

TIPS TO HELP YOUR CHILD PARTICIPATE IN THE MASS

1. Start before leaving the house. Explain that you are going to Mass because you want to show your love for God, who gives us all that we need every day. The Mass helps us to say, "thank you!" in a very special way. It's a time to celebrate God's love with other members of God's Family through songs, prayers, stories, and Holy Communion.
2. On the way to Mass, brainstorm things that you are thankful for this week. Give everyone a chance to suggest happenings, people, or things that they really appreciated. Suggest that these are good things to talk to God about when you first arrive at the church.
3. When you enter the church, help your child make the Sign of the Cross with the Holy Water. Explain that this special prayer reminds us how much God loves us.
4. Choose a seat close to the front so that your child can see what is going on at the Altar. If questions come up that you can't answer, ask Father Don after Mass. He loves questions!
5. Help your child kneel for prayer before sitting down, saying: I love you!, thank you for the good things, I'm sorry for unloving choices, or please help with a problem.
6. Guide your child through the parts of the Mass that s/he can do:
 - Standing, sitting, and kneeling at the appropriate times
 - Singing and following the readings and prayers in the missalette
 - Offering a sign of peace to family members and others
 - Going up with you at Communion, with arms crossed over the chest, to receive a blessing
7. Quietly call your child's attention to different parts of the Mass:
 - Coming together as God's Family by singing and praying together
 - Listening to stories from the Bible
 - Bringing gifts up to the Altar to get ready for the special meal
 - Setting the "table" for the meal.
 - Ringing bells (tell that bread and wine are now Jesus)
 - Blessing (sends us out to do God's work)
8. Ask your child to listen carefully to the stories that are read. On the way home, give everyone a turn to share something that they heard.