

Did you know. . .

- ...that there are two different sets of worship bags, one for children ages 3-6 and one for children ages 7-12? Look for the color of the children's bulletins in each bag; younger children's bulletins are white; older children's bulletins are pink.



- ...that the Family Parlor, adjacent to the Sanctuary doors, is a comfortable place to go with your child when sitting in the pew is too challenging? The Sanctuary sound system is linked to the parlor, so you can listen to worship while allowing your child more freedom to move around.

United Church of Chapel Hill



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Arrive in time to find a place to sit near the front. Make sure your children can see the pulpit area; seeing facilitates understanding.

Bring something for little ones to hold or look at. Worship bags and Children's Bibles and storybooks are available in the Narthex.

Call on the Lord's Prayer, familiar hymns and Sunday School lessons to use for grace and prayer time at home.

Direct your children to the bulletin and locate the congregational responses, hymns and scripture lessons before the service begins. Make a note of places where your child can participate.

Encourage your child to listen to the sermon for stories and important ideas, and engage in conversation after church.

Find your offering before the service and talk about the importance of giving. Invite your child put the offering in the plate.

THE CHILD IN THE PEW



Bringing children into the Sanctuary is something like letting them eat at the dinner table. Even though their manners are not elegant, we do it in the hope that, given time, they will begin to feel like part of the family.

Children giggle, they poke, and they swing their legs simply because they are children. But they also sing, pray, and give with us. Even as children exhibit a natural restlessness during worship, they are also learning:

- that it is important to come to this place each Sunday
- that they belong to this special company of people
- that the sights and sounds and feels of the sanctuary are good, though not always understandable
- that something is expected of them in this place, and that they may respond in song, in prayer, and in offering.

Children are welcomed and encouraged to be in worship at United Church of Chapel Hill !

Consider the age of the child
sitting with you in the pew:



Ages Three to Five

This child spends considerable time wiggling in the pew; may wander down the aisle if allowed to sit at the end of the pew; insists on a personal bulletin, keeping it in constant motion and clinging to it tenaciously if a parent reaches out to take it away; writes their first name on as many of the friendship pad pages as is allowed; fits toes nicely into the hymnbook racks and finds that more comfortable than letting them hang down.

Let's look at the other things that are happening at the same time: this child can be assisted with finding the page numbers of the hymns and have them ready for singing; may sing along with everybody else (albeit with unrecognizable words); wants to hold the offering plate as it goes by adding their own offering to the contents of the plate, perhaps sensing that worship involves giving.



Ages Six to Seven

Six and seven year olds generally sit in place unless there is an acceptable reason for moving, the best one being a dropped bulletin. As it flutters to the floor, it lands well under the pew ahead, followed by a small body which wriggles around and returns grinning triumphantly. This child writes the whole name plus address and phone number on the friendship pad. While feet are closer to the floor at this age, the hymnbook rack is still closer, though the increase in shoe size may cause a foot to get stuck.

This child can do some new things. The six and seven year old knows when to sit and when to stand; bows their head during prayers; sings some words to familiar hymns after locating them in the hymnbook, which they can now hold by themselves; is excited to discover readable words in the bulletin; is beginning to apply reading skills to matters of the faith.



The older child can handle the bulletin with more agility as well as folding the bulletin into a paper airplane (also has learned not to sail said plane over the heads of the congregation, but threatens to do so anyway); swings feet back and forth, creating a discernable rocking sensation, often hitting legs or bumping the pew ahead; pretends to take money out of the offering plate instead of putting it in; licks lips and looks forward to the "snack" during Communion.

But there is another story: the eight year old can read the bulletin, can find the scripture lesson in the Bible, and follow along as the pastor reads. This child also follows the hymns with a helping finger and listens to the sermon more than it may appear. The child usually mutters along during the Lord's Prayer, and understands at a deep level that Jesus is the bread of life.