

St Thomas of Canterbury Episcopal Church and Preschool



Summer Worship (Family Focus)

Beginning in July and continuing through Labor Day, there will be no Sunday school. The nursery for children 0-3 years old will remain open. During this time, resources will be available to help parents and the congregation-at-large become better able to meet the needs of children and youth who will be attending the full liturgy.

Pre-liturgy resources:

Just as you receive resources to prepare you for the adult lectionary readings for the following Sunday, you will also receive lectionary aides for children and youth. Perhaps you could make time during the week to read and discuss the Scriptures with your family members to prepare them for what they will hear on Sunday mornings. You may find it helpful to ask if there are any words in the youth version that are not known. You may also want to ask what strikes your youth as different or strange. This is where the background information from the adult version may be helpful.

If questions come up that cannot be answered, great! Have your youth bring these questions to church. Have them listen for answers in the sermon. This will help everyone listen more intently during the sermon. Questions still not answered? Never fear, the priest is near! You may want to allow time for the youth and the priest to have a chat during fellowship. (Note: You may want to arrive early to services to tell the priest what has been discussed and where the questions are.)

At the liturgy:

Whispered conversations are great! "Hey, Tommy, did you hear that? The priest just answered your question!"

Show grade school and older children how to coordinate between the service outline in bulletin and *The Book of Common Prayer*. If your child cannot react quickly enough to make this an effective way to participate in the service, share a book with your child. Point to the words as they are said. Have the child read aloud as much as he/she can.

For younger children, it might be nice to set up a “squeeze” word or two. Every time the child hears that word during the service, the child squeezes your hand. This will help to keep the child engaged during the service.

Sit up front with younger kids. They can't see over all those adult bodies. Up front, they can see more of the “action.” It will help keep them engaged.

We are working on using music with easily learned and memorized refrains in many parts of the liturgy. Please sing out and encourage your kids to participate also. For those of you who do not feel that your singing voice is a particularly gifted one, a priest once told me that God hears in perfect pitch and God is the one whom you are praising and worshiping.

Before and after the liturgy:

Allow time for your children and youth to write prayer requests and place them in the bottom drawer of the prayer box located on the table next to the musicians' entrance.

Have your child or youth volunteer to read the youth petition during the service. Petitions will be written in simple words. See Kathy Foxen if you have a child or youth who might be interested. Note: You will need to arrive at least 15 minutes early on the Sunday someone in your family is scheduled to read.)