

# Kids in the Divine Service

Short Guides for Learning  
About the Parts of the Church



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## KIDS IN THE DIVINE SERVICE

### What is the “church”?

When someone says the word “church,” we usually think of a place people go to worship. The Lutheran Confessions teach us that the church is the “assembly of all the believers among whom the Gospel is preached in its purity and the Holy Sacraments are administered according to the Gospel.” Wow! The church is so much more than a building!



### If the church is more than just the building, then why is the building and everything in it so important?

The church building, or the “sanctuary,” is a place where God is present. We know that our Lord has promised to come to us in His Sacraments. Since God is actually here with us in His house, we should be very reverent, or respectful. We don’t want anything in the church pulling us away from what God gives us in His Word and Sacraments. Everything should direct our attention toward Him.



**Parents:** Before or after the service, direct your children to the wonderfully Gospel-rich symbolism found in the sanctuary, including the on the altar, windows and banners. Remind them that the Lord truly comes to us here in His Word and Sacraments. He brings us what we really need: the forgiveness of sins.

## KIDS IN THE DIVINE SERVICE



### What are the peculiar windows in the church?

If you look around while sitting in the Divine Service, you'll most likely see windows that are different than the windows in your house. These windows are made with pieces of colored glass. These colored pieces may even have designs painted on them. Stained glass windows are a very important part of the church building.

### Why do we have stained glass windows in the church?

Stained-glass windows add to the beauty of God's house, but that's not all that they do. These windows are designed to teach us. If you look closely at the windows, you'll find that most of them contain wonderful imagery. This imagery usually depicts **stories from the Bible**, different **Christian symbols** or different **articles of the Christian faith**; and it's all wrapped up in beautiful pictures made from colored and painted glass! What a wonderful way to glorify our Lord and to proclaim the Gospel!



**Parents:** After worship, be sure to walk around and look at the windows with your child. If there are windows with different themes, take a few moments each week to discuss the individual teaching points of each window. Encourage your child to ask the pastor for help.



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### Why do we worship on Sunday?

Do you remember on what day Jesus rose from the dead? On what day did Jesus appear to His disciples on the road to Emmaus? If you guessed Sunday, you are right! The Early Church gathered on Sunday because it directed our attention to Jesus' resurrection from the dead. Many other miraculous events in the early Christian Church, such as Pentecost, happened on Sunday.



### When did Christians begin gathering together for worship on Sundays?

We know from the Bible that during Paul's lifetime Christians met on Sunday to hear God's Word and celebrate Holy Communion (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2). Though Christians in different regions of the world sometimes worshipped on different days, by A.D. 325 most Christians worshipped on Sunday because they considered it "the Lord's Day." Wow, what a great tradition we share with our Christian ancestors!



**Parents:** In the Early Church, Christians used different terms for their day of worship such as "First Day" or "Eighth Day." The label "the Lord's Day" stands out as the most significant title chosen by the Church. Direct your children to the significance in having a particular day set aside for receiving God's wonderful gifts through Word and Sacrament.



## KIDS IN THE DIVINE SERVICE

### What does “worship” really mean?

Most people use the word “worship” to mean something we do to honor God. Because of this misunderstanding, many people believe that a church service is what we do for God. The word “worship” comes from the root words “worth” and “ship.” These two words describe God rather than the ones praising Him. These words describe a God who is *worthy* of being honored and adored because of His love for us. God gives us His love through His Word and Sacraments. Worship is not something we do, but rather something that God does for us!



### What makes the Divine Service so important?

The Divine Service is not about what we are doing for God, but who God is and what He does for us in the ways He has promised: His Word and Sacraments. That’s why Lutherans call it *Divine Service*. God is serving us! What a wonderful God we have!



**Parents:** The Divine Service is like listening to one long reading from the Bible. Everything in the Divine Service has been given to us through God’s Word. Explain this to your children, reminding them that it is God’s Word that delivers God’s salvation to us!

