

# ATTENDING MASS WITH YOUR CHILDREN

Tips to help families get the most out of Mass, specifically at St. Mary of the Lake, for themselves and their children.

## INFANCY STAGE

Most children in this age category are comfortable sitting with mom and dad in the pew in the main worshipping space. If your child gets hungry, feel free to feed them in your pew, or if you feel more comfortable, our Brides Room (St. John the Baptizer Room) is quiet, with comfy chairs and you can still listen to the Mass through the sound system.



## THE GATHERING SPACE

Q: Why can't I use the Gathering Space as a "crying room/nursery?"

A: Sounds made in the Gathering Space travel up the aisles and can be heard as far as the Altar. That is why sometimes you find the doors between the Worship area and the Gathering Space closed. The Gathering Space is also an area traveled through by the Mass coordinator, Roadies, ushers and Eucharistic Ministers who carry the precious Body and Blood to our auxiliary areas and Sacristy. Having to watch for quick moving children in that space can be a safety hazard to everyone. A safe alternative would be to sit in the St. Joseph room where Mass is projected on the large screen.

## THE MOVEMENT PHASE

Once your child is on the move, it can be very difficult for you or your child to get anything out of Mass if all you do is chase them around or worry that they are bothering other parishioners. This is the best time to take advantage of our nursery program, **WELCOMING THE LITTLE ONES**. This is for children ages 1-5 and takes place during the 9:00 & 11:00 Mass on the 1st - 4th Sundays of the month. It is designed to help your child in their first phase of learning how to attend and participate in the Mass. They will learn that while at church we sometimes sit and listen to a story, sometimes we sing, sometimes we get up and walk. At the same time you can enrich your own faith by attending Mass in the main worship space with your older children.

## THE NURSERY

Our nursery is located through the sacristy, down the hall, the last door on the left. When it is not staffed, parents are welcome to stay in there with their child, while still being able to participate in the Mass via the large screen TV.

When it is staffed, parents are asked to leave their children with volunteers who have been background checked and Virtus trained in accordance with the Archdiocese. They will care for the children and engage them in fun lessons that will help them grow in their faith. Parent and youth volunteers are welcome!

## BOOK BAGS AND BULLETINS

Those cool book bags and children's bulletins are there to help children learn and keep busy when the readings and homily might be just a little "over their heads." Remember though that there are times in the Mass when they should be responsive and participate. Try to balance the coloring time and participation time.



By the time your children finish **KINDERGARTEN** most should be able to sit in the worship space with you for the one hour. If they just can't make it, bring them to the St. Joseph Room for a break, but explain to them that they still need to participate and not run around. **First —fifth GRADERS** should go to **LITURGY OF THE WORD WITH CHILDREN**. This is a wonderful opportunity for them to learn the Word of God using age-appropriate language. This takes place at the 9 & 11:00 Mass from September—Pentecost. From this age on, children should attend Mass in the worship space so they can prepare themselves to receive Jesus in the Eucharist. Be sure to sit in the front so the kids can see and learn!