

# **WE PRACTICE PARENTING IN THE PEW!**

## **What is “Parenting in the Pew?”**

In a nutshell, it's children worshiping alongside their parents in “big church.” If you want more details, a book written by Robbie Castleman is available. Visit our church library or ask a Kid's Ministry staff member to borrow a copy.

## **What ages worship with their parents?**

That is totally up to you. Infants and toddlers may do better in early childhood programs, but even small children may enjoy worship, especially if they can sing or color a journal page.

## **Why is “Parenting in the Pew” better than age-appropriate pull-out programs for children?**

- Long-term studies have shown that children who worship with their families are more likely to remain in church than those who are pulled out for age-specific programs.
- Children learn best by doing. They look to parents to be their examples.
- Worship is a great way to help them learn about God's love for us and our love and thankfulness for Him.
- Worshipping together is a great way to engage children in conversations about spiritual things. Asking questions about a song or a sermon can teach valuable truths in a very real way.
- During the sermon, kids are encouraged to journal and illustrate the “big idea,” which can lead to great lunch time conversations!

## **What do we need to know to make worship a successful experience for our children?**

- This is a new way to see church. We're doing old things with new attitudes.
- Always sit with your children. Help them develop a proper reverence during worship by whispering instructions and reminders to them.
- Visit the restroom and water fountain before the service begins. Encourage children to stay with you, not to move freely throughout the room.
- Be intentional about modeling worship and directing your children's worship activities. Encourage their drawing and journaling to be about the sermon or music. Ask guided questions about what it means to them. Point out real-life examples of concepts. (Whisper these during worship! Discuss in more detail after church.) Activities are not just "busy work" but tools to help reinforce concepts at an early age.
- Encourage your children to go up for a Children's message or back to the interactive board when invited. Go with them if needed, until they are comfortable going alone.
- Don't worry about your children behaving perfectly. Our congregation is practicing "grace," so this is good for all of us. Focus on coming into the presence of God.
- Remind your children that God is here. Ask them how they will show their love to Him.
- Training children to worship may not always enhance your own personal worship experience – especially at first. Don't give up! The rewards are eternal.

Questions? We're here to help!

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