



PARENTING IN THE PEWS (OR CHAIRS)

What are some of your memories of church as a child? No doubt, many of you grew up with the expectation that you were to keep quiet during worship with little expectation that you would encounter God or participate in worship. Our goal is to help you as parents teach your children how to worship.

Children learn best by doing, and worship is best taught by parents because you can guide and be the example that your children need. You can show by example what it means to seek God, to love His Son and to respond to the Holy Spirit in worship. Below are ways to help your children have a positive worship experience:

SUNDAY MORNING STARTS SATURDAY NIGHT

- Get your kids to bed on time; go to bed yourselves!
- Set the alarm.
- Lay clothes out for Sunday on Saturday night.
- Prepare your tithes and offerings (including your child's gifts)

KEEP SUNDAY SIMPLE

- Make breakfast simple
- Don't plan elaborate meals for after church
- Communicate that worship is a privilege- not a punishment

LOCATION! LOCATION! LOCATION!

- Sit up front! Proximity encourages participation. It is difficult for children to pay attention to what is happening when they cannot see.
- Sit near families who are trying to do the same worship training that you are

BEFORE THE SERVICE BEGINS

- Take your child to the restroom
- Leave games, toys and books at home
- Remind your child that God is present
- Have older kids look at the title of the sermon and predict what they think the sermon will be about

DURING THE SERVICE

- Help them to follow along by pointing to words in the worship program
- Encourage your children to listen for a particular story or word
- Ask them to draw a picture of the story being told or the scripture passage being read
- Put an arm around them as they follow along as this provides control and support
- When the congregation is standing, allow them to stand on the chair so they can see
- Take time to explain things during the service by whispering quietly to your child

AFTER THE SERVICE

- Express appreciation at being in church with your children.
- Commend your children for specific times when they were participating
- Talk about what went on in the service. Avoid making this sound like an exam, but ask a few questions to let your children know that you expect them to be listening.