

FROM THE CHILDREN'S CHARTER FOR THE CHURCH

THE CHURCH IS CALLED:

- **to receive children's special gifts** as signs of the Reign of God;
- **to foster community** beyond the family unit, in which children, youth and adults know each other by name, minister to each other, and are partners together in serving Christ in the world;
- **to appreciate children's abilities and readiness** to represent Christ and his church, to bear witness to Christ wherever they may be, and according to gifts given them, to carry on Christ's work of reconciliation in the world, and to take their place in the life, worship, and governance of the church. *(Ministry of the Laity pg. 855 BCP)*



HINTS FOR OTHER ADULTS IN THE CONGREGATION:

- Recognize your role as models for children in worship.
- Express your joy and appreciation for the presence of children and their families at church – through your facial expressions and body language and through how you greet and welcome the children around you – just as you would greet adults!
- Help children and families feel included by getting to know them by name.
- If you are in charge of a ministry – or assisting with our worship in a special way – consider inviting children to join you. Young people love to have a meaningful role. They can help to greet worshippers as they arrive, pass the offertory plate, or bring up the gifts, help to set up the altar or even learn to be a lay reader!
- Listen to what children have to say; ask them what they enjoy about coming to church and be open to receive their ministry to you as they share with you.
- Feel free to use the same Children's bulletins or coloring materials that are provided for people of all-ages! You're modeling that what they do in church is a part of how we worship!



BEING WITH CHILDREN IN WORSHIP AT ST. PAUL'S



Hints for parents, grandparents, and other adults in the congregation



Children **belong** in the faith community.



Young and old, we are called to gather **together** to participate in worship.



Children bring unique gifts of wonder, excitement, and creativity that can make worship more **meaningful** for all of us.



Worship is a celebration of belonging. by participating in worship, children learn that they belong to Christ and are **welcome** in Christ's church.

THE VERY YOUNG CHILD COMES TO WORSHIP WITH...

- a growing curiosity about everything in their world
- lots of (seemingly endless) energy
- a rather limited attention span



YOU CAN HELP YOUR YOUNG CHILD PARTICIPATE IN WORSHIP:

- Sit near the front of the church so that your child can see clearly all that is going on!
- Please feel free to bring your child to the “PrayGround” area near the altar – with tables and chairs just their size and books and materials to help them engage in the worship. There are chairs for you to sit nearby.
- Prepare your child for different parts of the service by letting them know what will happen next (i.e. “we’re going to stand now and sing this song”) and answer their “right now” questions in a quiet whisper.
- Allow your child to bring a favorite stuffed animal, picture or coloring books, or other quiet toys with them! Make use of the books, children’s bulletins, bins with crayons and other resources that are provided for you as well.
- Use church quiet time as a chance for special togetherness with your child – time to snuggle them in your lap or keep your arm around them – things that there may not always be time for during the routine of a busy week. Make church special family togetherness time.



Children & Communion:

The Episcopal Church encourages full participation in our liturgy. Children of all ages are welcome at our altar. When we baptize children, we welcome them into God’s family, just as they have been welcomed into our individual families. It may be years before children understand the history or values of our family, but they are nonetheless valuable members. Likewise in church, children may not understand all the mysteries of Eucharist (who does? ☺) but they are learning how the Family of God breaks bread together and receives sustenance for the journey – so as soon as your child has been baptized and is physically able to ingest solid foods, they are welcome to receive at Communion.

THE SCHOOL-AGE CHILD COMES TO WORSHIP WITH...

- a longer attention span for attentive listening
- the increasing ability to read
- improving abilities to remember and to memorize information.



YOU CAN HELP YOUR OLDER CHILD PARTICIPATE IN WORSHIP:

- Arrive early enough to let your child(ren) help choose where they want to sit!
- Make sure that your child has a name tag (we can print one or they can design a special one).
- Help your child learn the Lord’s prayer as well as the creed and other parts of the worship service. As they are learning to read, you can help show them how to follow along in the Book of Common Prayer.
- Invite your child to find the hymns or look up the Bible readings (children’s bibles are available to borrow!)
- Continue to answer any questions they have in a quiet voice. Be honest if you don’t know the answer and make a note to learn something new.
- Bring drawing materials or to make use of the books, children’s bulletins and other resources. As children get older, hold onto any activities until the sermon begins so that they have something new to do during the longest part of sitting still.
- After church, ask your child(ren) what they liked best. Share your own experience and model sharing what was most meaningful to you at worship.



Questions?
Want a tour of the church
or the worship materials?

Our Lay Associate for
Parish Life or Rector
would love to talk with you – either
by phone or after the liturgy!