

A Short Note to You Parents with Wiggly Children

Dear parents with wiggly children,
Oh, yes: I see you and your kids. I'm way up there in the pulpit and you're usually way in the back, but I see you. I hear y'all, too. The dropped hymnals, the coos, the squeals and the cries—all those little distractions that rise above the sounds of worship.

You know who you are. The rest of us do, too.

And since I see you and I hear you, I just wanted to say something:

Thank you.

Thanks for your ongoing efforts to include your children in worship. You could get so much more out of it for yourself if we had a nursery and you could park your kids there. You wouldn't have that feeling that everybody's looking at you when your kid does something out of order, and you wouldn't be waiting for the possible meltdown when the communion service goes long. You wouldn't have to beat that hasty retreat to the narthex because a little one has gotten a bit too restless or whacked his head on the pew. (Thanks, by the way, for those hasty retreats in consideration of others!)

Yup. Your life on Sunday could be so much less noisy and risky.

But you're parents. You know that getting more out of things for *yourself* is a luxury for the next few years. You know the value of your children getting used to worship at an early age, a habit that we pray they'll attend to for the rest of their lives. You know that those little sponge-minds are picking up a lot of stuff, memorizing creeds and prayers and songs. You also know that as the Word of God bounces around the room from readings and sermons and hymns, it's going into the ears of the young to give grace and strengthen faith. And even when parenting duties mean you don't get to listen to much, you still receive Christ's body and blood—and so you know you're forgiven.

So you keep girding your loins, setting your face and bringing your kids to church.

Bless you. We're pulling for you and praying for you. Sometimes, we get a little cranky and forget that we had kids once and *were* kids once; and then we might throw a dirty look around before we remember what it means to be part of the family of God. But we remember Jesus' words, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God" (Matthew 19:14).

Me, I'm looking forward to teaching your kids in confirmation class. It's ten years away, give or take. That's really not very long at all.

So thank you. God grant you every good gift needed in your holy calling of parenting.

Peace to you in Christ,

Pastor Pauls