



## WHY WELCOME CHILDREN?

“Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to me. Don’t keep them away. The kingdom of heaven belongs to people like them.’” (Matthew 19:14, NIV) Children are theologians. From the beginning, children make meaning in response to their experiences with God. Children understand and experience God in worship. Welcoming children in worship allows them and their families to be fully engage in their faith community.

Worship provides an intergenerational community where children can learn and model, wonder and pray, and participate in the sacred rhythms of liturgy and sacrament.



## FAQ'S

### Isn't it noisy?

Not really. The children are likely making the same level of noise as if they were in a pew.

### Why is the ideal location in the front of the worship space?

Churches use many different locations for their Playground, it depends on space that is available or transformable. A more helpful location may be “why do we want a playground and how does that impact its location?”

You can find more information about Including Children in Worship at: [lifelongfaith.org/children/praygrounds/](http://lifelongfaith.org/children/praygrounds/)



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## WELCOMING CHILDREN IN WORSHIP: PRAYGROUND/ GRACE SPACE

## WHAT IS A PRAYGROUND?

The Prayground (also known as a Grace Space) is an area in the worship space that is designed for children to use during worship. Soft toys and blocks, crayons & paper, pipe cleaners, small furniture, and rugs are frequently used to create the Prayground. The space is often toward the front of the worship space so children can see what is happening in worship, but can be adapted to wherever it works most effectively. Parents or caregivers sit with or near their children.

The Prayground is an opportunity for children to worship through play. The space encourages families to worship together. As families sit together in worship, they may build relationships with one another and form community.



## GETTING STARTED

Communication is key! Begin with prayer. Start a conversation with the worship committee, children's ministry committee, and/or other leadership teams that would be invested in this space. Talk with parents, trustees, grandparents, and others whose input is valuable.

Gather stories and examples from other churches. Talk with leadership from churches who have a Prayground in their worship space about what they have learned (positives and challenges).

Seek the approval or blessing from leadership (worship, children, pastor, trustees, finance, etc.). Create a design for your Prayground space—what would you love to include?

Communicate with the congregation about what the Prayground is, why it is important, and how to use it well. This is very important to a successful launch. You may wish to put an info page in the "Pew Pocket" or bulletin so everyone has access to information about your Prayground/Grace Space.

On "Opening Day" offer a blessing to consecrate the space and welcome the children and their families.

## IDEAS

- Area rug that can be easily cleaned
- Toys that can be disinfected such as soft blocks, teething rings, baby safe mirrors, etc.
  - Board and picture books
  - Chenille Stems (pipe cleaners)
  - Washable crayons and paper
  - Quiet Fidget Toys
- Toys or objects that relate to the Bible story
- Objects that relate to the season or theme of worship
- Boxes to keep toys for different age groups separate and for toys that need to be cleaned
- Child friendly furniture (table/chairs)
- Consider seating for grown-ups

