

Worshiping with Children

We are a church that encourages children to worship with their parents. We believe that children belong with the full body of Christ, and that the best way to "teach faith" is to practice it together. This is why we do not have a "children's church" or Sunday school during worship times. Research shows that children who worship together within the larger body of Christ are more likely to end up as church-goers as adults. Yet we know that bringing young children to church can be challenging! Below are tips to including children, with links to Carolyn Brown's blog, "Worshiping with Children." Our goal is NOT to have children who are quiet and well-behaved in church, but to develop and grow our children into active participants in worshipping our Lord.

THE VISION

Remember what dinner was like before your children were born? Eating with preschoolers or elementary schoolers or teenagers is different! Eating with children at each age has its particular joys and trials. At times it drives adults a little nuts. But, when after 18 or so years we find ourselves eating with adults only again, we recall those loud, messy meals fondly (at least the better meals) and miss them.

It is the same way with worship. Worshiping with children changes the way you worship forever. If "before children" worship was a quiet "just for me" time, that is over and done. It is a new day. Worshiping with children is a team sport. You can no more worship beside your children than you can eat beside them. Both are interactive. You are now a worship coach. Your children will insist that you hone your worship skills and deepen your understanding of worship – and almost everything else – as you draw them into worship. Expect to be embarrassed, stretched, frustrated, delighted and deeply enriched by the process.

[excerpt from "[Worshiping with Children](#)" by Carolyn Brown]

TIP 1: SINGING WITH CHILDREN

We often say that faith is "caught" rather than "taught." Music and singing are common ways that children can "caught" in worship. The article in the link below focuses most on singing in the Sanctuary with hymnals, but many of the ideas can be carried over to singing songs of praise with the words on the screens in Life on the Road. Children too young to read can sway, dance, clap and hum. Music in worship provides a much needed break from the sitting and listening portions of the service. Encouraging your children to sing and/or dance engages their whole body in the worship experience. For one month, encourage your children to stand when the congregation stands for songs and to sing clap and/or move their body! You'll be surprised at what a difference it makes. Also, for those in the Family Life Center, listening to a Christian radio station can help children become familiar with some of the songs they hear in worship.

[Click here to more tips on Singing with Children](#) from "Worshiping with Children."

TIP 2: INCLUDING CHILDREN IN THE READING AND HEARING OF GOD'S WORD

On our Worship Gear shelves, we provide clipboards, pencils, crayons, fidget toys or pipe cleaners, stuff "lovies" and children's books and Bibles as worship aids. These props are intended to help keep busy little bodies occupied so that they can listen to what's happening around them. It's also a great idea to provide a "Worship Bag" from home that includes a Children's Bible, some writing or drawing materials and a bookmark. Encourage your children to find the day's story and mark it in their Bibles. Encourage them to listen as the Scripture is read, and then use the worship gear materials to respond to what they

hear. Maybe they only pick out a word or two, or maybe they hear the whole story. Either way, encouraging kids to stop what they are doing and listen as the Scripture is read helps them to learn the importance and authority we give to God's Word.

[Click here for more](#) about including children in the reading of scripture in worship from "Worshiping with Children."

TIP 3: PRAYING WITH CHILDREN

We say many prayers during worship services, but one prayer we say every time is the Lord's Prayer. Be sure to teach this prayer to your children at home. Talk about what each line means. Make sure that your children are saying the prayer along with the adults in church. This helps them to feel included in worship as part of the full body of Christ.

The worship gear shelf items can really help include children in prayer. During prayers of the people, get out paper and the clipboard and encourage children to write the names or draw pictures of the people they'd like to pray for. They can also write or draw prayers of thanksgiving! Learn more about Praying in Color!

Teach your children different postures of prayer. They can get on their knees. They can fold their hands or hold them open. They can even lift their hands to the sky. Sometimes we bow heads, but sometimes we lift them up to the Lord. Practice different prayer postures, trying out a new one each week every time a prayer is said in church.

[Click for more](#) about praying in church from "Worshiping with Children."

TIP 4: WORSHIP WITH PENCILS AND CRAYONS

We provide clipboards, paper, colored pencils and crayons on our Worship Gear shelf in the narthex and in the back of the Family Life Center. These items can certainly help keep children busy and quiet during worship, but used purposefully, they can also be powerful tools to bring children into worship as active participants.

[Click here](#) to read more from "Worshiping with Children."