

Central Presbyterian Church

Pew Pals



Pew Pals

is a program for families with young children in which the family requests to be paired with an adult (without children currently in the home) to help enhance everyone's experience of worship and the church family.

Background/History

A family in the church sat dad-daughter-mom-son in the pew before worship began. All were settling in and the children were, as many are, squirmy and restless. Carolyn Clarke came and sat next to the dad. She leaned forward, smiled big, waved to each of the children mouthing their names. Immediately the tenor and the action on the pew calmed. ...and Pew Pals came into being.

Purpose and Assumptions

- a) In worship, many parents need help helping their children prepare, focus, and participate;
- b) there are adults – of all ages and stages without children currently in the home – who could use some interaction with children periodically, and have insights and wisdom to share;
- c) most children could use someone besides their parents calling their names before and after worship; and, in general, a child loves to be greeted in the halls of the church in friendly and uplifting ways;
- d) all these folks could use another person to sit with periodically at lunch or in worship or at any other church function;
- e) a possible card/note/message to a child headed into worship could help make worship *worship* for all involved;
- f) Lynn and/or the Children's Committee will give suggestions and templates as needed to the Pew Pal to give to their child Pew Pal.
- g) MYTH: the adult Pew Pal has to sit on the pew with the family each week.

The Process

1. The family with young children submits three [3] names of folks they might like to have as a PEW PAL. [Suggested names are available upon request.]
2. Lynn Turnage, in coordination with Melanie Bliss, the Chair of the Children's Committee, takes these names and, depending on who else has requested these adults (and their interest or availability), a match is made. Lynn and Melanie, working on behalf of the Children's Committee are the "BROKERS" for Pew Pals.
3. Lynn or Melanie contacts the adult Pew Pal and invites him/her into this journey.
4. The family will not know if their first choice was taken by someone else or if the invited Pew Pal has said "No thank you".
5. The invited Pew Pal is free to say "No" to Lynn or Melanie without reservation.
6. When there's an affirmative answer, Lynn and/or Melanie notifies the family and
7. The Pew Pal adult is sent this information and may contact the family.
8. We're off and running!

Ideas for Action

...what the adult Pew Pal might do with and for the child/ren in this family.

The idea is that these are done one at a time and at a rate of about once/month. Listed in no particular order:

- Sit on the same pew.
- Invite yourself to sit with the family at lunch.
- Speak to the child/ren in the hallway and call them by name.
- Bookmark templates are available upon request to be handed to the child before worship with appropriate instructions. On one Sunday the Pew Pal hands the child the hymn bookmarks and on another Sunday the scripture bookmarks. [A template for 2-4 bookmarks that the Pew Pal can personalize, and then the child can draw on, and then use to find and mark the hymns and/or the scripture passages]
- Write the child a note to read in worship. [Share what you like about worship, your hopes for the child in worship, your favorite part of worship and why, WHY you like to worship, what helps you in worship,...]
- Give them a question on a sheet of paper before worship and ask them to answer it before the end of the service. Such as a question that encourages participation in worship:
 - What part of the music did you like best?
 - What's one question you have about worship today?
 - What was the most interesting thing you heard the preachers say?
 - What is a question you have about worship?
 - How do you think we could improve worship?
 - What do you think God thinks about today's worship?
 - What prayer concerns do you have?
 - Look around, who in worship can you pray for this week and why?
- Contact Lynn if you need other help or ideas.

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