



Why you'll find our

# Children in Church

By Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma

Often times we are asked why our little children sit through an entire worship service with the adults. I suppose it has become so commonplace to us that we do not even notice — unless, of course, a young child puts up a real fuss!

Many churches today have followed the practice of “children’s church.” This practice suggests that either before the worship service begins or just before the preaching, children are dismissed from the worship service to attend a Sunday School lesson or project. It is claimed that this is more profitable for children than to sit under a long sermon aimed, not at children, but at the edification of adults.

We do not follow this practice. Again, the question is often asked: why not? That is a good question and worthy of an answer.

## Training children

We well know as parents that training children is something that takes place already when they are infants. When taught good habits they generally will adopt those habits the rest of their lives. This is why we keep our children with us during the worship service. We train them at a very early age to get used to sitting in church. We have found this to be successful, too! Usually by the age

of three or four they are becoming well trained, although they still test mom and dad by constantly telling them they have to go to the restroom!

We realize there is a time — terrible twos? — when a child is too young to understand why he or she must be quiet in church. When they are constantly talking, fussing or crying it disturbs the other members of the church so that they are not able to listen. Out of common courtesy, we then take our children out of the service. Generally, a parent will take them to our nursery found in the basement of the church. If this is the case with your family, we have people that will

be more than happy to care for your children in the nursery.

## Is not “children’s church” better for our children?

Some argue that children’s church” is better for our children since they are busy with Bible projects that will teach them something rather than sitting in a worship service out of which they receive nothing. Our answer to this is no.



*The preaching of God’s Word is the means by which God works saving faith in our hearts and in the hearts of our children.*

First of all, it does not solve the problem of children making noise in church. By the time they are old enough even to attend “children’s church” they are beyond the

noisy years, or should be if they have been sitting in church. In the second place, there is good reason for our children to sit beneath the preaching of the gospel. The preaching of God's Word is the means by which God works saving faith in our hearts and in the hearts of our children (I Corinthians 1:1 8ff.) It is true that our young children understand very little of the sermon preached, but with proper training, and through constant exposure to the Word, they begin to pick up facts and truths out of the sermon. When mom and dad foster this, by the time children are in school they already are able to hear things in the sermon that might surprise us as parents! To expose our children as soon as possible to the preaching of the Word is good for their spiritual nurture and health.

### **Weekly children's church**

Just because our children sit in church on Sunday does not mean that we do not have

children's church. We do! We do not call it that, however. We call it catechism class. Neither do we hold it at the same time as the worship service, Most of these catechism classes are held on a particular day of the week.

Beginning with first grade and through the teenage years our minister gives our children systematic instruction in Bible history and Reformed doctrine. He teaches five different catechism classes each aimed at the level of learning the children are capable of at their age. If you would care to examine the materials he uses, just ask a member of the church and he or she will make them available to you.

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