

Worship at Church

How to not lose your mind every time you bring your kids into the sanctuary...

From "FAITHfully Parenting Preschoolers" by John R. Bucka

"Worship is when the **Lord comes to us** in the proclaiming of His Word and in the sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion. For participants, worship is a time of confession and absolution, prayer and celebration, a time for praise, reflection, and joy. If we as parents become so busy trying to keep our children quiet, we are tempted to think that we will get absolutely nothing from being at church. In fact, we might become so frustrated that we leave the service feeling drained and exhausted.

To better equip our children to be part of the worship experience, consider the following:

- *Create a worship time at home.* Set aside time each day to read a Bible story or devotion, say prayers, and sing hymns. Children will sit more quietly in worship if they have been expected to sit quietly while Mom or Dad reads a Bible story to them.

- *Make sure your children know what church is.* Remind them that church is where Jesus is present to forgive them in person! All of the saints are gathered at the throne of God in church.

- *Prepare your children for their experience.* Tell them things like, "We are in God's house, and when we are in God's house, these are the things we do/don't do..."



- *Teach your children the biblical language of the church.* As you and your children sit in church, don't forget that as they slowly learn the liturgy, or the language of the church, they are also learning the biblical teachings of Christ. These will be imprinted on their soul, mind, and tongue for the rest of their lives.



- *Bring things along to occupy them when their attention span runs out [or make use of the materials the church provides].* Christian coloring books and children's bulletin inserts teach more than you think. Not only will they help your child's attention span, your child will also learn about the stories of the Bible through these specially designed materials.

- *Sit where your child can see what is happening.* Know that if the child cannot see what is happening, he more than likely will become disinterested in the worship service."

Worship at Home

Tips to enhance your family worship time while streaming the service online.

Insights from Jessie Bell/Concordia Collective and other sources.

A few suggestions for treating online church the same way you'd treat in-person church...

- If you regularly attend in-person worship at a specific time, watch the service at that time if the livestream/recording is available. Keep your routines the same as much as possible.
- Get dressed. Yes, in real clothes. Pajamas might be comfier, and it might seem silly to get dressed up with nowhere to go, but if you keep the kids in their pajamas (and/or you stay in yours) you might find you have a harder time keeping everybody awake and engaged throughout the service.



- Stand up when the congregation is asked to stand. Just because you aren't there in person, doesn't mean you aren't part of the congregation. We stand out of reverence for God's Word and in postures of prayer and praise to Him.
- Follow along in the bulletin or with the on-screen words to speak the responses, readings, and prayers out loud. It may feel awkward at first, but if you aren't actively participating, you're just passively watching - and likely not paying much attention or getting much out of the worship experience. Sing along with the hymns, too!
- Even if you're watching a recording of a service, try to avoid pausing it. If someone needs to use the restroom, it's okay to step out for a moment just like you would in person (one advantage is that you can go back later to watch what you missed!)... But if you're constantly stopping the recording, it's easy to get distracted/lose the flow of the service.
- Create an environment that feels like church. Display the items in this CrossBox (your family cross and paraments) on a shelf or table with other things you may already have in your home -- a family Bible or hymnals, baptismal remembrance items (such as candles or banners) or anything else you'd see in church that is meaningful to your family.



Important note: This isn't to create some kind of "shrine"... we aren't worshipping these objects - after all, they're just ordinary items, like anything else in your home! They're simply meant to create a visual atmosphere that reminds you of Jesus and His saving work for you on the cross, just like you'd see them used at church.