Educators Roundtable Resources, August 2026

Resources/Articles:

Around the Table Quick Sheets - free downloadables from the Office of Christian Formation PCUSA.

- Church Leader Quick Sheet: Conversations with Youth about Understanding the Dynamics of Dementia - Here are a few thoughts and tips to help leaders guide youth as they navigate the challenge of a family member with dementia. These suggestions can also be helpful for any relationship with older adult friends.
    - https://pcusa.org/resource/conversations-with-youth-about-understanding-dynamics-dementia

- Youth Quick Sheet: My Grandparent has Dementia...What do I do? - This Around the Table Quicksheet is designed specifically for Youth. It provides information about dementia and gives tips about things they can do if they have a person with dementia in their life.
    - https://pcusa.org/resource/my-grandparent-has-dementiawhat-do-i-do-quicksheet-youth

Gender Neutral in Music Class – While this is an article focused on teaching a music class, the concepts are more broadly applicable to any group. Her answers to "Why?" might be helpful to explain this approach to volunteer leaders, who, like many of us, grew up with "boys and girls" as the primary identifiers. Her list of alternative language is creative, and in church, we could come up with many other alternatives…i.e. Children of God.
https://mrsstouffersmusicroom.com/gender-neutral-in-music-class/

Loving Teenagers Well: A Six-Part Group Guide for Those Who Show Up for Teens - This six-week series meets anyone who is right in the thick of parenting or caring for teenagers, offering practical insights, honest conversations, and a little humor to remind us: you are not alone. I have not previewed this resource, but the source of the material is reliable. Be sure to look it over before you use it. It comes from Kate Bowler, popular author of Everything Happens. This free resource includes:

- Short video clips to spark conversation
- Thoughtful discussion questions
- Scripture passages to reflect on
- Blessings to end your time together

Here's where you can find more information and sign up to access the material:
https://katebowler.com/discussion_guides/loving-teenagers-well/?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email#gf_42

Intergenerational Insights: The Age-and-Stage Ministry Model – This article from Building Faith, gives a brief overview of the relative merits of and history related to these two models of ministry. Most of us were raised in the churches that were very committed to age and stage ministry, and that has become what is often considered "standard". There is some helpful background and resources referenced here. https://buildfaith.org/intergenerational-insights-age-and-stage-ministry-model/

Team Neurodiversity – This is a page from First Presbyterian Church in Stillwater, OK, which highlights some of the work they are doing to prepare for and welcome the full range of neurodiversity that is found in our churches. It is included here not because we can all do all of this, but as a spark as to how we might better meet the needs of the people we serve. https://stillwaterfpc.org/neurodiversity/

Nativity Sticker Sheets – These are stickers that stand out from others from Oriental Trading and such, as they present the Holy Family as non-white, and Mary looks a little more like she just gave birth. Illustrated Ministry has some great resources. https://store.illustratedministry.com/products/nativity-stickers

For Young Friends: What does it mean to be a Presbyterian? - While this is by no means an exhaustive article on what it means to be a Presbyterian, it might be helpful in some circumstances to give a brief overview for those who are unfamiliar with our denomination. I would make a few edits to it, but it might be helpful.
https://www.edgewaterpcusa.org/home/for-young-friends-what-does-it-mean-to-be-a-presbyterian

Spotlight: Family Worship – This is a resource from Wonders of Worship from Columbia Seminary. For those who want children to be welcome in worship, but have too much conflict with parts of your flock, here is an alternative design from a church in Black Mountain, NC. (see attacthement) HOME | Wonder Of Worship

Events:

Rooted in HOPE: Equipping Leaders for Ministry with Older Adults
POAMN Conference, September 15-18 at Knoxville, TN. This event is for ministry leaders, chaplains, and lay leaders to learn fresh perspectives on older adult ministry. Participants will be inspired with new ideas to implement. They will leave with tools to deepen their spiritual connection to serving older adults. The workshops will help address emerging challenges and needs of older adults, caregivers, and faith communities. POAMN Events | POAMN

Come to the Mountains: Presbyterian Youth Workers Association Conference, October 5-8, 2026 in Montreat, NC. This event will provide youth workers, both paid staff and volunteers, with an opportunity to Come to the Water to connect, be inspired, learn, and share best practices that support young people in the church. The conference will serve to uphold youth workers, expand their professional network, and introduce new approaches to youth engagement. There will be general sessions with worship, a keynote speaker, and various workshops. 2026 Gathering | Presbyterian Youth Workers Association

