

ABC's of Worshipping with Children

Kirk of the Hills Presbyterian Church



Arrive in time to allow children to choose a good place to sit. Encourage them to sit up front where they can see the pastor, musicians, choir etc.

Bring your child's worship bag to church. Make sure it has colored pencils or crayons for children to use as they draw in the Children's Bulletins. For older children have them bring a notebook: to write down unfamiliar words, draw a picture about something they hear in the sermon, take notes during the sermon...

Clue your child into what will happen next in worship. Children who like to read will want to read the words in the Bible, on the screen or in the hymnal. They like to be ready. Keep a bookmark in their bag/notebook so they can find the Scripture text for the day.

Discuss Worship (in the home). Take time to answer question about worship experiences.

Express your gladness at having children in worship. After the service, be sure to welcome the children sitting near you. Encourage your children to greet other members of the congregation. When you make introductions, always introduce your children and introduce yourself to other people's children. Include them in your conversations to let them know they belong.

Firm and consistent. Apply the same discipline as used for other important matters. Make the boundaries as wide as you can make them (say yes as much as you can), but the boundaries are FIRM.

Guide young readers to read the hymnal, Bibles, bulletin

- Look together for familiar words
- Follow the lines with a bookmark or bulletin on its side
- Use the large print hymnal

Holy Hugs. Use a gentle touch - an arm around your child's shoulder or your hand in his or hers gives reassurance and appropriate attention.

In and out. Children come *in and out* of participation- A children's Bulletin or bulletin helps them come back in. When they can't keep their focus on the service they can engage in a related activity.

Jehovah - whom our worship is directed to.

Keep the *Children's Bulletin Activities* for the sermon time. Being still and quiet is highly valued by parents and others during this time.

Let your children print their name on the pew card.

Make it a rule not to sit with friends

Notice when your child ministers to someone else or is touched by God. Praise him when he's listening well.

Offering. When we give a tithe to God it shows that we know God is the giver of all good things. You may want to allow your child to put some of his own money in the offering plate as his worship to God.

Participate. Children learn to be passionate about worship by watching you worship in spirit and truth. Let your child see you celebrate before the Lord, maybe even like King David ([2 Samuel 6:21-22](#))

Questions. Whisper questions to your child during the sermon/Scripture readings.

- "How do you think Jesus looked and sounded when he said that?"
- "What does this say about how you felt yesterday?"
- Wondering questions - wondering ?'s keep the Scriptures open by dealing with a child's experience and understanding of the story. Wondering brings us to the knowledge of God, ourselves and others in a deep and convincing way.
- "I wonder why Jesus enjoyed being in the temple so much?"
- "I wonder what Bartimaeus is seeing Jesus do now?"

Relax! God put the "wiggle" in children.

Stand "short people" on the pew to "read the hymnal/screen with a "tall person".

- Let them hum or la la along before able to read the words or
- Help them sing repeated words or choruses.
- During special music have a young child squeeze your hand every time they hear the word Jesus, Glory etc
- During music without words, children can be asked to listen closely and picture what is going on in the music. Have them think of a Bible story that seems to go along with the music.

Talk about the sermon afterwards and encourage children to share what they learned in the service. Ask them questions and let them ask you questions about what you learned.

Understand their need to move around. Accept them and care for them in the worship setting. Be appreciative of their presence and always be ready to cuddle.

Visit the sanctuary when a service is not going on. Let your child go up front and explore and ask questions.

Whisper instructions.

"Now is the time we tell God about how sorry we are. Remember our talk this morning about being selfish?" Tell Jesus about this right now, and ask him to help you share the last doughnut next time."

"Listen to this story. It's a good one."

Xit when necessary. In certain cases, exit is desirable: a teething baby, a hurt/distressed child, loud & rambunctious behavior, a toileting emergency, or if a child has set up a distracting pattern of play with another child. Exit relieves tension. Teach your child what behavior is acceptable - worship. When the cause of the child's complaint is resolved, return. **Exiting without reentry is counterproductive.**

You are your child's best worship teacher. Call her attention to the minister, choir, worship leaders, flowers, banners, seasonal colors etc.

Zzzzz no sleeping in God's presence

*Many ideas and quotes taken from [Parenting in the Pew](#) by Robbie Castleman.
ABC's for Children taken from <http://www.centralpc.org/worship/worshipa.htm> Central PC in Baltimore, MD*