

HELPING CHILDREN WORSHIP

Preparing Little Ones for the Lord's Day



The assembling of God's people for worship is a holy thing. In His wisdom and love, the Lord ordained the regular gathering of His saints. It is a time set apart for His exaltation and our encouragement (Ps. 29:1-2, Hb. 10:25; Col. 3:16). Corporate worship - a dialogue between God and His redeemed - involves a calling to worship; Scripture reading; the singing of Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; prayer and confession; reaching; offerings; baptism; and the Lord's Supper. These are means of grace, through which we experience God's presence and the strengthening of our faith

As we consider the sacredness of the Lord's Day, we are excited to welcome children in worship! We see a pattern for this practice in the Old and New Testaments* and believe that although young ones may not comprehend all that is happening (and likely need help learning to listen), they benefit, especially over time, from experiencing the presence of God with their parents and the congregation. As they are exposed to the living and active Word of God (Hb. 4:12; 2 Tim. 3:16-17), we depend on the Holy Spirit to lead them to repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. By God's grace, we pray our children will become worshippers in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). So, how can we, as parents, train our children for public worship? This is a process that takes time and patience, and children may be ready at different ages. There is much grace to be extended to both parents and children along the way!

*Come, Oh
children,
listen to me; I
will teach you
the fear
of the Lord.*

Psalms 34:11



PRACTICAL WAYS TO TRAIN YOUR CHILDREN FOR WORSHIP

BE A WORSHIPER: You cannot give your child what you do not have. Children are very perceptive and will follow your lead. Worship the Lord in solitude, through prayer and Bible study. Prepare your heart all week for the Lord's Day.

IMPLEMENT FAMILY WORSHIP: Children who are accustomed to worshipping at home will find it quite natural to worship at church. Start simply by training your children to sit still for 10-15 minutes, while you read a passage of Scripture together, make one application, pray, and sing a hymn.

START AS YOUNG AS POSSIBLE: Children are more flexible in their formative years. Use this precious time to cultivate a heart for worship. If your child is older, it is never too late to start!

PREP FOR SUNDAY: Make the Lord's day a focus during the week. Teach your children about the different elements of the service & why they are special. Discuss the upcoming text and songs. Be careful about your attitude. Model excitement about the church and worship. Get to bed early Saturday evening, and wake up early for Sunday.

But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the Kingdom of Heaven." -Matthew 19:14

INVOLVE YOUR CHILDREN: Have them bring their own Bibles and an offering. Sit where they can see what is going on. Let them copy your note taking. For younger children, whisper ideas to them for their drawings about the sermon. Remember to compliment them when they listen well!

FOLLOW UP: After the service, talk about the sermon as a family, asking your children what they thought about key points or specific applications. Welcome their thoughts and ideas!

BE ENCOURAGED: Training children in worship is a process, and children are ready at different ages. Give grace to your child and to yourself along the way. Don't worry if you have to step out with a child, or if they become a little noisy or restless. This is a normal part of the process. Thank God for these teachable moments, and embrace the opportunity God has given you to help shape the next generation for God's glory