

Worshipping with Children in the Pew

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At this time of year, with many different services and events, we often find ourselves sharing a pew with young ones. *But how does one worship amidst all of the squirming and whispering and distractions?* Often the “shushing” from parents can be almost as distracting as the children’s wiggling.

My advice to parents is to try to relax and enjoy the messiness of multigenerational worship. These little wiggle worms will be sitting in the pews regularly before long so this is a great opportunity to help them learn how to worship. Fortunately, as Anglicans, we have quite a lot happening in our worship services—plenty of things to keep our children busy.

Here are a few ideas to help engage children in the service:

1. Encourage them to stand, kneel and sit just like everyone else. Let them help find the hymns. Have them bring their Bible to find and follow along with the scripture readings. Show them the Book of Common Prayer and help them to follow along with the service. All of this will help some with the wiggles and waning attention plus it will begin to lay the foundation for our participatory worship.
2. Make a list of words that they are likely to hear during the service (e.g., Jesus, God, Holy Spirit, love, prayer, confess, neighbor, etc.) and have them keep a tally of how many times they hear each during the service.
3. Identify several symbols and/or objects that can be found in the sanctuary during a service (e.g., alpha and omega, cross, lamb of God, etc.) and have them find them and draw them. Architectural details can also be used.
4. For older children, talk about the different parts of the service and what actions take place during each. Have the child draw a cartoon strip showing the different elements in chronological order.
5. Explain to your child about the church year and the colors associated with each season. See if they can identify the current season (e.g., look at the colors, read the bulletin, look in the Book of Common Prayer, etc.). [Click here for a good explanation of this and other Anglican things.](#)
6. Grab one of the **Children’s Worship Bags** St. Philip’s Church provides every Sunday morning. They can be found in labeled baskets on the tables in the Narthex. *See the next article for a full description.*