



Children's Ministries Children in Worship

at

Overland Park Christian Church
7600 West 75th Street • Overland Park, KS 66204
913.677.4646 • www.opccdoc.org

"We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord,
his power, and the wonders he has done." — Psalm 78:4

Our Mission:

To support families in making Christ real to all children so they may grow in a lifelong relationship with Him.

Our Schedule:

9:30 a.m. Worship in the Sanctuary

Children are encouraged to worship with their families. Following the Kids' Time in the worship gathering in the sanctuary, all children 4 years old through 5th grade are invited to attend Kid's Worship in the Children's Wing. During Kid's Worship your child will experience God through His Word, praise songs, prayer, communion, and an age-appropriate lesson. You may pick your child up in the Children's wing following worship. Nursery care is available for little ones birth through kindergarten-age during our worship time.

11:00 a.m. Christian Education (birth through sixth grade)

Our curriculum is child-targeted, Bible-based and life-oriented. Lessons for children in Pre-K through 6th grade are presented in a rotational format using a variety of teaching methods. Nursery children are engaged and taught in a small-group setting with stories and traditional church (Bible) songs.

Affirmation of Children's Involvement in Worship

In Matthew 19:14, Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs."

Because we love our children, because we follow Jesus, because we assume care for children in baptism and blessing, and because we are part of a covenant community that has always been called to teach its children, we ask searching questions about children and their place in worship. We want them to worship God and we want to assume our responsibility for leading them intelligently. Therefore we believe:

- ✦ Our congregation should include our children as participants in an increasingly meaningful manner in our worship service.
- ✦ Children of school age are capable of participating actively and developing an understanding of the worship service.
- ✦ Children of pre-school age can also benefit from the experience of the worship service.
- ✦ The child's development of an understanding of worship is best accomplished when participating in the worship service.
- ✦ The role of the parent(s) and other adults as the model for a child attending the worship service is essential to an orderly growth in the understanding of God.

How Adults Lead Children to Worship

Children, with natural spontaneity, experience God in unexpected ways and places and often lead adults to an openness which helps all ages to worship. We plan experiences hoping to lead children to worship. We cannot make a child worship. We can help the child to become conscious of God's presence and to respond to God's love. To lead children to worship requires the participation of the entire congregation. At baptisms and blessings the church family, along with the child's immediate family, assumes responsibility for nurturing and guiding the child in faith. Our church family conveys their attitude toward children in various ways. This includes everything from saying, "Hi," to children in the halls, to being understanding and tolerant of a child squirming through a worship service. These expressions of loving acceptance are the foundation for subsequent and more formal worship experiences.

How We Assist Children in Worship

The capacity to worship is clearly a gift from God to children and adults. It is our responsibility to cultivate this capacity in children by helping them participate in the worship service. We offer the following suggestions for ways of developing "worship readiness." Use them selectively to apply to your family's specific situation.

Introduce Your Child to the Place of Worship and Its Leaders

- ✦ Visit the sanctuary when it is empty. Walk around. Look. Explore.
- ✦ Tour, examine, talk about: the cross, pulpit and Bible, organ, choir loft, communion table, baptistry, and stained glass windows.
- ✦ Handle everything in the pew rack and explain its purpose. Practice getting out a hymnal and Bible and signing your name on the registration card.
- ✦ Schedule a visit with any of the pastors and introduce them to your children.

Introduce Your Child to the Order of Worship

- ✦ Locate the Lord's Prayer in the Bible (Matthew 6 or Luke 11) and talk about its origin. Pray the Lord's Prayer at bedtime or at a meal.
- ✦ Use last Sunday's worship bulletin to explain its purpose and discuss the order of worship.

Prepare Your Child for the Worship Service

- ✦ Get a good night's sleep and don't rush on Sunday morning.
- ✦ Before the worship service, be sure your child has had breakfast and a chance to use the restroom.
- ✦ Dress comfortably.
- ✦ Use the time after you take your seats and during the prelude to locate hymns and Bible scriptures. Look around and recognize friends and those seated around you.
- ✦ Now tell your child the need to be quiet to talk with God and suggest that he/she do the same thing, asking God's help for her/himself, the choir, and the pastor.
- ✦ Be sure he/she has an offering, Bible, hymnal, and especially a children's worship bulletin.

Introduce Your Child to Sacraments

- ✦ Give your child an opportunity to view a baptism and to welcome a baby after a blessing. You might want to send a card to welcome them.
- ✦ Discuss the meaning of communion at your child's level of understanding and decide as a family when you want your child to take communion.

Help Your Child by Your Participation and Attitude

- ✦ Avoid saying, "Be quiet," "Be good," or "Be still." Small children need to move - not noisily or without regard to those around them - but as their young, developing muscles require. Sitting cross-legged may give relief to dangling legs.
- ✦ Do emphasize, by words and actions, the positive, important, happy thing you have come to do together. You are a model for your child.
- ✦ Hug your child frequently during the service. Tell him/her how happy you are to have him/her there. Let your child lean against you, have physical contact, ask you questions, have your attention. For the next several years you will be worshipping through your ministry to your own child. As you answer his/her questions, guide his/her eye across the page, locate a Scripture, or point out a place in the worship bulletin. As you do these things, do not mistakenly feel you have interrupted your worship. Remember the One whom we worship said, "Whoever welcomes one such child as this in my name, welcomes Me."

— Matthew 18:5

- ✦ Brief prayers at mealtime, a prayer of thanks on birthdays and special occasions, a Bible story at breakfast or bedtime, listening to praise music in the car, a simple conversation about what God want us to do . . . in short, all the ways we recognize God as a present and loving reality in our daily lives are the basic preparations for participation in congregational worship.
- ✦ Enjoy! Remember, God wants His people to worship Him with a joyous heart!