



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

KING'S HARBOR CHURCH

Family Worship

King's Harbor Church greatly values the participation of children in corporate worship. Throughout the year, children in Kindergarten-5th grade will have the opportunity to join the adults in the sanctuary for an all-family celebration of worshipping God. The following is provided to guide parents through the why's and how's of successfully integrating children into the act of corporate worship.

Why Family Worship is important

Family Worship provides parents and children the opportunity to experience (and practice) the God-honoring act of gathering for the purpose of declaring God's praise and being instructed from His Word. By integrating children into the weekend services on a regular basis, adults, specifically parents, provide models for the children on the means and methods of obedient worship. We know that most of what children learn about God and His community is caught and not taught. If we want children to grow as passionate worshippers of God, then we must show them what a passionate community of Christ-exalters looks like. Additionally, through Family Worship children experience value, belonging, and opportunities to participate in the family of faith. (Deuteronomy 6) Family Worship provides one context for parents to fill their children's senses with the things of God in order that their children might ask and be told about the greatness of the God we worship.

What about those wiggles?

We believe that God is big enough to visit a child who has the fidgets. There is a proper place for respect and order, but allowing a child to stand on a chair so they can see the worship team, or letting them color while the Pastor is speaking will not prevent them from experiencing God. Yes, we do want our children to learn to sit still and to practice listening so that they do not become a distraction to another person's worship, but allowing them to worship God in a more child-friendly way is acceptable. By the age of five most children are able to sit through a full-length movie which is equivalent to the time of our average service. Is not the worship of God more important than a movie? If your child has a difficult time sitting, encourage them to stand (or even dance along the edges of the seats) during worship. If they need to stretch during the sermon, feel free to walk with them to the back of the sanctuary for a couple of minutes.

Can children really learn anything in "Big People" Church?

We do believe that children can learn great truths about God. Help your child open their Bibles to the text; whisper greater explanations to things they are hearing; explain who is talking and what that person does to serve our church; tell them when the worship team is leading the congregation in your favorite song; turn to the maps in your Bible and help them locate the setting of the sermon's text. With your quiet prompts your child's experience will be greatly enriched. Continue your discussions on the way home from church. Answer any questions, inquire if they met anyone new, find out if they have any questions, or if they heard a new song they really enjoyed.

How to Prepare for Family Worship

Plan Ahead

As early as the Monday before, begin talking enthusiastically with your child about the upcoming weekend. Let them know how special this weekend is for you and to our church family. The night before, set out special clothes and pray with your child that God would especially bless your time together as a family. Some children also may have volunteered to be a part of the service and this is a great time to talk about the importance of serving.

Answer Questions

Does your child understand why you go to church? Do they know the people that you sit by and why? Do they understand what to do during prayer? What is the offering? (Yes, children will look forward to putting their own money in the offering plate.) Do they understand communion? Will they be invited to participate in communion or will they be observing in anticipation for the day that they may? (Please see our handout- Kids and Communion for more information)

Practice

Sing songs during the week that your child might hear on the weekend. Say prayers that last a little longer or read longer stories to help them learn to sit still for longer amounts of time. Walk through the service with them so they know what to expect and when.

Set Goals

Be sure that your expectations for your child are clear and reasonable. How do you want them to let you know if they need to stretch their legs? What will the consequences be if they do not meet their goals?

Come Prepared

All children will be given a box filled with activities related to the service, but it's also okay to bring a bag for your child with quiet things to help them through the service. Even when a child is coloring or looking through a picture Bible they are taking in the sounds and sights of the worship time.

Questions?

Please contact Lisa Larking, Children's Ministry Director, with any questions.
lisa@kingsharbor.org