## KIDS IN THE DIVINE SERVICE



### What is the “pulpit”?

You probably noticed that the pastor preaches to the congregation from the same place in the church almost every time. This place is called the pulpit. The word “pulpit” comes from the Latin word “pulpitum,” meaning “scaffold.” Do you know what a scaffold is?

A scaffold is a platform which is raised high up into the air. If you have ever seen someone washing windows on a building, they were probably standing on a scaffold.

### Why do pastors preach from a pulpit?

Before the invention of the microphone, it was sometimes hard to hear what the pastor was saying. By raising the place where the pastor preaches, he could better project his voice for all of the people present to hear the wonderful Gospel. Raising the pulpit above everything else also helps to signify the importance of proclaiming God’s pure Word. What a wonderful invention the pulpit is!



**Parents:** Before or after the service, allow your child to walk up to the pulpit to get a better look. Encourage them to step into the pulpit to get a view of the congregation. Remind them to be reverent in God’s holy places. During the service, before the sermon, remind them that pastor is about to preach God’s Word and that the pulpit will help them to see and hear him clearly!

## KIDS IN THE DIVINE SERVICE



Every Sunday morning, God's people gather together to receive the wonderful gifts of salvation. The gifts that our Lord has for us are delivered in different ways. One of these very important ways is the sermon.

### Why is the sermon so important?

Some people don't like the sermon. They think it is too long, or maybe it is too boring. Some people even try to think of other things while the pastor is preaching. When we are tempted to think this way, we must remember what the sermon is all about. In the sermon, **the wonderful Gospel message of Christ** and all that He has done for us on the cross is proclaimed. Through the sermon, the pastor brings this great message to people right where they are. Though we see and hear our pastor in the pulpit, The words of the Gospel are spoken to us and all people by Jesus, saving all from their sins. Wow! What a great way to actually hear the voice of our Savior!



**Parents:** Before church, remind your children that Jesus speaks to them directly during the sermon. Let them know that the message is not just for adults, but for Jesus' little lambs too! Encourage them to sit and listen to Jesus as he tells them the Good News. If they get lost in the sermon, comfort them by, after the service, explaining things that might have been confusing.



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### What is the “lectern”?

When the Lord calls us together for worship, He feeds us with His wonderful Word and Sacraments. In most churches, **the Bible**

**sits on a stand called a “lectern.”** The word “lectern” comes from the Latin word “lectio,” which means “reading.”



### Why is the Bible read from a lectern?

For thousands of years, God’s living Word has been read to His people. When this Word is read to us, we remember that God continues to deliver His promise of salvation to us through faithful preaching and teaching. With the help of the lectern, our church Bible is in a great place for reading to all of God’s people!



**Parents:** Before or after the service, allow your child to walk up to the lectern in order to get a better look. Allow them to look at the church Bible. Remind them to be reverent in God’s holy places. During the service, before the readings, remind them that they are about to hear God’s Word, and the lectern holds the Bible that they will hear God’s wonderful promises from!

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### What is the “altar”?

**When you walk into the sanctuary, what is the first thing you notice?** Maybe you see the beautiful stained glass windows. Maybe you noticed the candles. Of all the wonderful sights in our sanctuary, one thing probably comes to your attention first: the altar. The altar is the large, table-like object located directly in the center at the front of the building. The word “altar” comes from the Latin word “altare,” which means “a place for offering sacrifices.”

### Why do we have an altar when we don’t sacrifice anything on it?

It’s kind of scary to think that we might use an altar for sacrifice. We look at the altar through the eyes of the Gospel. On the top of the altar are often carved five crosses — one for each of the five wounds of Christ. They mark this altar as a place where no more blood sacrifices will occur. The only sacrifice needed was made on the cross. The altar is a place where Christ gives out the forgiveness He earned for us through His death and resurrection. Wow, the altar sure is an important place!



