



### Why We Encourage Families to Worship Together

*“And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children.” Deut 6:6-7*

At CrossLife CC, we believe children are a precious gift from the Lord (Ps 127:3) and that they play a vital role in the body of Christ. Part of our vision is to be a cross-generational church (Titus 2); that is, seeing people of all ages, from the youngest to the oldest, gathering together on the Lord’s Day to worship and celebrate Christ and His resurrection. So we encourage families to worship together and to embrace Sunday mornings as an opportunity to nurture your child’s love of the Lord and obedience to His Word. By this, children have a special opportunity to be personally engaged in the worship service and to learn through what is modeled by their extended family in Christ. We believe that parents are the primary spiritual teachers of their children, and that family worship at home will nurture family worship at church. The church comes alongside, as a strong support, you and your child, helping in their spiritual journey of faith. However, we understand that participation in corporate worship is a process and that the children will need the encouragement, patience, and loving support of adults until their attention span increases and they further mature. It is for this reason we offer our Crosslings and Crosswalk childrens’ ministries during our Sunday worship service.

For children ages 0-4, our **Crosslings** ministry counts it an honor to serve you by caring for your child and teaching them the Scriptures. For children ages 5-10 (through 5<sup>th</sup> grade), our **Crosswalk** ministry joyfully receives your child just prior to the sermon and also considers it a privilege to teach your child the truths of God’s Word. For those 6<sup>th</sup> grade and up (**Crossway**), we ask these youth to worship with their parents, listen to the sermon, and seek to apply what they learn. To help their focus and concentration, “Youth Sleuth” sermon notes are provided each Sunday.

At CrossLife CC, we know Satan is a divider and desires to separate and bring disunity to families. He would love to have parents believe their children are a distraction, not a blessing, to corporate worship. Often, the greatest hindrance to worshiping as a family is not children but an adult’s understanding of Sunday worship. As Christians, we know that worship ascribes “worth” to God. Worship centers on God. Its purpose is for God’s glory, not human self-interest. So worship does not center on what we get out of it but what we give to God in it. At CrossLife CC, we define the success of our corporate worship by how it displays God’s glory: Was God and His Christ exalted? Was the gospel preached? Were the sheep faithfully fed? Did the songs sung proclaim His greatness and goodness? Was the giving joyful and from the heart? Were the prayers befitting of our holy God and heavenly Father? Did we truly remember Christ in communion? The better a parent understands the God-centeredness of worship, the

more the parents will desire their children to worship with them. With God's fame and honor as our corporate focus, families can worship together and rejoice, not in what they get out of the corporate gathering but what the family together gives to God in worship. Therefore, our Sunday worship service is not primarily about evangelism, discipleship, or serving; it is fundamentally about the glory of God and the praise we give His holy name as His redeemed people. At CrossLife CC, simply put, we gather to give Him praise.

Here are 10 additional reasons why we value and encourage families to worship together:

1. God has given parents the primary responsibility for spiritually training their children.
2. No one is better or more qualified to spiritually train children than their parents.
3. Worship at church presents a model for family worship at home. It trains parents and children in what worship is and how to worship God.
4. Children need to see their parents participate in worship and experience that worship with them.
5. The most influential moments in a child's life are often not the moments that parents program but the moments that just happen. Worship opportunities are filled with these moments.
6. Parents' understanding of worship, attention to worship, participation in worship, and benefit from worship is increased as role models for their children in worship.
7. Throughout the Old Testament, God trained Israel to worship appropriately, giving them direction for accepted and rejected worship. Parents should also train their children to appropriately worship God. Effective training involves instruction and modeling.
8. Worshiping with children helps parents and children understand that the worship time is not for parents to relax or children to have fun but to focus on God.
9. Worship is always a challenge, both to adults and children. Children do not infringe on a parent's worship experience but rather encourage a parent's worship and help a parent fulfill his or her divine responsibilities.
10. Children are the "greatest" in God's kingdom. They bring elements to worship that adults need to see, hear, and experience.

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To nurture family corporate worship on Sundays, here are some practical tips to consider to help your child/youth spiritually thrive:

#### **Before Service...**

- ✓ Encourage your child/youth to spend quiet time & develop personal devotions with the Lord
- ✓ Listen to/sing God-honoring, Christ-centered worship songs throughout the week (see our Resource Table)
- ✓ Be well rested
- ✓ Introduce child/youth to friends/newcomers
- ✓ Discuss the purpose of worship (Ps 15, Ps 150)
- ✓ Prepare your child/youth by creating sense of awe and privilege to be in service
- ✓ Review the Sunday Worship Program with your child/youth to familiarize him/her with the components of the worship service (worship through song, communion, prayer, giving, message, benediction)
- ✓ Find appropriate seating (possibly up close for visibility and attention)
- ✓ Visit restroom before service begins
- ✓ Instruct (and model) for your child/youth on the “heart-preparation” time that is offered just before service begins (a time to repent of sins, refocus on God, rejoice in the gospel)

#### **During Service...**

- ✓ Encourage child/youth to engage freely in song-worship
- ✓ Encourage child/youth to listen closely and intently
- ✓ Help your child/youth navigate through the Bible verses mentioned
- ✓ Help your child/youth to fill-out the “Youth Sleuth” sermon notes
- ✓ Encourage child/youth to give during offering (and at home teach on financial stewardship using the three basic categories of giving, saving, spending)

#### **After Service...**

- ✓ Discuss the sermon
- ✓ Encourage your child/youth to ask questions
- ✓ Share real life experiences to illustrate and to help make the lesson-applications more tangible
- ✓ Pray and give thanks to the Lord for what He is teaching your family
- ✓ Apply truths learned from service and encourage child/youth to do the same
- ✓ Encourage and affirm your child/youth to “keep at it” and that the Lord is pleased by their desire to worship as a family.