

June 2004, *Equipping*



As Sunday worship begins, pastors and worship leaders look over their congregations and hope and pray that those gathered will embrace God's love and respond to the invitation to join in God's work in the world. Leaders anticipate the miracle of God's Spirit moving within and among the congregation. Leaders also accept the responsibility of preparing, listening and learning to create opportunities that engage the worshippers. Including children in worship provides an ongoing challenge for most congregations.

Mennonite Church Canada Formation is committed to making resources available to help congregations involve children, youth and minority groups.

In a recent visit to a congregation in Winnipeg, I noted that the children rushed to the front of the church as soon as the offering was announced. These under-ten youngsters were ready and eager with their coins. They waited, some rather impatiently, for their turn to put their money into a box made especially for their offering. These children were intentionally included in this part of the worship service.

Mennonite Church Canada Formation recommends a revised and expanded ***KidsPak*** to assist congregations in making children a vital part of the church. There are stories that can be shared during worship, there are activities for Sunday school and clubs, and there are games to play and recipes to try. Stories, activities and fun times are all related to a particular stewardship project. Children are encouraged to participate in God's work in the world. ***KidsPak*** is interactive, intergenerational and invitational. You can check out ***KidsPak*** at [www.mennonitechurch.ca/resources/kidspak](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/resources/kidspak)

Increasingly, people of many cultures bring "new eyes and ears" to Mennonite Church Canada congregations. Cultural differences can help congregations to see God at work in exciting new ways. I invite you to read how a Laotian pastor in Toronto sees his traditional "sukhuan" wedding ceremony as an opportunity to worship God and witness to his culture. Boris Sithideth writes about this transformed service in the new ***Weddings: Ideas and resources from Mennonite Church Canada*** anthology compiled by Karen Martens Zimmerly. This resource can be found on-line at [http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/files/resources/family/Wedding\\_resources\\_2004.pdf](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/files/resources/family/Wedding_resources_2004.pdf)

Hard copies of the Wedding resource are available and will be distributed to Mennonite Church Canada congregations at the Winkler Assembly in July. Upon request, we would be happy to send you a copy of *Weddings* before the Assembly.

Mennonite Church Canada invites your responses to these resources and also solicits materials created by your congregation. The Resource Centre welcomes new resources and ideas that can be shared with congregations across Canada and beyond. Together, we seek to discern where God is at work in the world and to engage our congregations to embrace that work.

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