**Parents:** During the service, direct your children’s attention to the altar. Point out that during the Divine Service this is where God has promised to come to be with us. After the service, take your children up to the altar to observe. Remind them to be reverent in God’s holy place.

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### Why is there a rail in the front of the church?

That railing you see up near the altar is the altar rail. Some churches might even have a chancel rail a few steps away from the altar rail nearer to the congregation. **Does your church have both of these rails?**

### What are these rails used for?

The chancel rail divides the church into two important parts: the "nave," which is the largest part of the church where the congregation sits; and the "chancel," which is the part of the church where the altar is located. The altar rail separates the altar from the rest of the chancel. It used to be, back in the Middle Ages, these rails were important for separating the congregation from the pastor or priest. As our understanding of the Lord's Supper changed, the rails began to be used for more practical purposes. They became helpful places for God's people to kneel and receive His wonderful gifts. They are also used for confirmation, marriages, and other events in the church.



**Parents:** Before or after the service, direct your children's attention to the chancel and altar rails. Allow them to walk up to the rails in order to get a better look. Encourage them to make the sign of the cross, kneel and pray. Remind them to be reverent in God's holy place.

## KIDS IN THE DIVINE SERVICE

### What is a “parament”?

A parament (pronounced PAIR-uh-ment) is a colored piece of cloth that hangs on the important items of furniture in the sanctuary. **Can you**

**find the altar?** You may see a colored piece of cloth hanging on it. This parament is called the “frontal” or “superfrontal.”

**Can you find the pulpit?** The pulpit has a parament, too, as do many of the important furniture items in the sanctuary. Look around to see how many paraments are in your church.



### Why do we use paraments?

Paraments honor God and beautify His sanctuary based on the seasons of the Church Year. For example, during the season of Pentecost, the paraments are green. During Lent, the paraments are purple. The word “parament” comes from the Latin word “parare” which means “to decorate or adorn.” The paraments are not silent decorations. Each parament helps to proclaim the wonderful news of salvation through Jesus Christ!



**Parents:** Before or after worship, allow your child to get a closer look at the paraments in the sanctuary. (Remind them to be reverent in God's holy places.) Instruct them that the colors might be different than what they would expect at certain times in the Church Year. For example, the paraments are red on Reformation Day even though it falls during the season of Pentecost.



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# KIDS IN THE DIVINE SERVICE



## What do we call the room near the sanctuary?

The room near the sanctuary is called the “sacristy.” See if you can find the door to the sacristy in your church. The use of sacristies became common over 1500 years ago. In most churches you will find the sacristy beside or behind the altar area (called the chancel).



## What is it used for?

The sacristy is the storage place for the sacred items used in God’s house. For example, the vessels and utensils used for Holy Communion are stored there, as well as extra candles, oil and banners. Keeping them in a separate room helps to ensure they are not broken, misplaced or disturbed in any way. Some churches may have two kinds of sacristies. One is the “clergy sacristy” where the pastor keeps his vestments (the clothes he wears during the service). The other is the “altar guild sacristy” where the people who help keep the chancel looking nice store their supplies.



**Parents:** Before or after the service, allow your children to go into the sacristy to get a better look. Instruct them to be careful. The items there are set aside for use in the service. Help them to remember why the church uses a sacristy.



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## KIDS IN THE DIVINE SERVICE

### What are “vestments”?

When you first see the pastor and his assistants in the Divine Service, what do you notice about them? They are wearing long robes and other unique garments. These are called “vestments.” The word “vestment” comes from the Latin word *vestimentum* which means “garment of office.” Vestments are garments worn by the pastor and the assistants during the Divine Service and other prayer offices.



### Why are vestments used?

A person's vestment tells us about who they are and their role during the Divine Service. If you have two or more pastors, one may be dressed in vestments that mark him as the presiding minister. The other pastors may be dressed in vestments that mark them as assisting ministers. Vestments help to keep the proclamation of the Gospel and administration of the Sacraments in good order. Did you know that God's people have been using vestments since Old Testament times? Wow! Vestments are great tools in the church!



