

Worshiping as a Family

Start with the right mindset

Your family is *going to worship God* not just *going to church*. Worshiping God puts him as the star of the story not ourselves. Sunday morning is not FOR us. Worship is a blessing to God and he values the presence and praise of children (*Matthew 18:14, Mark 10:14, Luke 18:16*).

Worshiping is about the surrender of our souls

Worship is a challenge. With children, it is a bigger challenge. But there is no external circumstance that can keep us from worship and we CAN learn to worship with children.

Offer all kind of grace to each other, our kids and yourself.

Fixing our hearts on being with our children before the LORD not OTHERS will free us from worrying about it looking messy. Avoid making worship a battle. Be patient with your expectations. Worshiping as a family goes better some weeks than others. We must trust God to be at work in our kids' lives, even when its hard.

Children will learn to worship by worshipping

Through participation, practice and patience, our kids will meet God. Parents model, by example, what it means to be encountered by God. Share with your kids how a song spoke to you or whisper your prayers so they can hear. Participating in worship can make all the difference between "borrowed" and "owned" faith.

Encourage their participation in all parts of Sunday morning

Point to the words of the songs, sing so they can hear you, have them bring their own money in for tithing, explain the parts of our service, define words, guide them through times of prayer. Have them bring in their Bibles and look up the verses used in the sermon. Explain communion if they are not partaking yet.

We are training children to worship not just be quiet

To help a child develop concentration, parents might have to talk more. If you sit close to your children, however, you can give whispered explanations, instructions and reminders. For this reason it is a good idea to keep your kids with you (not away, sitting with friends). Give truthful answers to their questions and cite Scripture as the resource for answers. It's great to admit "I don't know" and find out together.

Eliminate as many distractions as possible

If you bring games and activities the kids will learn they are not expected to pay attention. If there is lack of expectation that your kids will pay attention then they will habitually tune out. Sermon notes for kids can help them follow along. The key is still to concentrate on the service, not just "do something." Reviewing the highlights after the service will communicate the sermon was important.

Be intentional about your expectations

Point out appropriate expectations for children. Be clear about expectations and consequences, no matter how you choose to discipline. Be serious about behavior.

Express appreciation not just expectations

"I want to let you know how thankful I am to have the whole family sitting together this Sunday. Worshiping with you means a whole lot to me".

Preparing to worship happens all week

Protect Saturday night from being too late. Prepare clothes, tithe, Bibles, etc. before Sunday morning, Pray against spiritual warfare. Build excitement for God's special day.