

Tools for Training Your Child to Worship

- ✘ Talk to your child often about how much God loves it when we worship Him. Model a positive anticipation about including your child in worship.
- ✘ Prepare for Sunday's service throughout the week by learning hymns and praise songs, reading Scripture together and praying. Use Saturday night as a time of heart preparation for the whole family.
- ✘ Set the expectation that your child will pay attention during the service. Our attention is a gift of worship we can bring to God.
- ✘ Leave toys, books, coins, papers, electronic devices at home or in the car. Without these distractions he or she will be better able to pay attention. Purchase a special Worship Notebook that your child is allowed to bring and use just for Sunday worship. Young children can draw pictures of the things they want to offer to God in their worship. Older children can begin to take simple sermon notes that include words they hear or questions they have about something they heard.
- ✘ Use the children's worship bulletin, but save it for use until the sermon.
- ✘ When your child is ready, sit as close to the front as possible so that your child can see everything. It will be easier for him or her to pay attention to what he or she can see.
- ✘ If you fear your child may disrupt the service, sit near the back so that you can exit easily until he or she is able to sit quietly. Tell them when they're ready the family will sit closer to the front so they can see better.
- ✘ Sit close to your child so you can whisper reminders and redirect his or her attention when needed.
- ✘ Point to the words of the songs, Scriptures and responsive reading and have your child follow your finger as he or she listens.
- ✘ As your child learns the songs encourage him or her to sing along as much as he knows, even if it is just part of the song.
- ✘ As your child's reading skills emerge encourage him or her to read as many words as he recognizes during the responsive reading.
- ✘ Be clear about the expectations you have of your child during the service and about consequences. Be consistent and prepared to follow through.
- ✘ Avoid the water fountain between Sunday School and worship.
- ✘ Take a trip to the bathroom between Sunday School and worship.
- ✘ Don't allow bathroom trips during worship (except in emergencies).
- ✘ Be prepared to leave the sanctuary with your child when necessary to patiently reiterate your expectations. Don't be embarrassed to do this—we all know you're in training! And we applaud your efforts! Return to worship as quickly as possible.
- ✘ Remember, this is a learning process that takes time. It will require patience and much encouragement.
- ✘ Commend your child when he or she makes another milestone in the process and keep at it.