

“Let the Children Come...”



**Practical Ideas
for Helping Children
in the
Worship Setting**

Dear Parents:

We are glad that you have chosen to worship at here AS A FAMILY. From experience we know there are many great benefits for the family that shares the hour of worship together.

While a young child in worship may be full of wiggles and squirms (and you sometimes wonder if it is worth the bother) -- let me assure you it IS certainly worth the effort. As a parent, you are teaching your child a most valuable lesson: Worshipping God is not only important, it can even be fun!

Following are suggestions to assist you in this good work. I encourage you to read and use it as you encourage your child to grow in His or her love of Jesus as their Savior and friend.

Pastor Pfingsten

Note: Not all of these suggestions may be age-appropriate for your child, but they are a start!



BEFORE THE WORSHIP SERVICE....

- ◆ During the week, speak positively about going to church. Develop an attitude of anticipation about going to church.
- ◆ PRAY for and with you and your child.
- ◆ Prepare a special "church bag" that contains items used only during Worship services (this bag might include Bible story books, a book of Bible activities, a favorite stuffed animal, or any other quiet item you feel might be helpful). Perhaps your child might choose an item to put into the bag. Change them occasionally to keep interest high.
- ◆ Look with your child at the various parts of the church. Say the names of the furniture. Look closely at the chancel, pulpit, altar, font, lectern, organ. Explain why they are used.
- ◆ Look at the symbols on the banners and paraments. Explain that these pictures tell us about God and remind us that God loves us and cares for us.
- ◆ As a game, find all the crosses in the church. Tell your child that the cross reminds us of God's love for us.
- ◆ Prepare an offering for the child to place in the offering plate. Tell your child that this is a gift for Jesus.
- ◆ Get a drink and visit the restroom before entering church.
- ◆ A quiet snack or "sippie cup" may be appropriate.

DURING THE WORSHIP SERVICE....

- ◆ Sit where your child is able to watch the Pastor lead the worship. Many times, sitting up front lets children feel more a part of the service. Consider sitting by the organ so your child can also see the music being played.
- ◆ Be consistent in your expectations and routines. Allow your child to sit in a way that is comfortable for the child. Some parents bring a booster seat and set it in the pew so their child may see what is happening.
- ◆ When disciplining is necessary, do it in a kind, firm manner -- and when the child is settled down, bring him or her back into the sanctuary as soon as possible. GOING TO CHURCH SHOULD NOT BE ASSOCIATED WITH AN ANGRY PAINFUL EXPERIENCE ... NOR SHOULD MISBEHAVIOR BE "REWARDED" WITH A TRIP TO A TOY ROOM!
- ◆ Lead your child to feel a sense of participation in the worship service. Encourage him or her to sing along with the congregation and to fold his/her hands for the prayers. Your child will learn to model your joyful participation.
- ◆ Put your arm warmly around him or her and explain what is happening in the service. "We're praying; we're listening to God's Word, etc." Hold your child's hand. Smile often at him or her, especially when behaving well. Make church a warm, loving place to be.

- ◆ During Communion, let your child come up to the altar for a blessing and to see what happens there. While you should not let them play with the cups or wafers, you can explain that in Holy Communion God forgives us our sins and helps us to live holy lives.

AFTER THE WORSHIP SERVICE....

- ◆ Greet the Pastor at the door. Let your child hear you say, "Thank you for your message." Lift your child so he or she is at the pastor's eye level. Encourage your child to shake hands with the Pastor and others in worship.
- ◆ On the way home, make positive remarks about the service. "I'm glad we could sing to God together." Or "I'm glad we could pray together today." Sing some parts of the songs.
- ◆ As you tuck your child into bed, remind him or her that God loves them very much. You might even repeat a short portion of Scripture that was read during worship, such as "God cares for us."
- ◆ During the week, have your child draw a picture to take to church next Sunday and present it to the Pastor. Pastors enjoy receiving pictures from the children, and it gives your child a sense of belonging and pride.

IN CONCLUSION....

Guiding your child in worship can sometimes be difficult, but it's also a privilege. It CAN be accomplished in love so that the family is able to say...

"I WAS GLAD WHEN THEY SAID UNTO ME, 'LET US GO INTO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD.'"

Psalm 122:1



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