

A Message from our Pastor

Our Parish is getting younger!

It is exciting to see so many children at Mass. Attending Mass is something children learn to do. It can be hard for children to understand why they have to sit still for an hour when they do not know what is going on.

Remember that children will learn “Mass etiquette” as they watch you. Take time before or after Mass to walk through the church. Point out and explain different things...the tabernacle, the baptismal font, the altar, and so on.

If you attend one of the early Sunday morning Masses, go for coffee and doughnuts when they are offered. It is an opportunity for your children to socialize and get to know their parish family.

For those without children, greet them as you do adults; express joy at having them at Mass, and above all, have patience as these children grow in their faith. They are our future - the future of the Church!

Adults with no Children

You may sometimes think, “I would never allow my child to act like that!” or “Can’t those parents control their child?”

Before getting upset or criticizing, consider offering support instead. These children are the future of our parish, the future of our Catholic faith. If families do not feel welcome in their spiritual home, why would they keep coming back?

Remember too, that as you may feel unable to be spiritually nourished during Mass while surrounded by children, their parents probably find it even more difficult.

Ways to be Supportive:

- Express joy at having children worship with us. Send a smile their way!
- Greet children, as well as adults, during the sign of peace.
- Pass the collection basket to children.
- Be understanding when parents need to take their children in and out of the pew during Mass.
- Be patient with the leaning process; we are all growing as Children of God!

Welcoming the Little Children



“Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them, for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belong.”

Matthew 19:14

This brochure is an attempt to bring you comfort and peace as we welcome our children to Mass.

Most importantly, remember that you do receive wondrous graces in your efforts!

**ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI
CATHOLIC CHURCH**

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Infants

- Fussy babies are often comforted by changing positions or with a pacifier or bottle. Only feel the need to exit with your baby if he or she is inconsolable.
- Often, parents find that standing and rocking the baby at the back of the church is all it takes. In that case, wear comfortable shoes!

Older Infants

- Do not feel it necessary to remove a cooing baby. Some parents may be self-conscious about this, but most often, those around you enjoy the sweet sounds of the baby!
- Perhaps try blocking off an area for your child to move around, in between Mom and Dad or between the parent and the end of the pew.

Toddlers, Preschoolers and Pre-First Communicants

- Choosing your seat at Mass is important. Some families find that their children can see better sitting in the front. Others find that sitting toward the back, with an easy path to the door, is the best. Choose what works best for your family.
- Share the hymnal with children at their eye-level.
- Quietly explain to your children what is happening during the Mass.
- Encourage children to place their own money or the family's envelope in the collection basket.
- Babies will coo and young children will chatter. Unless they are really throwing a fit, please keep them in church.
- Feel free to use the cry room located in the glassed-in area at the back of the church.
- Encourage children to extend the sign of peace to those around them.
- Snacks should be avoided, but feel free to bring rosary beads or a favorite book.

At Home

- Teach your children The Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary, and prayers used regularly at Mass.
- Make prayer an important part of family time. Let children offer their petitions, too. Children are never too young to learn the "routine" of prayer, be it the rosary or bedtime prayers.
- Talk about the Mass at home, recalling stories told or read in the bulletin.
- Read the Bible, perhaps Sunday's reading or another favorite story.
- Learn some hymns together and sing.
- Instill an attitude of celebration on Sundays. Allow Sundays to be days of rest, just as God intended them. Take the day to pray together and to play together!

One last note:

The most important thing is to make the church a part of your child's life. Bring your children to Mass, for Adoration, for Confession, for social gatherings. Make them familiar with their "Home away from Home!" If you wait until they are adults, it may be too late!