

## Children in Worship

Welcome to worship at Christ Church! As you look around the sanctuary, you will see that children are part of our worshipping community. Their presence here grows out of the biblical tradition and conviction that children are members of the covenant community.

We make room for children in our worship by:

- ♦ providing children's activity bulletins for prekindergarten through early elementary.
- ♦ providing "Pockets" activity books for older children.
- ♦ giving them blessings at the communion table.
- ♦ giving Holy Communion to children 6 years and older (after they have finished First Holy Communion Classes).

This folder was designed to aid parents and other members of our congregation in making room for children at worship.

I hope you will help children learn the importance, beauty and joy of worshipping our creator by welcoming them and praying for them as they grow.

Carlien Parlett  
Director of Christian Education

## How Can You Welcome Families in Worship?

Express your gladness to parents for keeping their baptismal promises to bring their children to worship.

Before and after the service, be sure to say hello to children near you.

Make sure to praise children who conduct themselves well during worship.

Free yourself from worry about children's behavior. Remember Christ welcomed children.

Offer help to young parents who are still figuring it all out.

Be open to receiving children's ministry to you.



## For Parents

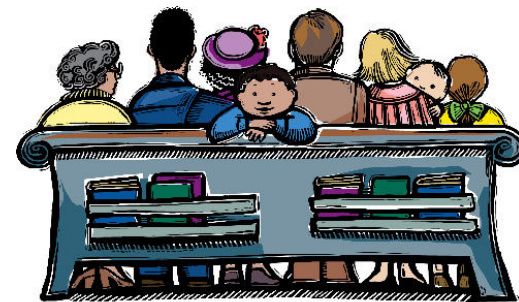
Arrive in time to find a good place to sit. Sit near the front to provide younger children with a better view of the chancel.

Bring colored pencils or crayons for children to draw in the children's materials you picked up in the narthex or in coloring books brought from home.

At home, talk about worship and answer any questions they may have.

## Making Room for Children in Worship

A Guide for parents and friends  
of children who come to  
worship with us.



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## Worship and Learning

Worship is God-centered praise and adoration. The church's worship service is also one basic way by which people learn what it means to be Christian. Children learn worship by worshiping with the congregation Sunday after Sunday.

- ◆ They learn they belong to Christ and are welcome in Christ's church.
- ◆ They come to know the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed and other parts of the service by memory.
- ◆ They build a fund of memorable, shared experiences of Christian community from which they may draw when they are older.
- ◆ They are enriched by the beauty of music and art as expressions of praise and as human responses to God.
- ◆ They hear stories from the Bible read and interpreted; and they begin to see Christian worship as one place where God may speak to them.
- ◆ They witness the drama of baptism and communion as signs of God's kindness and favor.
- ◆ They discover that they are valued as persons by God and by God's people.

Bringing children to worship may not always be easy, but it is an essential part of their growth toward Christ.

### Parents & Other Adults

Helpful tips can be found on the back of this brochure

## The Prekindergarten Child

Adults may wonder at the wisdom of including prekindergarten children in worship. Children may be restless, distracting those around them and embarrassing their parents with their behavior. The young child comes to worship with a rather limited attention span and a growing curiosity about everything.



While these ingredients can combine to test the patience of adults, there are several things parents can do to make the child's experience—and their own—more relaxed and worshipful.

- ◆ Sit near the front where your child can see the chancel.
- ◆ Prepare your child for the different parts of the worship service; explain special events ahead of time and answer questions that need an answer right now in a quiet whisper.
- ◆ Encourage use of the children's worship materials, available in the narthex, and invite your child to color or draw in them.
- ◆ Allow your child to bring a favorite stuffed animal and/or Bible story book along. (Check out the Children's Library in the Coffee Hour Room.)

Sensitivity to the young child's abilities and needs can help make worship a more pleasant and meaningful experience for everyone.

A child who is having trouble quietly participating should be taken out to the Narthex or Coffee Hour Room to calm down and re-group. The service is broadcast into those areas so parents may still hear the service.

## The School-Age Child

The school-age child brings some new abilities to worship:

- ◆ a greater capacity for attentive listening.
- ◆ an increased ability to read.
- ◆ the ability to organize and memorize information.

Parents can help their school-age child toward greater participation in worship as these capacities develop by:

- ◆ using a version of Scripture in contemporary English.
- ◆ helping them read or memorize the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed and other parts of the worship service.
- ◆ reviewing the bulletin with your child to identify new or difficult words and preview together those parts when the congregation responds with reading or speaking.
- ◆ inviting your child to follow the reading of the Scripture lessons, and prayers.
- ◆ finding hymns and go over the words.
- ◆ encouraging them to listen to the sermon for stories, answers to questions, or important thoughts.



For this age group, some parts of the children's worship materials will be more meaningful than before because of their ability to read.