

Why Welcome Children in Worship?

Welcoming children in worship is important for a variety of reasons: children are spiritual, children learn through modeling, intergenerational worship is meaningful for all ages, and more. Including children in worship allows them the opportunity to be fully engaged in the community.

Worship is an opportunity for children to take leadership roles and learn life skills in a loving and safe environment (for example, reading the Scripture lesson or leading a prayer time).

In a culture where age separation is prevalent, encouraging all ages to worship together is a way to reflect the Kingdom of God.



FAQ's

Isn't it noisy?

Not really. The children are likely making the same level of noise as if they were in a regular pew. Take care to ensure that the items in the Prayground area help keep noise to a minimum.

Why is the ideal location in the front of the worship space?

Being near the front allows children to see and hear better. Churches have also put the space in the middle, on the side or in the back.

Visit michiganumc.org/resources/children to learn more.



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Welcoming Children in Worship through the Prayground/ Grace Space





What is a Prayground?

The Prayground (also known as a Grace Space) is an area in the worship space that is designed for children to use during worship. Soft toys and blocks, crayons & paper, pipe cleaners, small furniture, and rugs are frequently used to create the Prayground. The space is often toward the front of the worship space so children can see what is happening in worship, but can be adapted to wherever it works most effectively. Parents or caregivers sit with or near their children.

The Prayground is an opportunity for children to worship through play. The space encourages families to worship together. As families sit together in worship, they may build relationships with one another and form community.

How to Start a Prayground

Communication is key in starting a Prayground. Begin with prayer. Start a conversation with the worship committee, children's ministry committee, and/or other leadership teams that would be invested in this space. Talk with parents, trustees, grandparents, and others whose input is valuable.

Gather stories and examples from other churches. Talk with leadership from churches who have a Prayground in their worship space about what they have learned (positives and challenges).

Seek the approval or blessing from leadership (worship, children, pastor, trustees, finance, etc.). Create a design for your Prayground space—what would you love to include?

Communicate with the congregation about what the Prayground is, why it is important, and how to use it well. This is very important to a successful launch. You may wish to put an info page in the "Pew Pocket" or bulletin so everyone has access to information about your Prayground/Grace Space.

On "Opening Day" offer a blessing to consecrate the space and welcome the children and their families.

Prayground Ideas

- Area rug that can be easily cleaned
- Toys that can be disinfected such as soft blocks, teething rings, baby safe mirrors, etc.
- Board books
- Chenille Stems (pipe cleaners)
- Washable crayons and paper
- Quiet Fidget Toys
- Toys or objects that relate to the Bible story
- Objects that relate to the season or theme of worship
- Boxes to keep toys for different age groups separate and for toys that need to be cleaned
- Child friendly furniture (table/chairs)

