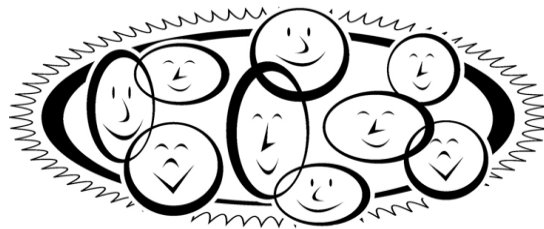


# Worshipping with Children

Are your children learning how to worship? Where do they learn this? By being in worship with you! We love to have children in worship and it takes training to teach our children how the things we do in the Sanctuary are different from the things we do outside of the Sanctuary. Each God's Garden newsletter insert this year will give parents some tips on how to worship effectively with children.

The first tip is: Bring your children to worship! Every week! This means making a commitment to being at church for 2 hours each week, but the rewards are great. Your children will participate in the "original" intergenerational event in the church. They will come to appreciate the rituals and traditions of worship, and they will grow closer to God.



*Worship as a Family*

Children will learn to worship by following your example! Worshipping means participating. When your children see you singing the liturgy or songs they will want to participate too. When you follow along in the order of service and respond when appropriate your child will too. Here are some tips for helping your child participate in worship:

- 1) Make sure your child can see a bulletin and/or a hymnal! Put it right in front of your child if necessary! People of ALL ages are meant to participate in worship.
- 2) Show your child where you are in the order of worship by pointing with your finger to the words in the bulletin. Early readers can follow along as you point out the words and more accomplished readers can follow on their own – but even pre-readers can follow your finger as it moves from word to word. This helps children understand that worship is participatory. They don't have to "just sit there"!
- 3) Encourage your child to stand as the congregation stands and to sit as the congregation sits. This helps all of us move a little bit. Most of us are not used to sitting for an hour at a time – especially children. Wiggles are common in younger children, but sitting and standing with the congregation gives everyone a chance to shift position for a few minutes.



Worshipping with children can be a rewarding or a frustrating experience. Much of the worship service seems to be focused on adults, but there are many ways that your child can be actively involved in worship.

- Engage your child in the **worship space** by asking questions before worship begins. What color is on the altar today? Look at the altar – do you think we are going to have Communion today? How many candles are there for the acolytes to light? Who do you see that you know? What instruments do you hear/see?
- Engage your child in **worship practices**. Encourage them to shake hands during the sharing of the peace. Fold fingers during the prayers. Have older children help you find the lessons in the Bible and read along with the lesson reader. Let them put the Gold Grow sheet and offering envelopes in the offering basket. Have them turn around to watch baptisms. Point out musicians and worship leaders. Encourage them to sing!
- Engage your child in **worship reflection**. When you get home (or in the car on the way home) ask what your child what they saw, heard and experienced in worship. Use the "Taking Faith Home" handout as a guide for further reflection and devotion during the week.