

Why Corporate Worship

Before you panic about bringing your child into “Big Church,” I want to encourage you to look at these passages in the book of Psalms to see what God says about all generations worshipping together.

Psalms 71:17-18 Psalm 79:13 Psalm 145:4

Reason 1 for All-Age Worship—Notice the repetition of teaching God's Word to the next generation. By bringing children, even young children, into corporate worship, they begin to follow the behavior of the adults around them. They will begin to notice and adopt the patterns they see even if they don't fully understand them yet. If we segregate them into their own worship all the time, they will never see the patterns and behaviors necessary to engage in worship because no one will be modeling those patterns for them.

Reason 2 for All-Age Worship—This goes along with Reason 1. Kids get the opportunity to see that we value the ordinances (Baptism, Lord's Supper) and that we sit and listen when the Bible is opened and read to us. Remember it is worth it even if your child makes noise, wiggles, or fidgets during service. I assure you that Shelby isn't bothered by their noise or wiggles and most of us who are older remember those days. It's likely that they are probably louder and more distracting to you than to others.

In the Old Testament examples of worship, the family is all together singing praises, listening to Scripture, and praying. Acts 2:39 emphasizes the importance of all generations worshipping together—“For the promise is for you and for your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

Reason 3 for All-Age Worship—Kids learn how to worship in ways other than singing and observe different postures for praising and worshipping God. In Ephesians and Colossians, Paul directly addresses children and the whole church. Talk with your kids about what they will be doing during worship. Explain things they may see such as people raising their hands during songs, bowing their heads during prayer, or maybe kneeling during prayer.

Open your Bible and follow along with Scripture reading and help kids find the passage or ask them to point out words as they see them in the passage. On the way home, talk with your kids about what they heard or saw. Encourage them to ask questions.

Reason 4 for All-Age Worship—You become the main teacher for your children! Yes, your children will begin to look to you as their teacher and guide for discipleship and all you have to do are the things you were already doing. Children watch and imitate what they see it is their primary way of learning. So, during worship do the things you already know to do but add in a few teachable moments for your kids. Open your Bible to follow along with Scripture, and while you are following along ask your child to point out words he sees in the passage, like *Jesus*, *love*, *God*, and so forth. Praying? Lean over and invite your child to hold your hand and pray, too. Tell your children, “This is a prayer where ...” maybe it's a prayer asking God to heal someone or a prayer asking God to forgive you. Are you singing? Invite your child to sing and clap their hands with you. The best thing is you don't need any special skills or materials; you simply need to invite your child to join in what you are already doing.

Tips for Kids in Corporate Worship Time

- Start a Playlist of songs you sing at church to teach them to your kids at home.
- Pick up children's bulletins each week as you enter the Sanctuary.

- Ask an older couple to sit with you (or if you can sit with them) and be mentors for your children. (Children build bridges between people.)