

Help your child love worship, without losing your mind...

1. Get yourself ready. Pray for yourself and your child before worship. Remember why you come to worship and why it's important for your child to worship with our church family.
2. Arrive a little early so you have time to get settled and for your child to adjust to the worship environment.
3. Check the bulletin for things that might interest your child - handbells, baptisms, communion, liturgical colors and season, familiar hymns. These are ways your child can move through the service with the community even before they can read and pay attention for the whole hour.
4. Arrive physically "ready" - full tummy, comfortable clothes, already visited the restroom.
5. Check the DFUMC weekly email to see what scripture or hymns we'll be hearing in worship, and read them ahead of time together. This could be as simple as reading them at bedtime, or you could create a ritual around reading them at dinner on Saturday night, along with prayers and lighting a candle. You can also ask Janice to be added to the Sunday School Sermon Questions email list. These are questions that are emailed out on Thursdays, intended to help Sunday School classes go deeper with the sermon material, but they could just as easily be discussed by families.
6. If your child has a Bible, let them bring it to worship. Flipping through a picture Bible is a wonderful way to occupy little hands. If your child doesn't have a Bible, let's get your child a Bible. Ask Robin, Janice, or one of the pastors if you'd like some suggestions. Older kids who are into music might enjoy owning their own hymnal. They can be ordered from www.cokesbury.com
7. Help your child understand that they are an important part of worship. We need their voice as we sing and pray together. They can also serve as a reader, liturgist, greeter, acolyte, communion server or pew helper. Ask Janice, John, or Robin for details on these jobs.

8. Help your child connect with other members of the congregation. Give the ushers/greeters a high-five, look for their Sunday School teacher, choir director, VBS leader, or other friendly adult and wave at them. Intergenerational connections are one of the ways we create sticky faith in our kids.
9. Create a culture of curiosity around worship. The best way to do this is to openly wonder about things together after the service. If you end up with questions that you can't answer, "I don't know, let's ask Pastor Dalton," is a great response. Dalton, Joya, Robin, Taylor, Janice, and John are happy to answer worship-related questions. Here are some suggestions -
 - I wonder which part of the service you thought was most important.
 - I wonder if we could have left something out of the service, and still had everything that we need.
 - I wonder why we stand for the scripture readings from the Gospel.
 - I wonder why we use gluten-free bread for communion.
 - I wonder what you heard the pastor say this morning.
10. Don't give up. This is the school of God's love. We are the teachers, and we are the students. Whatever happens, you and your child are in the presence of God and all things work for good when God is involved.

Janice Watts Yates

Decatur First UMC

August 12, 2018