

# Wild Church Kids with Heather Wolfe

from Taftsville Chapel Vermont USA

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We are all children of God. Wild Church taps into our inner child. Eco-spirituality is inherent to us all! It is joy to engage with kids at Wild Church who connect easily and remind us to reconnect with our own playful, curious, intuitive selves.

Here are some things I've found help me plan a gathering that engages kids from start to finish. Include movement, motions, music and mindfulness. Incorporate simplicity, songs, scriptures, stories, sharing, senses and acts of service. Ask lots of questions and invite curiosity. Build in a moment of mindfulness to recenter after transitions. Be playful. Share food together. Plan plenty of time to play, socialize and snack after the gathering.

I hope this inspires and encourages you. Blessings as you adopt and adapt to your own participants and place.

**Songs / Music:** Keep it simple- use call and response, repeated refrains, familiar tunes, sing from memory, no song book or reading skill required. Feel free to adapt words. Have regular songs you sing often.

- Love creator with all your heart and all your soul and all you mind and love all earth-kind as you would love...
- Seek ye first the kin-dom of God, and God's righteousness
- Love, love, love, love, the gospel in a word is love, love thy neighbor as thyself, love, love, love
- From Sing the Story: #16 Peace before us, #31 Jesus be the center, #97 Silence my soul, #113 I will stand in the...

**Readings:** Read out loud. Clarify any big words or concepts. Practice oral storytelling with familiar stories. Invite volunteer readers. Pass out verses.

- Try New Testament scripture readings from First Nations Version (Indigenous Translation)
- Use libraries to loan kids' books. Its good stewardship. I request to interlibrary loan most all the books I share.

**Mindfulness:** Invite an intention of paying attention.

- 5 senses: what do you see/hear/touch/smell/taste? Try 5,4,3,2,1.
- Follow the sound of a singing bowl
- Mindful breathing: Reciprocal breathing.... Inhale/exhale with the trees, in/out love, in cool/out warm air
- Psalm 46:10 Be still and know that I am God
- lead a loving kindness meditation
- Wow-Thanks-Help prayer

**Movement:** Welcome motion in everything... wandering, to music, dancing, wiggles, sit/stand/stretch when circled

- Embodied prayers such as to the 4/6/8 directions (for extra add in a yoga flow); St. Patrick's breastplate prayer

**Themes:** So helpful for providing focus. These are a sampling of some themes I've used. The possibilities are endless!

SEASON	THEME	STORY	ACTIVITY
January	Epiphany	3 wise people <i>An Orange in January</i> by Dianna Hutts Aston	Epiphany chalk blessing on rock/earth create/give a gift from nature, give a gift back to earth
February	Love	Story of St. Valentine, patron saint of bee keepers	How can we be bee keepers? Create a bee hotel write love letter to Mother Earth (also an Earth day activity)
March	Lent	Noah's ark or <i>Wild Hope</i> by Gayle Boss Story of St. Patrick	ideas/actions to protect endangered species look on landscape for symbols of nature & faith integration
	Easter	Resurrection	hunt for new life emerging on landscape
April	Earth Day	<i>Earth! My first 4.54 Billion Years</i> by Henry Holt <i>The Earth and I</i> by Frank Asch	create a walkable timeline of the universe outside (360 feet long, human hair at end is human history!) How do we treat friends? How to treat earth as friend?

	IPL Faith Climate Action week	Based on IPL's (Interfaith Power and Light) annual theme	
May	Mother's Day	<i>A ride on Mother's Back</i> by Emery & Durga Berhard	discuss how Earth carries us; how can we show love/gratitude back? Practice it!
	Pentecost	Acts 2: 1-4	Honorably harvest dandelions for snack time tea/coffee/salad; be reminded by flowers going to seed blown by wind of Holy Spirit spreading God's love
June	Planting Ceremony	Parable of the sower <i>A Prayer for the Earth: the story of Naamah</i> by Sandy Sasso	Plant anything by seed! Create a planting ceremony, write a blessing of the seeds
July	Interconnection	<i>Brother Eagle Sister Sky</i> a message from Chief Seattle	create forest web of life using yarn <a href="http://treesatlanta.org">Web-of-Life-Activity.pdf (treesatlanta.org)</a>
	Companionship	Tell about Indigenous 3 sisters garden, companion planting	plant corn, beans & squash or another companion planting; make a 3 sisters' soup
August	Fruit of the Spirit	Galatians 5:22-23 Jonny Appleseed	make a fruit of the spirit salad using 9 fruits; visit fruiting plants on the land, discuss how the fruits grow
September	Peace	Sing songs such as Let there be peace on earth; Peace like a river	What does peace on earth and with earth look like? How can that begin with me?
	Season of Creation	use theme and materials provided by <a href="http://seasonofcreation.org">seasonofcreation.org</a>	
October	World Communion Day	<i>Community Soup</i> by Alma Fullerton or other telling of Stone Soup story <i>Fry Bread</i> by Kevin Noble Maillard	make soup share, collect soup ingredients to donate to food shelf make fry bread to use for communion
	Indigenous Peoples Day	Use stories by Indigenous authors such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>We are Grateful: Otsaliheliga</i> by Traci Sorell</li> <li><i>We are Water Protectors</i> by Carole Lindstrom</li> </ul>	learn Indigenous words/ phrases think of ways to show our thanks/gratitude/ways we protect water
November	Thanksgiving, gratitude Harvest fest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Giving Thanks</i> by Chief Jake Swamp</li> <li><i>Braiding Sweetgrass</i> by Robin Wall Kimmerer</li> </ul>	write our own thanksgiving address Learn and practice honorable harvest principles
	Lament & Grief	Ecclesiastes 3:1 <i>Sometimes I Feel Like a River</i> by Danielle Daniel and Josee Bisailon	write griefs & gratitude on a large pumpkin or on cut out paper leaves to hang on a stick branch
December	Advent	<i>All Creation Waits</i> by Gayle Boss	decorate an advent spiral to celebrate diversity of life

**Share food!** after every gathering... creates community, invites lingering, opportunity for living out eco & faith values