**Parents:** Before the Divine Service, direct your child's attention to the pastor's vestments. What color are they? How are they different from what you are wearing? Be sure to let your child approach the pastor after church to ask him questions about the vestments.

## KIDS IN THE DIVINE SERVICE



### Why do we use candles in the Divine Service?

Imagine that you are attending a worship service 500 years ago. Since there are no lights, even during the daytime, the church is dark. How will you see what is going on? How will you see the pastor? How will you walk up to the altar to receive the Lord's Supper? As you probably guessed, one of the first uses for candles in church was to give light in the sanctuary. Actually, oil lamps were probably used until the fourth century when candles became more common.



### Is there more to using candles than just lighting the room?

With the invention of the light bulb, candles were no longer needed to light the church. That doesn't mean they lost their importance in the church. Candles have been used for hundreds of years to symbolize Christ's words when he said: "I am the Light of the world" (John 8:12). **Candles remind us that Jesus is the Light that has conquered the darkness of sin.** As you can see, candles play an important role in our worship.

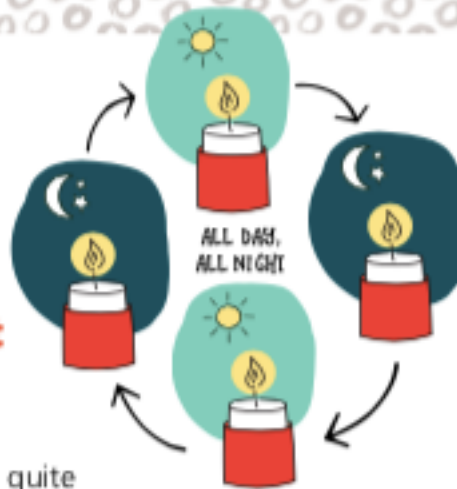


**Parents:** When the candles are lit at the beginning of the service, remind your children that Christ is the Light of the world. Teach them that when the candles are lit, we are honoring our God and recognizing His presence in the sanctuary. He is really here just as He promised!

## KIDS IN THE DIVINE SERVICE

### What is the candle in the sanctuary that stays lit all the time?

I'll bet you can count all of the candles in the church. There are quite a few. If you decide to try, don't forget to count the one that stays lit all the time. That's right, that little light in there is a candle! This particular candle is called an "eternal flame." This candle burns all the time. **Look close from where you are sitting. When you find it, maybe you can see it glowing.**



### Why do we have a candle that stays lit all the time?

When we see the eternal flame we are reminded that God is always present in our lives, and He promises to never leave us. God is especially present in His sanctuary where we hear His living Word and receive his wonderful Sacraments. If the candle burns out, we re-light it or put another one in its place. In other words, we do our best to keep it lit 24 hours-a-day.



**Parents:** Before or after the service, direct your child's attention to the eternal flame hanging above the altar. Remind them that this candle stays lit all year. Allow them to walk up to the altar in order to get a better look. Remind them to be reverent in God's holy place.

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### What is that great big candle?

There are many candles in our church sanctuary. Some we light every Sunday. Some we only light on certain occasions. The tall candle that you see up front, possibly next to the Baptismal font or up in front next to the altar, is one of those candles. That's the Paschal Candle!

### What is the Paschal Candle used for?

The Paschal Candle reminds us of Jesus' victory over death. Do you remember the story of the pillar of fire that led the Israelites at night in the wilderness after the Lord delivered them from slavery in Egypt? When Jesus died on the cross, He released us from the slavery of darkness and death due to our sin. Now, through our Baptism, we have been buried with Him in His death and we are now raised to new life through His resurrection! The Paschal Candle reminds us of this. Let that Gospel light shine!