Creating a Culture of Collaboration: GLAPCE Fall Event – October 20-22, 2026, Lindenwood Retreat Center, Plymouth, IN. Come to the GLAPCE Fall Event for:

- Keynote experiences with Guest Speakers Rev. Tom Brown & Rev. Jennifer Burns Lewis.
- Four sessions revolving around the theme of "Creating a Culture of Collaboration"
  Topics include collaborating with church leaders, individuals, your neighbors and community, and the Holy Spirit
- Listen to and participate in discussions about building an inclusive community of faithful folks to encourage faith, hope, love and witness
- Meaningful Worship times, including communion together on Thursday
- Sabbath rest time on Wednesday afternoon
  some options include an outdoor labyrinth, indoor and outdoor stations of the cross, self-guided tours of the campus, sitting near the lake, and walking paths; or a nap, reading, your own project -- the time is yours!
- Resource Sharing & Networking Opportunities with new and familiar colleagues

The EARLY BIRD deadline is Saturday, August 15.
Learn more and register here: 2026 Fall Event - GREAT LAKES ASSOCIATION OF PARTNERS IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

CAN THESE BONES LIVE? Rediscovering what matters…….The APCE Annual Event – January 27-30, 2027, Portland, OR. Each day, we will look at different questions we ask ourselves about how we do the ministry of Christian education, moving through the breath, sinews, flesh, and spirit of this collective ministry in the world we live in. Watch your email and social media for more information on the workshops, special events, pre-and post-events and so much more! Registration will open in September.

Spotlight: Family Worship

A Worship Space Where Kids Can Be Kids

WOW!
Wonder of Worship
Quicksheet 1.12
July 2025



In September 2021, in the midst of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Black Moutain Presbyterian Church launched a new worship opportunity designed to meet the evolving needs of families with young children. Recognizing a pre-pandemic decline in Sunday School attendance—a trend common in many congregations—we saw an opportunity to reimagine how we gather and worship as a faith community.

As we cautiously resumed in-person worship and programming, the reality was that many families, especially those with unvaccinated children, were hesitant to return to traditional indoor services. In response, we created Family Worship—a service rooted in hospitality, joy, and inclusion.

Welcome

Family Worship is intentionally designed to be child- and parent-friendly. It's a place where children can be themselves—free to move, sing, ask questions, and fully participate. The service is structured to be developmentally appropriate, particularly for younger children, and welcomes people of all ages and stages. Our goal is to create a non-judgmental, joy-filled space where children and adults can grow in faith together.

Each week, we explore Bible stories in engaging, age-appropriate ways and also share non-religious books that echo the core values and lessons of our faith. The service includes music, movement, clapping, dancing, prayer, and storytelling, all within a rhythm that blends playful energy with moments of quiet reflection.

Interactive

Intentional

Family Worship is not a "shortened" version of traditional worship—it is thoughtfully crafted for experiential, participatory engagement. The service includes many familiar elements of worship: a Call to Worship, Confession, prayers in many forms, an offering, and the celebration of Communion on the first Sunday of every month. Each element is introduced in a way that helps children understand what we're doing and why it matters. Services last about 30–40 minutes, and we strive to use this time meaningfully. We intentionally leave out some parts of a traditional worship service in order to focus on depth, not length. Worship concludes with fellowship and a snack, nurturing the relationships that are essential to our community life.

Growing

Over time, Family Worship has evolved—and that's a good thing. We listen closely to the needs of our families and make adjustments as needed. But what has remained constant is our commitment to creating a space where children can encounter God, surrounded by a loving, supportive community. It is a safe place for children to explore what worship means and to experience God's presence in ways that speak to them. t Black Mountain Presbyterian Church, Family Worship continues to be a joyful expression of faith—a reminder that worship doesn't require silence or stillness to be sacred. Sometimes, it looks like crayons and tambourines, storybooks and goldfish crackers. And always, it looks like love.





Brittany Williams is the Director of Congregational Life and Children's Ministry at Black Mountain Presbyterian Church, Black Mountain, NC. She is a native of Black Mountain and the granddaughter of two former PC(USA) pastors. She has a background in recreation and community building, and enjoys using her gifts to share the love of God with people of all ages.