

# Training Children for Corporate Worship

**What** is the new Children's Church program?

Beginning on 11/30/08, children between 3-5 years of age may go to children's church during the sermon portion of the worship service.

**Why** are we doing this? The Session wants...

1. To expose the whole family to the means of grace – Nehemiah 8:1-8; Deuteronomy 6:4-15
2. Families to worship together
3. To teach the covenant children to worship God – John 4:24, Matthew 19:14

**What** are some practical things to do in preparation for the worship service for your older children?

1. Tell your 1<sup>st</sup> and / or 2<sup>nd</sup> graders that they will be staying in worship the whole time – including the sermon.

Remember yourself that *you also* have trouble sitting through a whole sermon! Let that Gospel-attitude empower your patience.

2. Explain to your child from the Bible that God's preached word is powerful to save: Isaiah 55:10-11; Romans 1:16-17; Deuteronomy 6:4

Remember yourself that you never know how God's word will affect your child; just because you think a child is bored or inattentive, doesn't mean that God isn't getting through to plant seeds of faith.

3. Recognize that children *must be trained* to worship! And remember that they **do** have the capability to sit through a sermon – you know that your child can sit through a long video (it is not only the media that helps that along, but the child's desire: Matthew 12:34, Luke 6:45).

God desires families to worship together – He will empower you to train and them to learn.

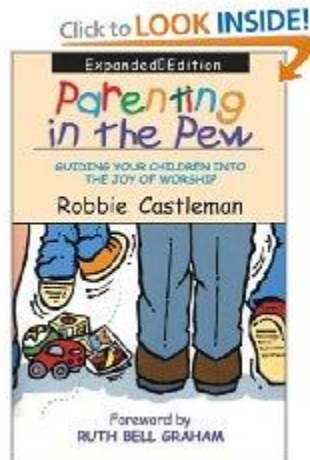
4. Discuss the standards of behavior that you expect from your child during the sermon time; communicate expectations *beforehand* (even days before!)! And review them!

They could include: sitting quietly, not disturbing family members or church members, talking quietly, persevering to the end, coloring or taking notes, etc.

5. Coach and expect the child to participate in all portions of the worship service from prayer (with closed eyes) to singing (while holding a hymnal) to tithing (with pennies to place in the bag) to listening to the sermon (with the worship bulletin).

6. Be prepared to take your child out of the worship service for discipline if he misbehaves **but** tell him that you will be returning to the service; if you wait to discipline at home, let the child know what will happen and then follow through.

7. Realize that **all parents of children this age are having the same issues!** Do not worry about what other people think about your children during worship – they would want them to be faithful when they grow up and this is how it happens!
8. Tell the child that you want him to listen for a specific word the preacher says and ask him how many times he heard the word or what it means. Ask the child what he thought of the sermon.
9. Pick up the children’s worship bulletin and *save it for the sermon part* of the service; don’t let them color it until the sermon is well under way
10. Practice having them sit through some Bible reading at home in preparation; increase the amount of time each day (10 minutes the first day; 15 the second, etc.). Tell them it’s practice for worship so you can refer to it during worship.
11. Make sure your child has been to the bathroom and drinking fountain *before* worship.
12. Seat them so that children who normally harass each other aren’t seated next to each other.
13. Purchase and read the book “Parenting in the Pew”



Here’s a book review you can visit:

[http://www.reformedworship.org/magazine/article.cfm?article\\_id=746](http://www.reformedworship.org/magazine/article.cfm?article_id=746)

14. Here are some articles on children in worship that you can read:

<http://www.reformedworship.org/magazine/issue.cfm?id=36>

15. **Pray** that God would strengthen you for this task and that He would excite and encourage your children to worship!

Remember James 1:5 - But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him!