

# Thank you for bringing your family to church!

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Taking children to church can, admittedly be a challenge. The following tips can help make any churchgoing parent's life easier.

**Sit in the front.** Yes, it's counterintuitive, but kids behave better when they can see what's going on.

**Sing, pray, respond.** Children will learn liturgical behavior by following along and copying what you do.

**It's okay!** Don't worry when kids make a bit of noise and even on occasion have a full-throttle tantrum in church. We expect it, and we won't give dirty looks if it happens to you. It happens to everyone.

**Teach.** Tell your kids what's going on. You can help your children follow along by repeating to them what is happening. Use the colouring sheet to explain the Gospel reading during Mass and on the way home.

**Take breaks.** Obviously, a screaming child needs a break from Mass. It's perfectly fine to get up and take your child out of the church. Stay out for as long as it takes to quiet your child then return. Use this as a last resort though. Letting your child play and run in the back of the church teaches him that he needs to cry and fuss to earn play time.

**Engage them.** By all means, bring some quiet toys or books. Keep them in a special "going to Mass bag" that is reserved for church. That will keep these activities special. Try to put these things away before the consecration. At the elevation, point to the host and whisper something like, "Look at the miracle! Look at Jesus. Say, 'I love you Jesus!'"

**Talk with others.** If you feel like your kids are having a difficult time, chat with other parents at Good Shepherd to ask for their advice. A good place to chat is after the Mass in the café. There's a lot of collective wisdom out there.

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Attending Mass as a family can be a challenge, but remember, God will abundantly bless those who bring his little ones to him. "For the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these" (Mt 19:14).