**Parents:** Before or after the Divine Service, take your children up to look at the Paschal Candle. Point out the beautiful symbols on its surface that remind us of our Savior and what He has done for us. Remind them that "Jesus Christ is the Light of the world, the Light no darkness can overcome." (*Lutheran Service Book*, 243)

## KIDS IN THE DIVINE SERVICE

### What is the “baptismal font”?

In church, the baptismal font is a place where we see the Holy Spirit do His stuff! As St. Paul says in Titus: “He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:5–7). This all happens at the baptismal font.



### Why do we use a baptismal font?

Baptism is important in the lives of God's people. In Baptism you were given the forgiveness of sins, rescued from death and the devil, and given salvation. All of this comes to you through God's Word with the water in Baptism. The font reminds us of the wonderful gift of God's forgiveness. It also reminds us that our old sinful self has been drowned, and a new person arises to live in faith!



**Parents:** Before or after the service, allow your child to walk up to the baptismal font to get a better look. Remind them to be reverent in God's holy places. During the service, when the sign of the cross is made on the congregation, remind your child that the sign of the cross was made on them at their Baptism. It was there that they were marked as one redeemed by Christ.



## KIDS IN THE DIVINE SERVICE



### What is “making the sign of the cross”?

Making the sign of the cross means to draw an invisible cross on yourself at certain times during personal prayer, the Divine Service and other appropriate times during worship.

### How do I make the sign of the cross?

Hold your thumb and two fingers together. ① Touch your forehead, ② then your tummy, ③ your left shoulder, ④ then your right shoulder ⑤ and finally your chest. Try it a few times and you’ll get it. Before long, it will be easy to do!

### Why is it a great thing to do?

Can you think of a time when your pastor first made the sign of the cross on you? At your Baptism, you received the sign of the cross on your forehead and on your heart to mark you as one redeemed by Christ! Making the sign of the cross is a great way to remember all that Jesus has done for you on the cross and given to you in and through Baptism!



**Parents:** Before or after the service, practice making the sign of the cross with your children. Remind them that we may make the sign of the cross at certain times during the service, for example, anytime you see a small red “cross” symbol, or pastor makes the sign of the cross on the congregation.

## KIDS IN THE DIVINE SERVICE

### What is a “hymn”?

The word “hymn” comes from a Greek word which means “song of praise.” Webster’s Dictionary tells us that a hymn is “a song of praise especially in honor of God.” In the Church, we sing hymns because they are God’s Word put to music. What an awesome way to praise our Lord!



### Why do we sing hymns?

During the early years of the Christian Church, its music came from the Psalms. As new people came into the Church, they added new hymns. The Church’s hymns have stood the test of time, never failing God’s people as generations change. When we sing hymns, we are praising God with the words He has already put on our tongues! There is no better way to pray, praise, and give thanks to God than with the words He has given us.



**Parents:** In order to answer questions as to why we do what we do as Lutherans, including utilizing the hymnody, read the introduction on pages 6 and 7 in *Lutheran Worship*. Here you will find a brief summary of what Lutheran worship and hymnody are all about.

## KIDS IN THE DIVINE SERVICE

### What does the word “Amen” mean?

The word “amen” (pronounced AH-men) is Hebrew for **“certainly”** or **“truly.”**

Martin Luther said that it really means: **“Yes, yes, it shall be so.”** You probably

recognize this word from

hearing it or seeing it used in prayer.

Maybe you use it in your prayers every morning when you wake up and every

night when you go to sleep.

### Why do we use it?

God commands for us to pray. When we use the word “amen” at the end of our prayers, we are letting God know that **we truly believe that He will hear and answer all of our prayers** just as He has promised! What a great way to end a prayer!



**Parents:** Point out that Jesus used the word “amen” a lot in Scripture when He said things like: “Truly, truly I say to you.” Encourage your children to listen for and say “amen” at appropriate points in the service. In what places besides prayer do we hear it amen?



