

how?

So how do we do Kids Church?

Here are eight suggestions for parents as we integrate entire families into our worship services.

- 1. Be patient.** Parents, do you remember bringing that newborn bundle home—and then the next eight weeks almost killed you? There is always an adjustment period. The first few times your children join you in the service might tempt you to never come back. Don't let that scare you. It will improve, though it may take time for the "new normal" to kick in. And just as that crying infant turned into a bouncing, happy eight-month-old, you will notice your family adjusting and discovering new opportunities for sharing the joy of worshiping together.
- 2. Come prepared.** A frantic Sunday morning isn't going to help anybody, especially a six-year-old. Spend some time preparing ahead. Talk to your kids the night before as you're putting them to bed: "Tomorrow, we all get to go to church together!" Share your expectations on the ride to church the next morning: "Remember what we talked about last night?" or "Who can tell me what we are doing this morning?" Children's activity bags are available at the doors to help kids sit through the service; you may consider bringing a quiet toy or color/sketch book as a back-up.
- 3. Have a goal.** Give a family assignment for the morning. For example, "Everyone is expected to share something they learned today." Or "Choose your favorite song that is sung today and tell why it's your favorite." Or maybe "Greet someone new who is older than you."
- 4. Help your child follow along.** Use your bulletin to help them track through the elements of worship. Bring your Bibles and look up the scripture passages together in both your and your child's Bibles. Follow along in the translation the pastors generally use and let them see where the words are coming from when Scripture is read. Point to the words

in the hymnbook. Sing together! Let them bring an offering and place it in the plate as it's passed.

- 5. Be willing to be interrupted.** As in every other context of parenting, you have to be willing to sacrifice your own peace in order to help your children grow toward maturity. This is a season, and it won't last forever.
- 6. Use a family signal.** Come up with a secret sign that only your family knows. Use the sign to communicate and redirect your children toward the service. Use a gentle hand on the shoulder or the knee to remind them (no pinching allowed!) And whatever you do, don't give them your smart phone. The whole point of being there is to be present with each other and the Lord.
- 7. If you need to leave, it's okay.** If your little person becomes too disruptive, it's okay to step out with them. A good rule of thumb is to exit sooner rather than later, because as your frustration builds, you are more likely to lose your cool. It is perfectly fine to step out for a few minutes and return when the child is ready. A calm whispered reminder can be much more effective than an angry threat. *Bonus:* Our Parlor is always open, where you can view the traditional services live on a large monitor. *Another tip:* Sit at the end of a row near a door if you think you might need to leave; this will minimize the disruption to others.
- 8. Remember: It's participation, not performance.** The goal of worshiping together is that we enter into a sacred time and space with our Lord. He knows us, complete with all of our imperfections, and welcomes us into His presence. The body of Christ gathers for this very purpose. We're all in this together!

questions?

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kids
CHURCH

what?

when?

where?

why?

how?

kids CHURCH

Trends in children's and youth ministry across the U.S. have segregated them from the rest of the congregation. However, the pendulum is swinging back toward center. And that's a good thing. Statistics tell us that almost one-third of children who don't form a connection with their larger church family stop attending church altogether once they leave home. Although some do eventually return, **our current post-Christian era doesn't afford us the chance to miss connecting with them.** We can't expect them to be lifelong disciples who are part of a church body unless we change our approach.

what?

What does this approach look like?

Kids Church consists of a rotation module with an age-appropriate Bible lesson, music, large motor skill activity, and fine motor skill activity. Our plan is to have **K5–2nd grade children** in the church service for all of the worship components (singing, offering, baptisms, Moment for Missions, etc.) with the option to move to the children's area for an age-appropriate Bible lesson during the sermon portion of the service. Since our church offers two almost simultaneous services (10:45 and 11:00), we will offer "Kids Church" during this time.

Those attending the 10:45 Ignite service:

- Option to check in children to Kids Church
- Go to Ignite for sermon
- Pick up K5-2nd grade children to attend the remainder of the service

Those families attending the 11:00 service:

- Retrieve check-in tag prior to service, but take children to service up until just before the sermon
- Option to take K5-2nd grade children to Kids Church during the sermon
- Pick up children after the service

Children younger than K5 may do the same, or they may remain in the children's area throughout the

service. If your **K5–2nd grader** would prefer to remain with your family during the sermon, that is completely fine. **3rd–5th grade children** will attend the full service with their family.

when?

What is the Sunday schedule for children?

8:15–12:00	Nursery	0–23 months
8:15– 9:30	Early Service Childcare	K2–K5
9:30–10:30	Sunday School	K2–Grade 5
10:30–12:10	Kids Church	K2–K4
10:30–11:25	Kids Church (Ignite)	K5–Grade 2
11:20–12:10	Kids Church (traditional)	K5–Grade 2

During the 8:30am service, nursery/preschool for **ages 0–K5** is available beginning at 8:15am. Children's Sunday School is 9:30-10:30.

Children of all ages are always welcome to join parents during worship services. A nursery is available for **babies up to 23 months**. Children's programming is offered for **K2–K4**.

During the 10:45 and 11:00am services, K5–2nd grade children will join their families for at least the worship portion of the service and have the option to register for Kids Church during the sermon portion. **3rd–5th grade children** will attend the full service with their family.

where?

Where do kids go for Kids Church?

Take your kids to the check-in desk in their age area.

register & serve

Registering your child to participate in Kids Church requires your participation in the Children's Ministry serving team.

Register at FirstPresGreenville.org/kidschurch.

why?

Why should children join the church body during the worship service?

Part of our commitment to generational faithfulness as a church means recognizing that **children are an essential part of the church family**. Because fewer children have been present in worship, we are focusing our efforts on making space for them and helping them learn how to worship with the Body of Christ. *Think about it: If a child only worships with children, and then only worships with other teenagers, and then only worships with other college students, what kind of worship have we modeled for our children? How do they learn to participate in worship as adults?* Not only do they miss an opportunity to be spiritually formed by worshiping with the church, but we miss that same opportunity to be shaped by their presence.

Worship is formational for everyone present—from youngest to oldest—because God is present with us. Therefore we believe that children can and should participate with everyone else. Don't underestimate them! Children are learners and will adapt quickly. There will be a learning curve, but you'll be surprised by the conversations you can have with your children because of this shared experience.

But aren't children disruptive in worship?

You bet. Children wiggle, whisper, squawk, and cry. They may wander, they may sing too loud, they may want to dance during the music, and they may want to color. And all of that is okay. We'd rather create a warm, welcoming environment where the church family is together being loved, than have a perfectly calm, quiet worship service. Our ultimate goal is to worship God, and Jesus modeled a life of worship that included little children.