

We Practice Parenting in the Pew:

First Pres practices "Parenting in the Pew" during our worship services. This means that by the time children enter first grade, they worship alongside their family in the corporate worship services (sometimes called "Big Church"). If you have a kindergartener or first grader, it is time to start thinking about transitioning your child into worshipping in Big Church on Sunday mornings. And we are here to help!

- For Kindergarteners, Preschool worship is still available in Critterland during the 11:00 and 11:05 worship services for your child, but this would be a good time to start practicing worship in Big Church. Consider taking your child to Big Church with you for a portion of the service (such as the singing, offering, and/or children's sermon). Your child is welcome to return to Critterland at any point during the morning.
- For First Graders, this is the first year that your child's worship programming will exclusively be to attend one of the worship services with you. (Note: we realize that each child is different and develops at his/her own rate. We are happy to work with families to make arrangements for their child's individual needs.)

Why do we include children in corporate worship? Here are just a few of the reasons:

- **Teaching Kids to Worship.** Kids learn by doing and they look to their parents to be their examples. Worshipping together is a great way to engage children in conversations about spiritual things and to train them in what it means to worship our Holy God. Asking questions about a song or a sermon can teach valuable truths in a very real way.
- **A Faith that Sticks.** Research done by the Fuller Youth Institute shows that intergenerational worship and relationships are key factors in youth continuing to practice their faith after leaving the home.
- **Developmental Stages.** Around age 5, changes are taking place in children's brains. They begin to ask questions about God, make life applications of Bible verses, are challenged by new tasks, seek explanations concerning why and how, enjoy imitating adults, begin to distinguish truth from lies, and can accept responsibility. All of these characteristics factor into the transition to corporate worship.
- **Double Blessing.** While being a part of Big Church is a great experience for children, seeing and interacting with children in the service is also a blessing for other members of the congregation. We all have a lot to learn by watching a child's pure, heart-filled worship.