

FAMILY TIPS FOR WORSHIPPING TOGETHER

1. Prepare:

We can praise and show love to God every day but Sunday is a special day. Look forward to going to worship just like going to a birthday. Start to get ready on Saturday night.

What are the things you need to prepare to be ready for Sunday?

TIPS: Pack babies bag. Have clothes chosen and ready. Not important to dress up (we are there for God, not to show off our clothes), children wear what is comfortable as long as it is clean and tidy and ready on Saturday night. When we come to church what does God see? 1 Samuel 16:7 “our hearts”

Start Sunday morning by telling the children “Jesus is excited. This is his special day.” A family member can take turns to choose special music to play in the morning while everyone is getting ready and having breakfast.

Offering: Have money ready to give.

Breakfast: Keep it simple and have it ready the night before?

2. Positive attitude:

Ask your children: What are we grateful for? What do we love about our church family? Afterwards talk about what we learned, how God met us in worship, etc.

3. In Church:

It is important to sit together as families.

I know children want to sit with their friends but:

“It is much harder to pay attention to God when you want to pay attention to your friend. You will have time later to be with your friend: right now Jesus wants all of our attention because he has something to say to us.” (Parenting in the Pew, Robbie Castleman)

If your children have friends whose parents don’t come to church, then invite those friends to sit with you as well so they can learn to worship too.

It’s important to **get rid of distractions**, phones, tablets, colouring books, etc may divert attention from God and what is happening in worship.

Sit close to your children so that you can **whisper and explain what is happening** during the service. Just telling them to be quiet is not going to train them in worship. At the beginning this is harder for parents and takes a lot of effort but God is pleased!

Choose where you sit carefully—choose a place where you can see what is happening and maybe near other parents who are also training their children in worship so you can encourage one another. And if there is a bad day you can encourage each other that it is worth it in the long run!!

For toddlers it is good to have them stand on the seat next to you during worship—point out the words to the songs up on the screen—maybe teach them the chorus to some of the songs you regularly do so they can join in. Kids are generally more attentive when they are sitting nearer the front.

When the Bible is being read **ask some “I wonder” questions** to your children:

I wonder how Jesus looked or sounded when he said that? I wonder how you would feel if you had been there? I wonder what this verse says to you about how you felt yesterday?

Let your children and young people make comments to you as they make connections between Scripture reading and their lives.

“Questions are good for children...When we ask our children to pay attention, we often end up doing a better job of it ourselves.” (Parenting in the Pew, Robbie Castleman)

If you have a sermon note sheet during church it can be used as a basis for discussion on the sermon at lunchtime or another good time after church.

Encourage children to join in with prayer: prayer stations around the church, adoration, confession, thanks, asking. When someone is praying out loud begin by asking your child to listen and say “Amen” at the end.

Parents may need to be prepared to find appropriate rewards for cooperation and please **express appreciation**. “I want to let you know how thankful I am to have the whole family sitting together this Sunday. Worship with you means a whole lot to me.”

Ideas from Parenting in the Pew by Robbie Castleman