

Worship and Learning

Worship is one of the basic ways people learn what it means to be a Christian. Children learn worship by worshipping with the congregation Sunday after Sunday.

- Children learn they belong to Christ and are welcome in His Church.
- They learn to know the Lord's Prayer and other parts of the liturgy from memory.
- They build a fund of memorable, shared experiences in Christian community upon which they can draw when they are older.
- They are enriched by the beauty of the music and art as expressions of praise to God.
- They hear the Bible stories read and interpreted as their faith is strengthened.
- They witness the drama of God's action and forgiveness in Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Bringing children to worship may not always be easy, but it is an essential part of their growth in Christ.



ABC's for Parents and Friends of Children



Arrive in time to find a good place to sit, to provide younger children with a better view of the chancel.

Bring a "church bag" with Bible story books and stuffed dolls. This keeps church things in one place.

Clue your child as to what will happen next in worship, following the service in the hymnal, finding the hymns. Children like to be ready.

Discuss what happened in church today (Bible story).

Express your joy at having children in worship.

Include them in your conversations before and after worship to let them know they belong.

Free yourself from worry about children's behavior.

Give thanks to God for the children in our church.

Hold family devotions during Advent and Lent.

Include the child's talents appropriately in worship as they develop.

Jesus is the center of worship.

Kneel at the Lord's altar as a family.



Let the little children come to me, so said Jesus.

Marvel at the little guy in the pew—he may become a pastor.

Nurture and encourage young families.

Open your heart and mind to youngsters.

Pray for young families and their children.

Questions—answer them simply and quietly.

Resist the temptation to encourage poor behavior when a child acts up for parents.

Share the peace of the Lord with children.

Teach children by your example.

Understand that a child may have a bad day at church. Speak an encouraging word to the parents.

Volunteer to help a young family before needed. This will alert them who can watch their child if a bathroom break is needed.

Whenever you need help as a parent at church, ask.

Xtra kindness by word and deed encourages parents.

You as a worshiper can make the difference in a child's life.

Zeal! Share in a child's zeal in worship on Sundays!

Henry V. Gerike, 1/1/08

Welcoming Children to Their Place In Church



We welcome children to worship by



- Encouraging families to bring their children of all ages to worship services. Children are an important and welcomed part of our worshipping community.
- Encouraging parents to bring their infants, toddlers, older children to the altar rail to receive a baptismal remembrance blessing.
- Encouraging older children to participate in worship as acolytes, instrumentalists, and choir members.
- Providing children's bulletins based on the Gospel readings.
- Encouraging children and adults to ring bells during the "bell seasons" of the Church Year: Christmas and Easter (Alleluias, Hymn of Praise).
- Modeling appropriate church behavior for children by teaching them to stand, sit, or kneel with the congregation.
- Modeling attentive listening to God's Word, singing the hymns and liturgy with the members of the church.
- Accepting children as children, not adults, knowing that the younger the child, the greater the need to move around.
- Helping children realize they are part of the Church, the people of God gathered around His Word and Sacraments.



The Preschool Child

It is true that at times children may distract those around them and perhaps distress parents by their behavior. But as members of the family of God, children are needed by all of us as we worship and live as God's people. The preschool child comes to worship with

- A short attention span
- Seemingly endless energy
- A growing curiosity about everything



While these ingredients can test the patience of adults, things parents and friends of children can do to make the preschooler's experience—and everyone's—more relaxed and enjoyable include:

- Sit near the front where the child can have a clear view of what's happening in the chancel, especially at Baptisms.
- Prepare the child for the different parts of the worship service, explaining special events ahead of time and answering "right now" questions in a whisper.
- Allow the child to bring along a favorite stuffed Bible animal or character, a Bible picture or coloring book or other quiet toy to play with when she or he gets bored. Rotate items in and out of this "church bag" throughout the Church year.
- Encourage the preschooler to "play church" at home with dolls and stuffed animals. Also encourage the child to practice whispering.



The Primary Child

The school-age brings some new abilities to worship:

- A greater capacity for attentive listening
- An increasing ability to read
- The ability to organize and memorize information



Parents and friends of children can help the primary child toward greater participation in worship as these capacities develop when they

- Help the child memorize the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, the Alleluia verse, the Gloria Patri (Glory be to the Father and to the Son...), "Thanks be to God" after the readings, "Amen" after prayers.
- Review the bulletin with the child to identify new or difficult words.
- Encourage the child to find the hymns and liturgy pages in the hymnal, to follow along in the hymns and liturgy and sing along with the congregation. Encourage active participation for standing and sitting during the service.
- Talk about the Scripture readings and the sermon and ask what the child remembers best about them.
- Encourage the child to contribute to the offering.
- Use the children's bulletin during the sermon time.
- Use devotions at home especially during Advent and Lent.

