

Children's activity – what it's like to be old

The aim:

The aim is to demonstrate physically how frustrating it can be to really want something but not be able to get to it as fast as you would like. Children walk down an aisle towards a prize, but they have to stop at various 'stages' and act out a forfeit. The forfeits are typical scenarios that happen to older people every day, sometimes several times a day.

You need:

- A prize. *It should be something that they can all share, and something that they would really want e.g. an enormous bar of chocolate, or big bag of sweets etc., and it's kind to have a few sugar free/dairy free/artificial colour free alternatives for any children that can't have sugar.*
- Somewhere to display the prize for all to see.
- Some way of marking 'stages' down the aisle, e.g. *low tack tape (masking tape is cheap) to mark certain chair legs, or stick lines on the on the floor, or stick paper on the floor...*
- Printed or written out forfeits that are below.
- A member of the congregation who will open the prize for the children.

Preparation:

- Choose which forfeits you want to use and print, or write them out. The last forfeit is needed, but you can have as many as you like of the others, and the others can be used in any order. The amount you use will depend mostly on how long the aisle is. *(you can place the forfeits near the 'stages' for the children to find and read out, or you can read them out from a list. Doing the latter means that you can gauge how many to use according to how long it is all taking, and how fed up people are.)*
- Mark off the 'stages' down the aisle according to how many forfeits you've chosen, or how many you think you'll use.
- Ask the Junior church leader(s) if any children need sugar free, and if so, ask them to be on hand so that they can give them their own 'special' prize at the right time.

Activity:

1. Show them the prize and ask them how much they would like to have it, make a big deal about how lovely it is. Display the prize somewhere visible at the front, with the last forfeit if you wish.
2. Tell them to go to the back of the church, and ask how long they think it would take to get to the prize from there, maybe one child could demonstrate, although they don't get the prize ... yet.
3. Children to walk – using small paces, one foot forward, two feet together, one foot forward....
4. When they reach a 'stage' they should stop, read out or listen to the forfeit, do the forfeit, and continue in the same manner to the next 'stage'. *They should still in the same manner between the penultimate forfeit and the last forfeit and prize – no sudden rush to get to the prize, it should still be frustrating.*
5. When they reach the last forfeit, have them sit down next to it, they can gaze upon it but not open it. They should wait until a member of the congregation happens to walk past (when you give them the nod!) so that the children can ask for the prize to be opened!

While they are waiting for the adult to come past you could point out that when we're children and we can't do something, it's often an adult that helps us and that sometimes that can feel ok; but when we're elderly and we can't do something, it's someone who is a lot younger that helps us, and that might not feel ok at all – imagine a 2 yr old easily does something that you should be able to do for yourself, but you can't.

Forfeits:

You need to sit down for a rest.

Sit down for 1 minute, and take as long as a count of 30 to get back up.

You need the toilet.

Go back to the beginning.

Someone has brought you your dinner and you need to eat it before it gets cold.

Go back to the beginning.

You fall over.

Sit down for 1 minute, and take 1 whole minute to get back up.

Someone takes you in a wheelchair.

Go forward 3 paces.

The person who is taking you in the wheelchair takes you somewhere else first.

Go back 5 paces.

Last forfeit:

You've arrived at the prize, but you are not able to open it.

Wait for someone who might walk past and ask them to open it for you.