

kids @ all souls

All Souls is a community for everyone, for children as much as for adults. We love your children, and we want to come alongside you as parents to help them love God and live in the way of Jesus. We take seriously our responsibility to help spiritually nurture your child. We want children to participate with us. We love hearing every gurgle and coo, every question, comment and laugh from your child. However, we also know that sometimes you are uncomfortable with what you may perceive as distractions – or you just may need some restful space so that you can receive whatever God has for you.

Here are a few suggestions to help you guide your children through worship:

{children ages 0-3*: room 103 }

- ✘ While children are always welcome in our gathering, a nursery is available for children ages 3 and under. (*parents of 3 year olds may choose to have their child in the nursery or in the preschool class.)
- ✘ Please sign your child in and share any important personality or health concerns.
- ✘ If your children are staying in the gathering, feel free to let them participate – or do whatever you need. Your children are not a bother to us but a gift. Also, coloring supplies and Bible story pictures are available for them at the welcome table. And feel free to bring along a favorite toy.

{preschool*-kindergarten: library}

- ✘ preschoolers and kindergarteners are dismissed after the music for their interactive Bible class. (*parents of 3 year olds may choose to have their child in the nursery or in the preschool class.)
- ✘ You may pick up your child after church, or if you would like your child to participate in communion, feel free to go and pick them up during the Prayers of the People.

{1st and 2nd graders: room 105}

- ✘ 1st and 2nd graders are dismissed after the music for their interactive Bible class.
- ✘ You may pick up your child after church, or if you would like your child to participate in communion, feel free to go and pick them up during the Prayers of the People.

{3rd through 5th graders: library}

- ✘ our 3rd through 5th graders are invited to go to their spiritual formation class during the teaching portion of our gathering for an age appropriate learning experience.
- ✘ We will bring the children back to the worship space for Passing of the Peace, Communion and the remainder of our gathering. Please meet your child in the foyer area.

{a few suggestions if you are helping your child to participate in our gathering and liturgy}

- ✘ Sit where your child can clearly see what is happening and all we are doing
- ✘ Go through the liturgy guide and explain what to expect. Encourage them to listen for certain things that will be said or done. Tell them why different portions are included. Encourage them to read along and follow what is happening.
- ✘ We have coloring supplies and activity pages available near in the foyer.
- ✘ Encourage as much worship engagement as your child can tolerate. Allow them to be appropriately active.
- ✘ Ask your child to whisper.

If these suggestions fail and you're at wit's end, don't worry. Someone will probably offer to help – and you can feel free to ask. And, chances are, your children are not disturbing others nearly as much as they are frustrating you. Breathe deep. You and your children are welcome here.

{child safety}

- ✘ Anyone working with youth or children @ All Souls are given a background screening.
- ✘ We maintain multiple adult workers in the room with children.
- ✘ We welcome any feedback or questions. We are here to serve you and your family.

{a note about kids, communion and baptism}

Naturally, the question arises concerning when a child should participate in the Eucharist (communion). Coming with the community to the Lord's Table can be one of the most formative experiences for any person, certainly a child. Many Christian traditions have some form of childhood catechism that works alongside the child's baptism. This catechism allows the child to learn the Biblical story they will be participating in and to have some context for the gravity and joy of the grace offered in Jesus' bread and wine.

Parents are of course the ones first entrusted to train their children in faith, and it seems wise for parents to encourage their kids to the Table after they have embraced Jesus' story and received baptism (even if not in that order). If your child will not be eating or drinking at the Table, we still would love for them to come and participate. One of the pastors or elders serving communion would love to offer a blessing for your child if they are not receiving bread or wine/juice. As you come to the Table, please simply indicate that you would like your child to be blessed.

If you would like to discuss baptism for you or your child, we would love to talk with you. Also, whenever you are ready for your child to begin receiving communion, we would love to have a conversation with you and your child around the meaning and mystery of coming to the Lord's Table with God's community.