

Guide to Helping Children Understand and Experience Worship

Preparing Children For Worship

1. Practice the Lord's Prayer at Bedtime. Read it from Luke 11. Use the "Doxology" as a table blessing; the "Gloria" can be used in a similar manner. Discussion and practice of the Apostles' Creed will provide insights into your own faith and the blossoming faith of your children.
2. Anticipate events in the Church; changes in the church season and colors; Advent, Pentecost, Rally Day; Sacraments; etc.
3. Take an active part as a family in the worship service: serve as greeters; meet new members; watch for seasonal opportunities (Advent candle lighting, Maundy Thursday, Communion, Christmas Eve, etc.)
4. Encourage your children to greet other members. When you make introductions, always introduce your children along with yourself.
5. Make Sunday worship a regular part of the time you spend with your children.

To Help Children Experience Worship

1. Allow time for drink and bathroom before church.
2. Members of the congregation are requested to greet children warmly before and after the service so that they may feel totally included.
3. Upon entering church, pick up a bulletin and a worship bag for your child.
4. Choose a seat that is close to the front or at least an aisle where the child can see.
5. During the pre-service music, help your child locate hymns and responses in the bulletin. Have the child underline the hymns, circle the prayers, etc.
6. Point out announcements, which pertain to the family for the coming week.
7. Number the events in order of worship. As the worship service progresses, ask the child to check them off the bulletin.
8. Note when there will be "A Moment With the Children" and encourage your child to participate.
9. Encourage children to locate any Bible verses used in the service in the pew Bibles.
10. Assist your child in singing hymns by using the bulletin or bookmarks to underline stanzas. Do not be embarrassed to sit during hymns to help point out words to your child. Correct reading is not important. The goal is participation by the child.
11. Help the children participate by making sure they have their own offering- no matter how small. They can even draw a picture of something they will do during the week and place the picture in the offering plate.
12. Encourage them to sign their own names on the Friendship Pad.
13. Our denomination encourages the participation of baptized children in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, once instruction is given by parents and/or others in the church. When you know this is coming up, talk with them about what these mean before church.

Who nurtures the spirituality of children?

Each time a congregation baptizes an infant or child, the entire church accepts the responsibility of nurturing that child's spirituality or relationship with God. We are all, individually and together, either stumbling blocks or steppingstones along that child's journey of faith. How we welcome that child in worship and how that child observes the faithful life in us is the way that we fulfill the promises made at baptism.

Those who are leaders for the child, in the nursery, the church school setting, or in other ministries of the congregation, have the privilege of a personal relationship with the child, one through which we can be mentors for their spiritual journey. In those relationships, we journey together as we learn and use spiritual practices to be more present to God. Perhaps Jesus' words strike our ears even more sharply.*

But Jesus called for them and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Luke 18:16

Colors that Tell Us a Story

Our church uses a calendar called the Liturgical Calendar which many other churches also use. The Liturgical Calendar divides the Church Year into pieces to show the seasons of the year instead of fall, winter, spring and summer it uses Advent, Christmastide, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, and Ordinary Time.

Color	Significance	Season Displayed
Purple	The color of royalty	Advent; Lent
Blue	A royal color symbolizing the preparation for Christ as the Son of God	Advent
White	The color of light that symbolizes Christ's purity, divinity, and victory	Christmas; Epiphany; Easter; Communion; Weddings
Red	The color of fire symbolizing the flames of the Holy Spirit	Pentecost; Ordination
Green	The color of creation and symbolizes growth	Ordinary Time