



Why Bring Kids to Church?

by Rev. Jason Reitz

“If my kids are in church, I don’t get anything out of it.” “My kid can’t sit that long.” “I don’t want to disrupt the people around us.” These are some of the things I’ve heard over the years when people are asked why they aren’t in church as a family.

I have no doubt that those are actual concerns of parents. They are all true statements. Little children can be disturbing to others, the parents won’t get as much out of the worship experience, and when kids are little, they aren’t used to sitting that long. But it’s worth it!

I don’t remember where to point for these statistics, and it has been a couple of years since I read this, but a study showed the reasons why children stay in church.

The top two reasons that kids ultimately stay in church is, they were able to talk to their moms about God, and their dad sang in church.

Those may sound too simple, but it makes sense. When a child sees the value of a relationship with God through conversation and active participation in worship in parents, it stands a much better chance of having lasting value for them.

No matter how often our children, especially as they enter the teen years, will say they don’t care about what their parents do, they are watching, and they do actually care. Family worshiping together has value.

I could dissect the opening statements and tell you why they are only “excuses”, but I would rather share how my congregation has made it important to have the “disruption,” the getting up and down, and parents getting something out of it as well as the kids. At our church, we celebrate the noise. That’s not to say that we applaud a child crying, or throwing things.

What we emphasize is that if these noises weren’t there, we would be dying.

What we don’t do, as leadership or as fellow members, is tell them they should leave or give a glare, or whisper to our spouse, or move. Don’t tell the kids sitting in our pews, but I love it when a child breaks free and runs down the center aisle. I love it when a little one says something during the sermon. We will laugh when those moments happen. We may make a joke. Sure, I’ve had the voice tug-of-war with a child, increasing volume as they increased theirs. But I’d rather have that than no kids. That’s the atmosphere the church should convey if they want kids in church. And we do right?

Having said all that, here’s the number one reason kids should be in church. God wants them there.

You’ve heard those verses where Jesus calls the children to Him. He wants them close, He wants them to be gathered, and He wants us to not hinder them.

Worship is about being fed by God through His Word and Sacrament. His Word comes to us in EVERYTHING we do in worship, not just the sermon or readings. There is a sacrifice made by parents bringing their kids to church. Being a parent has a lot of sacrifices and a lot of joys too. The sacrifices are worth it, and are only temporary. Our faith is important to us.

Having our families worship together shows its importance. How will our children know if we don’t show them?

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