

☺ BEING AN ALL-AGE, ALL-STAGE CHURCH ☺

As an all-age, all-stage church, we believe that:

- ☺ all people matter to God
- ☺ God's family is diverse, with all sorts of different people included and welcome
- ☺ kids benefit from being involved in all of church life from the beginning
- ☺ we all benefit from practising generosity and tolerance so everyone's needs are met in church services.

HOW IT WORKS...

With these values in mind, curators and preachers aim to build Sunday morning services that stretch mature adults and also engage kids, sometimes at the same time and sometimes with different parts of the service aimed at different groups.

We have outstanding teenagers today whose faith is the product of this all-age environment. We see the evidence every week that this is a great way to nurture people's faith. We trust you will come to appreciate it too, if it's unfamiliar at first.

IF YOU HAVE KIDS WITH YOU TODAY...

We know it can be daunting, but please don't be too worried! We love having kids with us, in all their noisy, wriggling glory, and the people around you will be keen to help you if you need a hand with yours.

Here are a few quick tips for helping your kids to connect with what goes on in the service. There's also a longer guide to all the resources and help that are available which you can take from the resource table at the back of the church – or just ask someone.

- ☺ Talk to your kids as the service runs, pointing things out to them that are familiar, asking questions, redirecting their attention. Even in the 'adult' slots, there is often a visual aid or reference to something familiar that the kids can relate to. Be persistent in directing their attention to the front, or whatever activity we are doing together. We want them to get the message that church is for them, too.
- ☺ Some bits of the service will be aimed at adults, so it's fine if children do a quiet activity in their seats for these parts.
- ☺ Some parts of the service are aimed mostly at kids – yay! For these bits, direct your child's attention to what's happening and encourage them to participate by coming up the front or answering questions or doing a craft activity that's offered.
- ☺ All kids are part of the 'Offering Team', taking around the collection bowls. Your child is welcome to join in this whenever they are ready.
- ☺ Use musical instruments (available beside the stairs) and dancing movements during singing, particularly for children who can't read yet.
- ☺ Don't worry if your baby or toddler is making a bit of noise, if they're happy and engaged. We want them to be part of things, and a bit of background noise is fine.
- ☺ If you need to take your child to the foyer to resettle them, make sure you come back in again, so they don't think this is an escape route!