# GLOSSARY

**Absolution:** proclamation of God forgiving our sins



**Agnus Dei:** Latin = "Lamb of God"; sung/spoken before Communion (Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, have mercy on us...)

**Alleluia:** Hebrew = "praise the Lord"

**Altar:** piece of furniture in the chancel, similar to a table, that holds the wine and bread for Communion

**Baptism:** a sacrament, or Means of Grace, in which God gives His grace and forgiveness through ordinary water and in His Triune name

**Benediction:** Latin = "bless" (The Lord bless & keep you...)

**Canticle:** a hymn with words directly from the Bible

**Chancel:** the very front of the sanctuary containing the altar and pulpit

**Collect:** a short prayer read by the pastor to sum up or "to gather" the theme and prayers of the service

**Communion:** a sacrament, or Means of Grace, in which God grants forgiveness of sins through bread and wine + the Words of Institution; see "Consecrate"



**Confession:** apologizing to God for our sins

**Consecrate:** to dedicate to the Lord or declare holy; when Jesus' words are spoken over Communion

**Creed:** a statement of what someone believes

**Disciple:** a follower of Jesus

**Divine Service:** the weekly church service that includes the Lord's Supper

**Epistle:** Greek = "letter"; often the 2nd reading in worship

**Eucharist:** Greek = "giving thanks"; see "Communion"

**Font:** the container that holds the water for baptism

# GLOSSARY

**Gloria Patri**: Latin = "glory to the Father"; usually spoken at the end of a psalm or introit

**Heaven**: life with God forever

**Hell**: separation from God forever



**Hymn**: a song of prayer or praise to God, sung as part of a church service

**Introit**: Latin = "enter"; psalms sung/spoken to begin a church service

**Invocation**: Latin = "call upon"; calling upon God to bless us; said while making the Sign of the Cross (In the name of the Father, and the Son...)

**Kyrie eleison**: Greek = "Lord, have mercy"; asking God to forgive our sins

**Liturgy**: the order of hymns, prayers, + other parts of the church service

**Lord's Supper**: another name for Communion or the Eucharist

**Means of Grace**: the ways that God creates faith, forgives sin, + gives eternal life; Baptism, Communion, & the Gospel of Jesus (God's Word)

**Nunc Dimittis**: Latin = "now let [your servant] depart"; AKA Simeon's Song; read/sung after Communion

**New Testament**: The second part of the Bible, which tells about Jesus, His work, and the Early Church



**Offertory**: a song usually sung during the presentation of offerings; the things that we give back to God to thank Him for the blessings we have

**Old Testament**: The first part of the Bible, which tells the history of God's people from creation through the time of the Prophets



# GLOSSARY

**Pastor:** Latin = "shepherd"; Christ's messenger who prays, shares God's Word, + delivers God's gifts to the church

**Pax Domini:** Latin = "peace of the Lord"; spoken by the pastor during Communion

**Prophets:** special messengers sent to God's people to tell them the Savior Jesus would be coming soon

**Pulpit:** piece of special church furniture in the chancel area, similar to a podium, from which the pastor preaches his sermon



**Repent:** being sorry for our sin, asking God for His forgiveness, and stopping the sinful behavior

**Sacrament:** Greek = "mystery"; a sacred act that was instituted by God, includes something physical (such as water or bread + wine) and offers the forgiveness of sins won for us by Jesus Christ; Baptism and Communion.

**Salutation:** greeting & invitation to pray with pastor & congregation (The Lord be with you/And also with you)

**Salvation:** saved from sin and death through Jesus' death on the cross to pay the price for our sins

**Sanctus:** Latin = "holy"; spoken/sung before Communion (Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God almighty...)

**Sermon:** Latin = "speech"; a special talk that a pastor gives to share God's Word with the church

**Sin:** any thought, word, or action against God

**Temptation:** anything that makes us want to sin



**Trinity, triune:** words to describe the mystery of 1 God in 3 persons (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit)