children are slightly younger, you may choose to do the preschool midweek content. Oftentimes there is a colouring page, or invitation to draw or make something in the midweek content as well.

Supplies are kept to a minimum, but having some for drawing, colouring, etc. can be a big win. (Ask your lead pastor about a **family friendly home church supply kit!**)

1:00-1:30 - Huddles

As adult groups move into huddles, kids can too! Expectations may look a little different, but kids can do this. The midweek kids content includes a couple of questions and then a suggested way to pray. Depending on age and maturity, consider having an older kid lead a huddle time with a few other kids (this is a great way to develop young leaders). If there are enough kids, have a couple of older kids lead a couple of different huddles.

If you have younger kids in the preschool range, try an abbreviated huddle time; ask them what they'd like to pray about for themselves, or for someone else, or for each other. Invite kids to do the praying, and then consider praying for each one by name. For preschoolers or kids, a full half an hour while grown-ups do huddles is probably pretty unattainable. When kids are finished huddling, consider playing a game, watching another brief video from the curriculum resources document, or planning a compassion idea or special event together.

Family-Centred

In this format, children are involved in the fabric of the home church from beginning to end. Children and adults are intentional about doing things together. The format and timing are highly dependent on the makeup of the group.