

Worship Booklet for Children and Their Family



Enclosed are some ideas to engage your children in worship as they begin to sit through the whole service. They can simply follow the instructions in the order of worship and participate that way, but realistically, kids like to have something to do with their hands and often engage better that way. Remember that children imitate their parents, so if you demonstrate how to participate in worship, they will follow. It can be a very meaningful experience for both you and your child, and you may engage in worship differently yourself!

Before Worship

Look over the bulletin together. Take this time to look up the hymns in the hymnal and save them with the bookmark. They may also find the Old Testament and New Testament passages either in their own Bible or the one in the pew, and put their book marks in the correct place. Note that sometimes the pages listed in the bulletin are not the same for all the Pew Bibles, so help them find based on the passage rather than the page number.

This can also be a time where they can skim the prayers in the bulletin. What words are difficult to understand or pronounce? What sentences do they like? Encourage them to doodle on the bulletin, underlining and circling things they like or confuse them.

Call to Worship

This is a great place for children to begin in worship. It is a time to move into sacred space. Remind them that we are in worship now, and while wiggles are ok, we are to respect the space we're in. They can stand and recite the lines with you, the words are usually a bit more simple than other prayers. If it is helpful for them to practice the lines first, they can do this during the prelude. Ask them if there are any words they don't understand or can't pronounce so they can recite with you during the actual prayer.

Hymns and Choir Pieces

Hymns are a great way for the kids to participate in worship. If they have trouble reading music or any of the more complicated words, it's ok, they can sing what they can. Point to the words as they are sung so they may be able to get the hang of following music. They can always listen or participate by holding the hymnal for other family members. Children imitate their parents, so if you sing (no matter how your voice sounds), they will at least attempt to.

During the anthem, introit and sometimes offertory, the choir will sing. Sometimes it is in a different language and hard to understand, sometimes it uses old english and is hard to understand. Ask your child to listen for some of the words. Does it sound familiar? Where do you think the words come from? The Bible? What are they singing about? Remind them that this is a time to listen to the choir sing about God, just like the scripture and the sermon. We listen rather than sing along too.

Call to Confession/Prayer of Confession/Assurance of Pardon

Often the words in the prayer of confession are hard for children to read or understand. If this is the case with this week's prayer and you can tell from the beginning, encourage them to think about some of the things that they might need forgiveness for and to draw or write it on their dry erase board. They may also want to just copy the prayer of confession from the bulletin down on there in the same way and practice their writing. Then during the assurance of pardon, they can erase it away, just as God forgives us.

Apostles Creed and Lord's Prayer (this is usually after the Pastoral Prayer)

There is a card with both of these on it in their bags, so they can practice the words each week. Both of these have tricky words, but if they practice at home too they may get the hang of it! They can practice one line at a time, which is how the font looks on the card.

Offering

This is a great time for your child to participate in worship. They can place your pledge or some cash in the plate. If you give your pledge electronically or just once a month, you could encourage them to place one of their drawings in the plate or write down something they want to do to help the church and the community. Offering is not just about giving money, it is about giving of ourselves and our gifts. They can get into the habit of placing something in the plate and recognize it's not just about the money. The Doxology and the prayer of dedication are both easy for the child to pick up on, so help them as they participate in each.

Pastoral Prayer

This prayer will seem fairly long to them, especially with the list of prayer requests and the prayer. This is a great time to participate in "Praying in Color." The child can find the list of prayer requests in the bulletin and write a name on their paper or dry erase board. Then they can draw shapes around it and pray for that person as they are drawing. Then they can connect it to another name. They can use all the names in the bulletin or just one or two. They may not know everybody's name but encourage them

to pray for both people they know and people they don't know. They can listen to the prayer requests spoken aloud and write for those, or they can just think about what they have on their mind - their siblings, pets, family, and pray for them.

If you want to know more about "Praying in Color," check out the Kid's Edition by Sybil MacBeth.

HERE IS A SAMPLE OF PRAYING IN COLOR. IT CAN BE AS DETAILED OR SIMPLE AS YOU AND YOUR CHILD WANT.



Scripture and Sermon

Since they've saved their spots in the Bible for the scripture reading, encourage them to follow along with the reading. If one of the readings is a story, encourage them to draw a picture of the story. They can continue this during the sermon. If the passages are Psalms, prophet passages or epistles - things that don't necessarily have a story with them. Encourage them to pick one word or phrase from the passage, write it down and draw something that makes them think of that phrase and God.

It would be wonderful if everybody paid attention during the sermon, but especially with six year olds, it is pretty unrealistic for them to hear much past the introductory story. If they do pick up on it, and are bored of their scripture drawings, they can think about how that introductory story might look to them and draw it out on a notepad or dry erase board. They may also think back to the children's sermon and think about the things they learned in that. If they are paying attention through the whole sermon, encourage them to think of questions to ask the pastor after the service. What are some

words they didn't understand? Phrases that they really liked? Stories that they connected to?

If the drawing is getting repetitive, this could be a good time to get out the silly puddy or pipe cleaners, they can keep their hands busy and also pay attention to what they can of the sermon. Sucking on a mint or hard candy will keep them awake and focused. This may also be a good time to read a book you've brought with you or borrowed from pastor Meg's office.

Communion

Communion is always a great way for children to actively participate in worship. On Communion Sundays, the order of worship is a bit different so kids might be getting a bit antsy by the time the invitation to the table happens and they are waiting for the bread and cup to get to them. Ask them to think about the last supper and what it may have been like to be there with Jesus and with all your neighbors and friends. As you pass the tray of bread, say "Body of Christ Broken for You," or "Bread of Life for You," to engage them in the experience. When the tray of cups comes around you can say, "Cup of the New Covenant," "Cup of Salvation," or "Blood of Christ Shed for You (this might need a bit of explaining)." Children who are baptized are invited to the table because Christ has invited them to participate in the feast. If you would rather wait until your child is older and understands the table more (as the church used to do), that is fine too. Just explain it to your kids as the tray passes by that they are part of the community, but that you'd rather they take communion when they get a bit older.

Postlude and After Worship

Remember to hang up your worship bags, and take drawings and trash with you. We are in a sacred place, and we want the children to feel welcome ere but also respect the space. Remind them as they leave that they can ask the pastor questions about the sermon and the service. As you drive to lunch or back home, ask your child what they liked about worship today. What do you remember? What do you think the message of the scripture and sermon was? What did you not like? Did you ever feel confused about what was going on? Tell them what you thought the message was, and how they might learn from it. Children learn more about worship from their parents than the pastors and educators, so don't be afraid to talk about it!