

Members and friends, please greet children warmly before and after the service, by name when possible, so they feel included.

Helping children participate in worship

For the next several years, you will be worshipping with your children. Our congregation supports you in this important ministry as parents, and we hope the following suggestions will help enrich your worship experiences.

Before the service:

- ❖ In the Narthex (the entrance hall to the church) you will find bags (for ages 2-5) and packets (ages 6-9). These are filled with pencils, children's worship bulletins, bookmarks and other concrete activities that will help your child concentrate and participate more fully in the worship service.
- ❖ If you feel comfortable doing so, please sit close to the front so your child will be able to see the activity around the altar.
- ❖ Explain the purpose of the items in the pew rack.
- ❖ Help your child locate and place a bookmark at the hymns and scripture readings being used this day.
- ❖ Look for symbols, colors, stained glass windows, icons and the altar hangings. Notice when the colors of the hangings change and talk about the church season signified.
- ❖ Comment on special events in worship such as baptism and other special days in the life of the church.
- ❖ Mention the homily and ask your child to listen so you can talk about it later at home.

During the service:

- ❖ Help children further participate by giving their own offering, no matter how small.
- ❖ Feel free to remain seated with your child to help point out words read or sung during the services.
- ❖ Encourage your child to say and sing the parts of the service they know.
- ❖ Baptism is full initiation into the Christian faith. If your child has been baptized, no matter how young, they may receive communion. If your child does not receive the bread and/or wine, have your child cross his or her arms over their chest, and the priest will offer a special blessing.
- ❖ Emphasize by words and actions the positive, important, happy things you have come to do together in worship.
- ❖ Hug your child frequently during the service. Tell your child how happy you are to have him/her with you in worship.

After the service:

- ❖ If your child attends Sunday School, ask them what they are learning and talk about it during the week.
- ❖ Pray together at home. Include your children's friends, pets and everyday concerns.
- ❖ Make every Sunday worship a regular part of the time you spend with your children.

Remember, the One whom we worship said, "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me."

Matthew 18:5