

Engaging with a Live-Streamed Service as a family

The Coronavirus situation is forcing all of us to re-think the way we do so much, including church. How do we live as God's people when we can't gather as God's people?

At RLBC we are live streaming our services on Sunday mornings. This has been a massive learning curve in every way, but not least for those seeking to watch together as a family.

As with being in the church building itself, there will be hard times gathering together. But this is an amazing opportunity to grow in faith together as a family and demonstrate to your children what is important to you.

So how can you help your children engage without it seeming like another home-school session?

1. Relax!

You are at home – your children can wriggle, be a bit noisy and not disturb anyone else around you! Some weeks will seem like they haven't taken a thing in – but you know full well as parents that your children are always absorbing and learning even when you think they aren't paying the slightest bit of attention. Maybe have some favourite toys around too, so that they can play alongside you while the service is on.

Just the regular act of getting together as a family to 'do church' will speak volumes to your children about what is important and why.

2. Help each other watch the service

Since you're at home, you're free to talk to one another about what is being said or done in the service. Point out important things. But also ask observational questions! (What do you think of John's shirt this week? Who do you think will be in the band? What biblical character does...remind you of?)

3. Join in

It feels weird to join in at home – but it is also very weird for those who have recorded the service in isolation! So go for it! Make up actions together. Play musical instruments. For small children, if its rattly, bangy, shaky, jingly, then it's a great thing to praise God with! Again, the noise isn't going to disturb anyone else!

4. Have a Bible ready

Encourage your children to find the passage – we do this normally in Sunday Club. Help them to follow along the words perhaps by guiding your finger along the text.

5. Use the resource sheets

Each week we are sending out a resource pack to go alongside the service. This isn't another homeschool exercise – it's intended to help you and the family engage in whatever way helps you!

So don't feel that you have to print it out and fill it in – maybe have the children's questions available to view on a tablet, so that you can chat through them during the service. An activity is included in the service which we will usually try to make sure can be done without printing anything off. There are colouring and wordsearch sheets for younger ones, but if you don't want to print them, why not encourage your children to simply draw about what they hear. Or write down any important words and make their own puzzle sheet?! Samples of other kinds of sermon sheets are also available. Do whatever your child needs. Maybe use the follow up questions to chat through over lunch?!

6. Be imaginative

If you have your own ideas to follow something up, go with them! Anything that demonstrates to your child how important your faith is and how you want them to learn about Jesus too is well worth doing.

7. Share with others

We'd love to see any pictures/videos of what you've been doing, and, with your permission, to show them on social media and in the service. Feel free to Whatsapp stuff through to Karen.

8. Ask for help

You're not on your own! We don't want to bombard you, but we do want to partner with you. That's what church family is for. We have sought to research different things for you, but are very happy to spend time with individual families helping you to find what is best for you and supporting you in engaging with different ideas.