

ABC's For Parents and Other Adults

Arrive in time to find a good place to sit. Sitting near the front will help young children have a better view of the worship service.

Make sure the children's physical needs are met before worship begins.

Bring something for little ones to hold or look at. Children's Worship Folders are available in baskets at each entrance to the sanctuary.

Contribute visibly in worship by singing, praying, making an offering. You are a role model in all that you do.

Discuss worship at home, helping prepare children to participate, and talking with them afterwards about their understanding of the service.

Express your gladness at having children in worship. Greet the children near you during the Passing of the Peace.

Free yourself from worry about children's behavior and be open to receiving their ministry to you.



Consider the age of the child and what the child is about:

Ages 3-5: It may seem unwise to include preschool children in worship. It is true that they sometimes distract those around them and distress parents by their behavior. But as members of the family of faith, they are needed to complete the circle at God's table. It helps to remember that a preschool child comes to worship with a short attention span, great energy and a growing curiosity about everything. This child spends much time climbing off and on the pew; sticks fingers in the communion cup holders; may wander down the aisle if seated at the end of the pew; wants her/his own bulletin, keeps it in constant motion and clings to it tenaciously if a parent tries to take it away; writes first name on register in BIG letters; fits toes nicely into hymnbook rack.

But what else is happening at the same time? This child can be assisted with finding the page numbers of the hymns and have them ready for singing; may sing along with everyone else (maybe using his/her own words); can join in singing the Doxology and Gloria Patri and in praying the Lord's Prayer. This child wants to hold the offering plate as it goes by and wants to add to its contents, perhaps sensing that worship involves giving.

Ages 6-7: By this age, children come to worship with a greater capacity for attentive listening, an increasing ability to read and the skills to organize and memorize information. These children generally sit in place until there is an acceptable reason for moving – the best one being a dropped bulletin or pencil. It flutters to the floor and lands well under the pew ahead, followed by a small body which wiggles around and returns grinning triumphantly. This child writes her/his whole name in the register, often adding address and phone number before checking every response

box. While feet are closer to the floor at this age, the book rack is still a nice footrest.

Stop to consider, though – this child can do some new things. He/she knows when to sit and when to stand; that heads are bowed during the Lord's Prayer. This child can find the hymns and sing some of the words to more familiar hymns while proudly and carefully holding the hymnal. He/she is excited to find readable words in the bulletin and is beginning to apply reading skills to matters of faith.

Ages 8 and up: The older child can handle the bulletin with more agility – in fact, has learned to fold it into an airplane; has also learned not to sail that plane over the heads of the congregation, but enjoys threatening to do so. Another favorite activity is to swing feet back and forth to create a discernible rocking sensation, often hitting legs or bumping the pew ahead. And of course, what worship service would be complete without pretending to take money out of the offering plate?

But the 8-year-old can read the bulletin, find the Scripture lesson and follow along as Scripture is read. This child also knows that we read a hymnbook differently than other books, and can follow the hymns pretty well.

So! Bringing your child to worship may be a real exercise in aggravation at first. But **our children are part of Christ's church, and they – just like the adults – are called to worship God.** They don't participate just the way adults do, but they grow in understanding with each worship service, and that participation helps them learn that they are a valuable part of the family of faith.

Child Care

While all children are welcome in worship, there are times when they are better nurtured in a less formal setting.

Childcare is provided for infants through kindergarteners by our professional staff.

Those younger than 2 may stay in the nursery throughout worship.

Preschoolers are encouraged to attend church through the Children's Sermon, after which they are escorted to the child care rooms.

Children who have completed kindergarten and are not members of the Children's Choir are expected to remain in worship.

All children are invited to use the Worship Folders found in baskets at the front and back of the sanctuary.

Children's Choir

The Children's Choir generally practices during Worship, following the Children's Sermon. Children 5 and older who wish to participate are escorted from the sanctuary to the Music Room, and dismissed to their parents at the conclusion of worship.



Children at Central Presbyterian Church

Children are welcome and encouraged to be in worship at Central Presbyterian Church.

The Presbyterian Book of Order affirms that "In Jesus Christ, the Church is a royal priesthood in which worship is the work of everyone. The people of God are called to participate in the common ministry of worship. No one shall be excluded from participation or leadership in public worship in the Lord's house on the grounds of race, color, class, age, sex or handicapping condition." (W-1.4.003)

We know that it can be a challenge to bring a young child into worship. They giggle, poke, fidget and talk – simply because they are children. But they also sing, pray, give – and learn that worship is both the highest duty and the greatest joy of all Christians.

If you have questions or comments about the church's policy on Children in Worship, or if you would like more resources for helping your child become familiar with Christian worship, please contact **Kathy Escandell, Director of Education for Children and Youth;** kescandell@cpcastin.org

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CHILDREN IN WORSHIP

A Guide for Parents and Friends of Children



Whoever welcomes this little child
in my name welcomes me;
and whoever welcomes me
welcomes the one who sent me.

Luke 9:49