

Tips for Parenting in the Pews

For Parents

- Worship is a family event...try to sit together
 - Toward the front of the sanctuary with older children
 - Toward the back with smaller children
- Be careful, thoughtful and appropriate about bringing distractions
 - E.g. iPads, games, legos, dolls, trucks
- Prepare for Worship
 - Before
 - Sundays need to be made special
 - Sunday morning starts Saturday night. Lay out clothes, offering envelopes, etc.
 - Make Sunday morning different! Set the alarm early enough to allow for a relaxed pace. Have a simple, special Sunday breakfast.
 - Allow time to get settled. ***Take children to the bathroom before the service begins.***
 - During
 - Worship WITH rather than BESIDE children.
 - Engage your children about worship
 - Explain communion, offering, etc.
 - Help those who can't yet read by singing the words of the chorus into their ears so they can sing along. Have them squeeze your hand whenever they hear a repeated word like God or Hallelujah.
 - Afterwards

- Talk about the sermon at lunch, ask which song they liked, talk about the words of the songs, teach them the creeds, doxologies, prayers
- Encourage older children to use the Notes page and fill in the blanks
- Allow children to participate in the offering by sharing their allowance
- Whisper instructions, questions and comments into your children's ears
- When young children need a break, step out of the sanctuary. Rejoin when they are ready to participate again.
- Be firm and consistent

For the Congregation

- Remember the commitment you made as a church when children were dedicated/baptized, a commitment to encourage them to become disciples of Christ.
- Remember your commitment you made to the church in our church Covenant
 - We covenant with the Lord and with one another, and bind ourselves in the presence of God to live together in all His ways, as He reveals them to us through His Word. We do this for the glory of God, for our mutual growth, and for the good of our fellow men, through the enabling grace and power of Jesus Christ.
- Realize, Worship is not for adults-only.
 - Honestly, sometimes parents need to do a better job parenting at church
 - But ask yourself...
 - How much support do you give?

- Have you gone out of your way to make non-Christians feel welcome but done very little to make eight-year-old boy feel the same?
- Introduce yourself to the child sitting beside you. Make him or her feel welcome and important.
- On occasion, ask a parent if you could invite one of their children to sit with you during the service.
- Understand when parents need to take young children and babies to the nursery or the rest room and then return to worship.
- Have patience with the learning process, and pray for families that you see are struggling.
- Compliment children who listened attentively during the service.
- Be aware of you attitude

Helpful articles on Parenting in the Pews

<http://www.addingaburden.com/2013/02/pew-parenting.html>

<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/homeschoolchronicles/2013/04/parenting-in-the-pew-tips-for-stressed-out-parents-and-fed-up-congregants/>

<http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-family-together-in-gods-presence>

Books

Parenting in the Pews: Guiding your Children into the Joy of Worship by
Robbie Castleman