

# PARENTS' SURVIVAL GUIDE



A Guide for Worshipping with Children



CHRIST THE REDEEMER  
ANGLICAN CHURCH

# WELCOME LETTER

Dear Parents,

As a parent of three boys, I am very grateful for the opportunity they have to grow up in this church community. They are surrounded by so many people who love them; they enjoy our children's ministries, offered by a dedicated team of volunteers; they are surrounded by truth and beauty expressed in so many ways.

But let's be honest. Sunday morning can be tough. Parents can feel like they are in a game of survival, where just making it through church (or to church on some weeks) takes Herculean effort. Some of that goes with the territory and will never change. But this Parents' Survival Guide is designed to help as much as we can, introducing you to the physical space, the ministries offered to children, and tips and tools for surviving and actually enjoying Sunday morning with your children.

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I hope this guide and the resources it describes are helpful to you. Should you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Grace and Peace,

**Father Brian Barry**

Assistant Rector, Director of Youth and Children's Ministries  
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# IMPORTANT LOCATIONS

**Retreat Room:** This is an ideal quiet place for nursing or otherwise calming infants. Speakers connected to the sound system mean that you can continue to hear what is going on.

**Baptistery:** The Baptistery is now equipped with sound-dampening glass, and is a good location for more active children who need to step out of the main service for a time. Children meet here during the sermon and prayers in the 9:00 service.

**Nursery:** Care provided for 9:00 and 11:00 service, open other times.

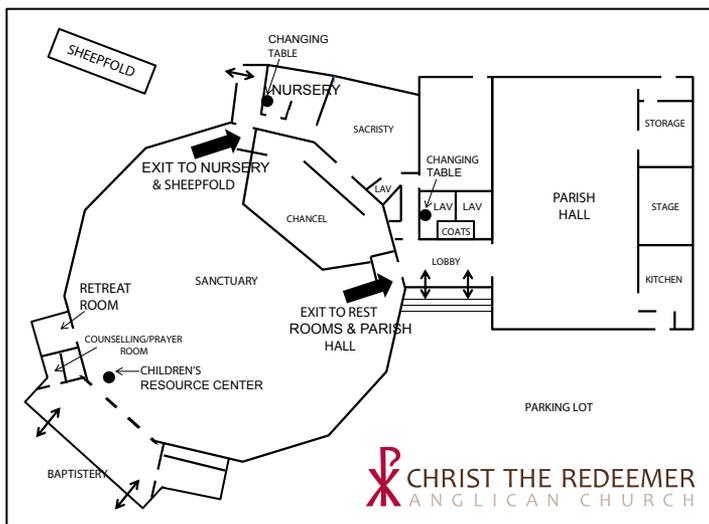
**Changing Facilities:** Changing tables are available in the Nursery and in the Women's Restroom. A diaper pail is also located in the Retreat Room.

**Restrooms:** Men's and Women's restrooms are located in the hallway between the Church and the Parish Hall, as well as a separate restroom in the Sacristy.

**Sheepfold:** Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, for ages 3-5 during the 11:00 service, ages 3-5 and 9-12 during 10:00 Christian Formation Hour.

**Parish Hall:** Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, for ages 6-8 during Formation Hour, and 6+ during the 11:00 service.

**Children's Resource Center:** In the worship space near the front entrance, several resources to be used with children during worship are available.



# CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

Offered on Sunday Mornings

**The Nursery** is offered for infants and children through age three at our 9:00 and 11:00 services. Pagers are available to let you know if your child is in distress or needs to be changed. For more information, please contact Jean Sword, Nursery Coordinator, [jmsword@comcast.net](mailto:jmsword@comcast.net).

**Catechesis of the Good Shepherd** provides a peaceful, specially-prepared environment in which to prayerfully reflect on Holy Scripture and on the liturgical life of the Church. In short, children are given an opportunity to meet with God personally as their Good Shepherd, receiving him with wonder and awe. Catechesis takes place in The Sheepfold (see the map on page 4), a temporary classroom space across the driveway, as well as on the stage in the Parish Hall.

**Sunday, 9:00 AM** during the 9:00 AM service, children are invited to the Baptistry for a brief time of Scripture, prayer, and song that starts at the beginning of the sermon and concludes in time for Holy Communion.

**Sunday, 10:00-10:50 AM** during our Christian Formation Hour, CGS is offered to children ages 3-12.

**Sunday, 11:00 AM** during the 11:00 AM service, CGS is offered to children ages 3+. Children follow the cross out toward the beginning of the service, returning for Holy Communion.

If your child is attending one of these ministries for the first time, please go with him or her to meet the adult volunteers and to provide some necessary personal information.

Children return from Catechesis at the Offertory. Please keep your eye out for your children, as it is often difficult for them to locate parents in a full Church.

