
A PARENT'S GUIDE TO *Parenting in the Pew*

At Christ Fellowship, we welcome and encourage children to participate in our Sunday morning services. We love having kids in the worship service. This guide is intended to help you understand why we encourage children to participate in the worship service with their parents and to provide you with guidance as you seek to train your children to participate and engage with you each Sunday.

WHY PARENTING IN THE PEW?

“So that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.” – Psalm 78:7

- It trains our children to do the most important thing they are called to do—to worship God!
- It teaches our children discipline. Sitting still and listening attentively for over an hour is a discipline!
- It allows our children to soak in God’s word and the truths of the gospel, because we believe that children can understand more than we give them credit for.
- It allows our children to watch the people of God and learn from their example as they worship God together.
- It gives our children a sense of awe of God.

If you are new to parenting in the pew, the thought of teaching your children to sit through an hour and a half service may be overwhelming. It isn’t easy, but it is possible. And as we’ve already seen, it’s worth it! So how do we set our children up for success?

AT HOME

- 1. Have regular times of family worship.** This will help your children get accustomed to coming to church to worship. Family worship is as easy as reading the Bible, singing a hymn, and praying about what you read in the Bible.
- 2. Read the sermon text with your children before Sunday.** Use the church card to know what text of Scripture will be preached each Sunday and prepare your family to hear God's Word.
- 3. Be prepared for Sunday!** Sunday morning should start Saturday night—lay out clothes, pack the children's bags, and set expectations for the next day.
- 4. Have a good breakfast.** Don't come to church on an empty stomach!

AT CHURCH

- 1. Use the restroom.** Take a trip to the restroom before the service starts so you can prevent your children from squirming due to a full bladder or asking to use the restroom during the service.
- 2. Find a good seat.** Depending on the age of your children, sit in a place you feel appropriate for your children's age and conducive to the level of attention they need. Don't be afraid to sit on the ends close to the front or back if you need to exit with your children during the service.
- 3. Use the bulletin.** We provide a children's bulletin to help younger children participate in the service. Older children can use the regular bulletin to take notes. The key is to teach your children to participate and engage rather than to distract them in order to keep them silent.
- 4. Model participation and engagement to your children.** Your children will follow your lead. Sing loud, say "Amen!", and take notes. Let your children see what it looks like to be engaged in worship.

AFTER CHURCH

- 1. Talk about the service with your children.** Discuss the songs we sang, the missionaries and churches we prayed for, and the sermon. Encourage your children to ask you questions about the service.
- 2. Pray for your children.** Continue to pray that the Lord will work in the hearts of your children as they join you for the worship service each week.

Parenting in the pew isn't easy and there is no guarantee that every worship service will be easy and smooth for your family. Consistency is key and prayer is essential! Over time our children can learn to participate and engage in all parts of the service. Our prayer is that you will be blessed to see how the Lord can use the weekly worship service to work in the lives of your children.

“Let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.” – Galatians 6:9

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

Books

Family Worship by Donald S. Whitney

Parenting in the Pew: Guiding Your Children into the Joy of Worship by Robbie Castleman.

Bibles

The Jesus Storybook Bible by Sally Lloyd Jones

The Gospel Story Bible by Marty Machowski

ESV Holy Bible for Kids

Articles

“The Family: Together in God’s Presence” by John and Noel Piper. (DesiringGod.com)

“5 Reasons You Should Prioritize Family Worship” by Donald S. Whitney. (TheGospelCoalition.com)

Special thanks to Carolyn Roberts and Deana Menikoff (Mount Vernon Baptist Church), Deepak Reju “10 ways to Make the Sermon Much Less Boring” (Capitol Hill Baptist Church), “8 Tips for helping Your Child Worship” (Children Desiring God) for much of the content in this guide.