

Kids in Church? Yes! Please!

**Restless bodies, fidgety fingers, random vocalizations,
crying babies...
All are welcome here!**

As Episcopalians, we believe that our primary formative experience lies in our Common Prayer.

Gathered together, as the Body of Christ, we hear the story of God's outreach to us; God's faithfulness; God's love; and God's unshakeable desire to be in relationship with us.

We hear this story in the context of a community that has promised to seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbor as ourselves; to strive for justice and peace among all people, respecting the dignity of all human beings; a community bound together in love by God.

As children we hear these things in the midst of a community that, at our baptism, promised to do all in our power to support us in our life in Christ! We, this community, have promised to be here for our children. We want them to know that the church is theirs too! We want them to know that they are valued members of the community. We want them to know that they belong.

If we don't help them to know these things now, while they are younger, why would we be surprised or hurt, if they decide not to participate when they are older?

- over for more -

Keeping Our Kids Engaged

They might not look like they are paying attention, but when kneeling on the floor, using the pew seat as a coloring desk, they are taking in more than we think! We have **bags of crayons and coloring sheets that focus on each Sunday's Gospel** in the Narthex (foyer) right next to the bulletins.

People sometimes look a little panic stricken at the suggestion that they sit up front, but the closer the kids are to the action, the more they will feel the energy generated by the readings, music, sermon, and ritual. And if there are kids with whom Fr. Andy can make eye contact, his language choices will shift in subtle ways to make the sermon accessible to them.

If you need to escape, and please don't read this paragraph as instruction to take restless or crying children out of the room, there are **children's books, and buckets of Legos**, downstairs, in the Parish Hall. Father Andy's office, through the side door of the church, next to the copier, is always open and on the bookcase you will find **brio trains and some Dr. Seuss books**.

There is a **changing table** in the bathroom at the foot of the narthex (foyer) steps, fully stocked with changing supplies. **Our nursery**, in the lower level of the education wing, is staffed during from 10:00 – 12:00 on Sunday mornings. If you need directions, please ask an Usher (or anyone you see!).

And perhaps most importantly, **we are committed to helping them find a role in our Common Prayer!** We welcome your kids to serve as **Ushers/Greeters, Acolytes, Readers, and Communion Servers!** If they are interested, and you think they are ready, we want them to be active participants in the liturgy (literally, the work of the people)! Let Father Andy know and he will engage you, and your kids in a supportive and encouraging conversation!

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