

# AT SALEM UMC



## ALL KIDS ARE WELCOME!

Be honest...have these thoughts ever crossed your mind?

- ◆ Why should kids be in worship anyway?
- ◆ Shouldn't we wait until they can actually 'get' something out of it? Or at least wait until they won't 'interrupt' us as we try to worship?

Well, having children with us in worship isn't always the most convenient or easy task, but it is essential to the faith journey of our children and to all of us.

Worship is one of the basic ways people learn what it means to be a Christian. Children learn how to worship by worshipping with the congregation.

On the flip side, if children aren't present here with us, we miss out, too! Without children, the body of Christ is incomplete. We need everyone present to complete the circle at God's Table.

By participating in worship, children:

Feel God's Love

Recognize they are valued as a fellow child of God

Know the mystery and 'wonder of God

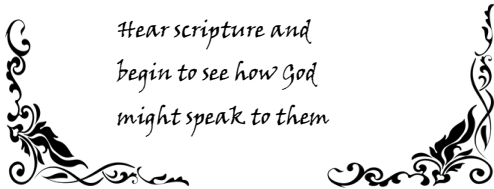
Experience liturgy, sacraments, prayers, and other worship traditions that shape their understanding of

Understand they are welcome in the body of Christ

Build strong memories that will inform their faith over time

Learn they belong to God

Hear scripture and begin to see how God might speak to them



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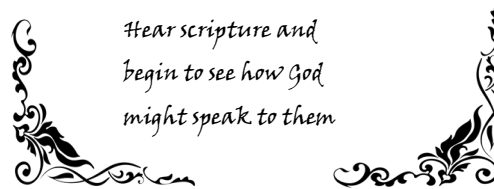
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## CHILDREN IN WORSHIP

### For Friends of Children



**Warmly welcome the children near you.** As you arrive or during the passing of the peace, be sure to say hello or share a friendly smile!

**Extend hospitality.** Get to know the children of our congregation by name. Ask children how their week has been or what part of worship they like best. Tell parents that you appreciate having them at church.

**Help children feel involved in worship.** Include them in passing the offering, making music, draw, dance, communion, etc.

**Remember our baptismal vows** to nurture the children in our midst. We are all 'godparents,' whether we realize it or not!

**Be patient and understanding when children become restless.** Allow parents to choose what they feel is best for their child. Remember we are all precious children of God.

**Share positive reinforcement with the children.** "It was so nice to have you singing with us."

**Look for the gifts a child's presence can bring to worship.** What do children teach you about God and what it means to be the body of Christ?

### For Parents

**Don't worry!** God put the wiggle in children - don't feel like you must suppress it completely. Encourage your child to sit and stand at the appropriate times.

**Find a good place to sit.** Sitting near the front will provide children with a better view of the sanctuary so they can see what's happening.

**Guide children during worship** and help them participate. Children enjoy using the bulletin, finding hymns and passing the offering plate. Even non-readers can hold hymnals and hum along. Children like to be ready and feel involved.

**Use a gentle touch.** Holding your child's hand or placing an arm around their shoulder provides reassurance and appropriate attention.

### Whisper quiet instructions and explanations

**Discuss worship before and after the service.** Talk about what to expect, how to behave, what they heard in worship, and where they felt God. Younger children enjoy "playing church" at home.

**What should I do?** If your child becomes restless and needs a break, you may take them outside for a short walk. Nursery care is available if you wish.

**Please help yourselves!** *There are crayons, paper, and quiet activities in the narthex. Children may draw what they hear or experience in worship.*

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