

**Podcast: Confessing The Faith**

**Episode 20: Children in Church**

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**Q1: Why this topic?**

Family oriented worship is an Emmaus distinctive. And I believe it is one of the more challenging things for new families to overcome. For some, it is expected that a church provide a full blown children's ministry program. When they hear that we do not offer that they assume that their children will be missing out on something (actually, I'm convinced that they miss out when we send them away to classrooms while the adults worship). For others, the thought of managing the children during the service is overwhelming.

**Q2: What do parents need to know to help overcome the difficulties?**

Parents need to understand why this is important, and to really believe it is important.

**Q3: So what is the rationale for having children in the worship service?**

Scripture

The unintended consequences associated with isolating our children from the church

**Q4: What are the benefits of having the children in the corporate worship service with the adults?**

They experience what it is to be a part of the church

They hear the word preached

They sing songs of truth

They see the Lord's Supper administered (or they partake of it, if baptized)

They are involved in prayer

They enjoy fellowship with young and old

Essentially, they are exposed to the means of grace and are called to faith and repentance by them.

"But Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.'" (Matthew 19:14, ESV)

**Q5: What about the concern that children cannot understand what is being taught in the worship service?**

Prove it! They understand way more than you think.

They learn through observation and experience.

They learn through the songs.

They learn as we teach the Catechism.

They learn through the symbolism of the Supper.

They learn from the sermon. (Active Listener Guide)

They learn when parents reinforce these truths in the car and at home.

They ask questions about things they don't understand.

**Q6: Does Emmaus offer anything that is specifically designed for children and youth?**

Yes. Youth; Sunday School is coming.

We believe that the church has the responsibility of teaching young and old.

But we believe that never should this age specific instruction violate the unity of the church.

Also, we believe that age specific instruction should encourage and not demean the responsibility of parent/guardians.

Also, teaching to children and youth should be done by those qualified to teach.

**Q7: Let's talk about the practical issue of managing young children in the worship service. What can parents do to succeed in this?**

Come with realistic expectations.

A little restlessness is to be expected with young children.

By the way, we do offer a toddler center. The sermon is piped in through a speaker. We are also working on live streaming the service online (not so that you can stay home!)

There is a limit to this, of course.

Prepare ahead of time

Explain to them what worship is and why it is important

Bring proper supplies (not too much!)

Get to church early

Have them use the restroom before the service

Pray  
Establish expectations and consequences  
Follow up  
You must parent ahead of time (Saturday night; early Sunday morning; throughout the week)  
Practice in the home during family worship  
Think about where you are sitting and how the children are situated in relation to each other  
Partner with other people  
Consistency is key!  
Be willing to be distracted for a little while for the sake of your children.  
Work on your concentration  
Use the toddler center and try to listen there (or the live stream, Lord willing)  
Listen to the sermon again via the website or podcast  
Be patient with your kids, but also lovingly instruct and discipline them.

**Q8: A lot of this has been directed towards parents. Is there anything that needs to be said to the church as a whole?**

The entire church really does need to be committed to this.  
Patience  
Prayer  
Support  
Engagement