

Suggestions for Parents

- ◆ Allow time to get settled. Take children to the toilet before the service begins.
- ◆ Sit towards the front. Children who can see will feel more a part of the activity.
- ◆ If possible, seat children with an adult between them.
- ◆ Introduce your children to the people sitting nearby.
- ◆ Go over the order of worship before the start to identify what will be happening, to help them find hymns, other readings, and scriptures, and then mark them.
- ◆ Share the hymn book and sheet with a child at their eye level. Point out words for young readers and even non-readers who can pick out repetitive words.
- ◆ Allow children to participate in the offering by sharing their financial resources.
- ◆ Children learn “worship etiquette” by participation. Feel free to whisper to children to teach.

- ◆ We sometimes encourage their participation in a “special activity” in our worship. You may come as well if they are hesitant.
- ◆ Talk about what people or events might need our prayers and might be included in sharing “joys” and “concerns” or silent prayer.
- ◆ Talk about worship at home during the week: “That’s sort of like something that was said in the sermon last week”, or “Do you remember the story the minister told?” “We could pray part of the prayer we used in the worship.”
- ◆ Make some ground rules ahead of time for appropriate behaviour in church.
- ◆ There are those times when a youngster has “toddler tantrums”! You can make use of the Narthex which has sound relayed to it, you can still see, and the screen is double glazed. But, you must bring the children back!

All family life has its difficulties in helping children to grow. The church family is no different. However, it is well worth all of the effort.

As a Church we are committed to supporting parents with their children at worship:

◆ **Busy Bags**

In a box by the screen are bags containing items of interest to the younger children. These can be borrowed and returned to the box at the end of the service

◆ **Crèche**

On the 2nd and 4th Sundays there is a Crèche for children of pre-school age - the children can leave towards the end of the first hymn and are brought back during the offertory hymn

◆ **“JAM” (Jesus and Me) Sessions**

On the 2nd and 4th Sundays - optional groups for children to look at the readings at their own level. The children leave immediately after the Gospel, returning at the offertory.

◆ **First Sundays**

Especially, on the first Sunday of the month we aim to make it as easy as possible for the younger members of our church to take part in our worship.

◆ **Worksheets**

Worksheets are available for children to take away with them.

Relax! Your Family is important here!

- ◆ Children are important ... and we have a commitment to help them to learn to worship. Perhaps they won't always understand what is going on or being said, but they can understand that this is a place where they are loved and accepted.
- ◆ The formal worship can provide an excellent opportunity for parents to be involved in the spiritual nurturing of their older children. Talk to them about the service. Explain what is happening. Help them "catch" your enthusiasm and excitement about being in church!
- ◆ Let the suggestions contained in this folder help you *relax* and *appreciate* the children who are present. The Kingdom of Heaven does belong to them as well as you!

Child Protection Policy:

There is a "Child Protection Policy" in place in our church and all those working with children have been vetted.

Suggestions for the Congregation

- ◆ Remember the commitment we make as a congregation at baptism, including, children's and pray for them.
- ◆ Have patience with the learning process; we are all children of God.
- ◆ During the peace, greet children as well as their parents.
- ◆ Hand offering bags to children, not over their heads.
- ◆ Ensure that children have books and a notice sheet of their own.
- ◆ During any "special time" for the children, laugh with the children, not at them.
- ◆ Try to get to know the children who are present.
- ◆ Understand when parents need to take younger children out and then return to worship.
- ◆ Compliment children who have been attentive during the service.

Children are members of today's church in their own right, as well as its future. Please help to give them a sense of really belonging here.

Children in Worship

A Guide for Parents and Congregation to encourage children in Worship.

Parish of West Byfleet