For more information on Children's Ministries, please contact Fr. Brian Barry,  
Assistant Rector and Director of Youth & Children's Ministries:  
[brian.barry@ctr-anglican.org](mailto:brian.barry@ctr-anglican.org).

# SURVIVAL TIPS

## Engaging Children in Worship

Encouraging children to enter into corporate worship can be done in so many ways, and each child will respond uniquely. These are just some possibilities:

- Model how one behaves in a sacred space: enter quietly, kneel for quiet prayer, bow or genuflect when entering your pew, etc. These behaviors help children to understand intuitively that they are entering a special place.
- Sing a few seasonally appropriate hymns at home; the sense of personal ownership is so much greater when even one or two hymns are familiar.
- Help children to see. Without a boost, everything happening at the altar is invisible.
- In our children's ministries, we introduce children to the Liturgy first through what we see with our eyes: liturgical colors indicating the season, gestures made by the Celebrant, various items used throughout the service. Any way that we can help children to notice these things gives them a point of connection.
- If (when) all else fails, there is always stained glass. Inviting children to look at the images on the windows can sanctify the time for them, even if they are having trouble relating at the moment to what the rest of the congregation is doing.
- Use one of our "Survival Tools" from the Children's Resource Center.

## Distracting Children

Sometimes children have decided to check out and there is little to do but either keep them quietly occupied or escape. Here are some distraction tips:

- Coloring is great. Crayons and papers are available at the entrances.
- Try to pick a toy that will keep your child's hands busy without causing further disruption: some toys are loud and others are so interesting that they cause children in neighboring pews to climb into unnatural positions simply to covet their neighbor's toys.
- Some "fidget toys" are available at the Children's Resource Center.

## When you Need to Escape

Relax; our congregation is gracious. We are surrounded by children, and expect that there will be some noise. At the same time, when it becomes clear that the noise or other distractions a child is making are of the... continual variety, it is time to escape. What can you do?

- PLAN AHEAD. Try to position yourself near an aisle where escape is easy.

- The Retreat Room is a great place for nursing or otherwise calming babies.
- The Baptistry is a good sound-dampened location for more active children to move about.

### **Concerning Choral Music**

While they are singing a special piece of music, such as the Psalm or Offertory Anthem, the choir requests those entering and exiting through the Nursery / Sheepfold door to wait until the end of the piece, if possible.

### **Concerning Postludes**

Our congregation has a custom of sitting through the postlude to meditate on what has been heard and experienced throughout the Liturgy. Most children are, at this point, more interested in lunch than in reflection. You are free to exit after the final blessing and dismissal; this creates an opportunity to get in place for lunch before the Parish Hall is filled with people.

### **Concerning Snacks**

Most of our children's ministries do not provide snacks. If you are going to offer your children some sort of nourishment to help them make it through the long morning, we ask that you be considerate of those around you. Much of our worship space is carpeted, so please avoid foods or drinks that would cause stains. Please make sure you pick up after your children; if for some reason a spill creates a mess you cannot handle, inform the sexton. Also, consider the fact that some snacks are magnets for other children; we'd prefer to avoid the "feeding frenzy" effect.

### **Concerning Bathroom Breaks**

We are in a very public place and there are always unfamiliar people present at weekend services. Our children's ministries seek to provide adequate supervision to keep children safe. If, however, your child is under your supervision, it is up to you to keep them safe. Please do not allow children to go to the restrooms without supervision.

### **Concerning Lunch Hour**

We offer lunch after the 11:00 service almost every week. Our congregation is very good about keeping an eye out for children but, even so, it is easy to lose track of the little ones. Parents must ensure that their children are being adequately supervised. We are on a very busy street and children are not permitted to play outside without supervision. We also ask that children not be permitted to run around the Parish Hall while it is full of people.

# CHILDREN'S RESOURCE CENTER

The Children's Resource Center is provided for your convenience. Everything there is designed to calm children and/or to engage them in the experience of liturgical worship. Here are some things you will find.

## **Fidget Toys**

Some children can calm their bodies and minds if they have something to do with their hands. These fidget toys give them something to play with quietly.

## **Liturgical Flash Cards**

These cards are designed to help children engage visually with their surroundings and begin to understand what they are seeing. This can increase the child's sense of ownership in what is taking place. There are three sets of cards. One focuses on the gestures and prayers made during the Eucharist, one on the articles used throughout the service, and one on locating and identifying images from our stained glass windows.

## **The Sunday Paper**

This is a child-oriented resource based on the day's Scripture readings, which children can color. This is also available at the main entrances.

## **Coloring Paper**

Drawing Paper, tracing paper, and Crayons are available.

With the exception of The Sunday Paper or Coloring Paper, please return whatever you borrow from the Children's Resource Center.