Top Tips for…..all age services

1. Plan, plan, plan!

What is my opening line? What is my closing thought/question? What is my key message?
Can you involve others in the planning and delivering of the service? Then do it. Church is a collaborative space.

2. Practise!

Practise your presentation beforehand. It will mean that you fix the outline in your head and you won't need to keep referring to notes, which in this context is to be avoided. Then you can make good eye contact with the congregation, and can walk around and amongst, emphasising that we are learning together.

3. Language!

Keep it simple. Beware cliche religious language. It won't just be the children who will switch off.
Use open questions such as 'I wonder'. It encourages the congregation to do the thinking for themselves.

4. Body language!

Speak with energy, using movement, facial expressions, eye-contact with the congregation, pauses and changes in volume! Include everyone, from the front to the back.

5. Resources!

Make sure all props and resources can be seen from the back. Don't use children as human lecterns (i.e. someone to hold up a word or object). Use all the senses to convey the message.

6. Content!

Keep it active, visual and short. Let the congregation make their own connections.
Make it fun! Everything doesn't always have to have some immediate and deep spiritual connection.
Talk appropriately and with respect for all. Do not make clever asides just for the adults. Talk with the children, not about them.

7. Storytelling!

Don't re-tell the Bible story after it has just been read. Either do it differently in the first place (e.g. use a different translation or have more than one voice) or alternatively make the reading part of your presentation anyway.

8. If it all goes wrong!

Keep it light, don't panic. Nobody is perfect. Seeing the imperfection might encourage others to take part, maybe even lead.

9. Have fun!

If you look like you are enjoying it, the congregation will relax and enjoy it too.

10. When it's over!

Evaluate how the session went. maybe ask a couple of people, including children, for their feedback. Use what you learn next time.