

CHILDREN IN THE CHURCH

“Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven’.” (Matt. 19:14) Our Christian Orthodox Church baptizes and chrismates children at a young age to make them full members of the Body of Christ, the Church. As members of the Church, parents are to instruct them to be respectful and quiet during Divine Services.

It is never appropriate to allow a child to run down or play in the aisles. In addition, toys that make noise are not permitted in church. Children should be taken to the restroom before church begins; do not allow them to come and go during Divine Services.

Should a young child need a snack, please clear away any leftover pieces. The child should not have anything in his/her mouth when coming forward to receive Holy Communion. Remember, it is strictly forbidden to chew gum in church at any time and by anyone.

It is a good practice to bring young children to church when Divine Services are not scheduled so that they might learn proper church behaviour. They should be taught that the church is God’s House and that special manners are expressed there.

TO PARENTS WITH CHILDREN

Relax. God put the wiggle and curiosity in children; don't feel you have to suppress it. All are welcome!

Children tire of seeing the backs of people's heads. Sit somewhere where the children can see (even if it's near the front).

Quietly explain the Liturgy:

The Small Entrance: The Gospel (Good News) coming to the world

The Epistle and Gospel readings: Our message for the day

The Homily: The clergy speaks about the Bible readings, the Saints, and the Holy Days

The Great Entrance: Bringing the gifts to God

The Offering (Anaphora): Bowing to our King and asking Him to accept our gifts and return them as His Body and Blood.

Holy Communion: Christ is in us and we are in Him

Children learn liturgical behaviour by copying you. Please be mindful of fellow worshippers if a child becomes too disruptive and go into the "Cry Room" as quietly as possible. Once the child has calmed down, please come back into the

church. This is where they belong but remember that we come to church to pray and to worship God.

Remember that the way we welcome children in the Church directly affects the way they respond to the Church, to Christ, and to one another. Let them know they are at home!

TO THE MEMBERS OF OUR CHURCH

The presence of children is a gift from God to the Church and a reminder that our community is growing. Please welcome our children and give a smile of encouragement to their parents. It is a heavy sin to cause someone to turn away from God and His Church.