

Children & Worship:

A Handbook for the Covenant Family

Worship with children is different.

Worshipping the LORD alone can be deeply introspective and restful. But it can also lead to selfish idolatry of “peace and quiet.”

Worshipping with children draws you out of yourself. And by the grace of Christ, one can have a chance to see wonder and awe in the eyes of a child. This handbook was designed by members of West End Presbyterian Church to enable parents to see the joy of worship with children.

Worship with children is different, but has the potential for a moment of grace in a restless world.

Please use the following pages as a tool to engage your children in worship. If you grow weary, remember that we worship a God who welcomes children and lifts them up.

May we all be more childlike in our worship of Jesus.

Before Worship

Language is Important: *Do you enjoy worship? If so, then tell your child. The more your child sees you enjoy it, the more they will enjoy it. “We get to go to church tomorrow to be with Jesus!” or “It’s Jesus’ Big Day and we get to go worship Him!”*

Church Bag: *Pack a small bag for your child to bring each week. Include colored pencils or crayons, a notepad for drawing and any other items that are quiet and will help keep your child’s attention and focus. Consider a small, mess-free snack.*



Prepare on Saturday: *Preparing our bodies for worship on Saturday evening may aid your entire family in preparing their hearts for worship on Sunday morning. Go to bed early and set out clothes in an attempt to alleviate the Sunday morning rush.*



Arriving at Worship

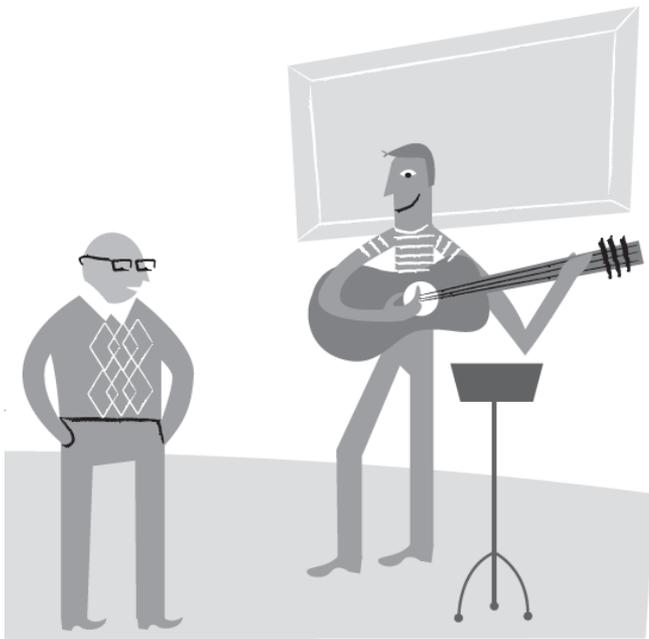
Be the Worship Leader: *As a worship leader in the pew, you are bringing your child to His Heavenly Father every Sunday. Don't be afraid to explain things to your child or to open your eyes during corporate prayer to tell your child something he could pray for. Find teachable moments. For example, if your child had been struggling with sin this week and you are singing about Jesus being your shepherd, take a few moments to tell your child that Jesus will lead His people in the path of life. God will delight in your guiding your child in worship, maybe even more than in your continued singing.*

“Mother’s Helpers”: *The church is here to help you in this important task. Ask a fellow church member to join your child and family for worship. Consider asking a young teenager, a young adult, or another family to sit together with you. By asking others to join you and your child, you allow them to participate in God’s work in your child’s life.*



Call to Worship: *We always begin worship with His Word, His invitation to us to gather in His name. Remind your child that God is welcoming us to worship.*

Prayer of Invocation: *Asking God to be with us. Children love to call out to their parents. In their prayer, point your child to call to their Spiritual Father and ask Him to join us.*



Enjoy the Renewal of Worship

Songs of Praise: *God has ordained the praise from children and infants (Psalm 8:2) and children love to sing! While some songs will be too complicated, there are many songs that your children will know from Sunday School and other programs. If the song is too complicated for*



your child, tell your child to listen for specific words (i.e. 'Jesus' 'love' 'shepherd') and to sing out "Amen" when they hear it.

Member Presentations: *God saves His children. Remind your child that God has rescued the people up front from their sin.*



Baptisms: *God chose His people before we choose Him. Remind your child that God will never abandon His people. If your child has been baptized, tell him that he was once up there.*

Mission Updates/Announcements: *The gospel is advancing. Try to show your child that God is advancing His kingdom – and that He can even use children!*

Ministry of Prayer: *God delights in the prayers of His people. Ask your child to pray for the things on her mind – her worries, her needs, her joys.*

Offering: *God has blessed His children abundantly. The offering is our chance to give back to God the first-fruits of our 'crops'.*



Listening and Receiving



Scripture Reading: *If possible, have your child find the Scripture in her own Bible. Have her follow along with the reading and to find any words or ideas that interest her.*

Sermon: *Children hear more than we think! Even if a child is occupied with drawing or doodling, we believe that a child can still hear what is being said. Whether through the children's bulletin, or your own, do your best to engage your child in the sermon. Ask questions during, play word games. Afterwards, help them apply the sermon, give personal examples, and ask more questions.*

Communion: *God gave us the Lord's Supper to show and signify that God is present.*

While we ask that children NOT partake of the Lord's Supper until they can adequately "examine themselves" (1



Corinthians 11:28), we believe it is integral for the child's faith to see his parents confessing and partaking of Communion. For those children desiring to take Communion, we ask that you speak with an elder.

Benediction: *God always has the last word in our worship, and for those who are in Christ Jesus, these are always words of blessing. Point your child to say/yell "Amen" at the end of the Benediction.*

Children's Worship

Parents are the primary worship leaders of children. It is the church's duty to come alongside parents in nurturing the faith of our children. This is where Children's Worship comes in.

Who? *All children from Kindergarten to 2nd grade are welcome in Children's Worship. A committed team of volunteer adult and teen worship leaders (members of WEPC) are trained to shepherd the children in praise, scripture, song and prayer. [Preschoolers are invited to attend Preschool Quest during this time.]*

When? *Children are dismissed from the larger worship service just before the sermon and are picked up by their parents from their classrooms at the conclusion of the service. Children's Worship is held every Sunday except for the first Sunday of every month when the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is served.*

What? *Children's Worship is designed to replicate the larger worship service in an age-appropriate way, with similar elements of worship as we find in the "adult" service. Our homegrown curriculum is written with the intentional purposes of shepherding our children to the throne of God and training them in responding to Jesus and putting all their affections on Him.*

2nd Grade Children's Worship Lab

During the last few weeks of the school year (approximately mid-March through May) the graduating class of 2nd graders will break out into their own "laboratory" to review the elements of worship and prepare them for the larger worship service.

Scripture & Creeds

Young children have great capacity to memorize. What better way to engage your children with the Gospel than to help them memorize some of the core Scriptures and creeds of the faith. Impress these upon your children and watch the Holy Spirit work.

The Shema [Deut. 6:4-7]

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

The Lord's Prayer [Luke 11:2-4]

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name,

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from the evil one.

For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

The Greatest Commandment

[Matt. 22:36-40]

“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

The Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary.

*He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended to heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father
almighty.
From there he will come to judge the living and the
dead.*

*I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.*

Forever...

Ask questions of your child: *Enjoy the inquisitive nature of children and join him in his discovery of the God we worship. You may see Jesus in a whole new light through the eyes of your child.*

Pray for God to move: *Ask the Holy Spirit to grow the fruit of the Gospel in the heart of your child. We need Him more than ever. Amen!*