

Teach Your Child to Worship Willingly With This Scriptural Method

First let me tell you what this is not. It is not a commentary on whether one or both parents should stay at home, work from home or focus on managing family and career. It is not about whether you should or shouldn't have children, or how many you should have. It is also not a comparison between people who are parents, and people who are not.

So what is this? Thanks for asking. It is simply my thoughts on the wild season of parenthood. The one where the littles are wild and the chaos is strong. The one that leaves you tired, smelly and maybe a little crazy.

As a worship leader, it is easy to feel like this season is so all-consuming that your identity is being swallowed up. You watch your gifts and talents fade to the back while you join the management game. Managing the noise, managing the mess, managing the hungry little people who constantly need you. Seriously, why would you even bother to attend a corporate worship event? You can't possibly participate.

Friends, here in the land of the wild ones, choices are made, the important choices that affect your children. Children, wild, quiet, ornery, beautiful, funny and crazy all have the same access to Holy Spirit as you do. They are just as capable as you in experiencing the power and presence of God.

No matter how they do it, it's our job as parents to stay engaged. We are the director of the orchestra.

I generally see two kinds of parenting at worship services.

1. The Military Parent

No. 1 is the military parent. This parent demands that their children stand, behaving respectfully, giving honor to God. They raise their little hands and sing with hollow eyes and hollow hearts. Little obedient robots that never experience God.

2. The Checked-Out Parent

No. 2 is the checked out parent. They just want to worship. They are gloriously experiencing the worship, and fully engaging themselves. Meanwhile their kids end up running, unchecked, back and forth. It's loud and disruptive. These kids are having so much fun, but also never experience God.

3. The Engaged Parent

I present to you option No. 3, the engaged parent. I have found that parenting is in fact worship. Tending to the hearts of our children is a very valuable thing in the eyes of God. It is also very hard work. We can allow our kids to experience God uniquely. Asking them what they feel when Holy Spirit is moving in them. How do they connect? They may need to dance and spin. So dance and spin with them. Give them boundaries of space and volume so that they aren't disturbing others. They may feel and see in pictures. Give them a notebook and a pencil. Ask them to draw or write what Holy Spirit shows them. Some very profound pictures have come out of one of my picture feeling/seeing sons. They may get on the floor and just be with Jesus, or play the "drums" on the chairs. No matter how they do it, it's our job as parents to stay engaged. We are the director of the orchestra. We are stewarding them, and helping them to see, feel and know what it is to experience God. It takes our time and our energy. Sometimes it will mean that we don't get to just go away to our happy place in worship. But it is a beautiful different kind of worship, one that is a treasure in the eyes of God.

Parents, be empowered. Stay engaged and present with your kids. I promise you that this is only a season of your life. This is a sacrifice of praise that you can only offer for a limited time. It is worship like no other. Give yourself to it fully, and you will not regret it!

“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it” (Prov. 22:6

“Look, children are a gift of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is a reward” (Ps. 127:3).

*Reprinted with permission from NextGen Worship. **Hayley Kahler** is a proud mother to three boys and wife to Clint Kahler. She loves Jesus, coffee and chocolate. Hayley has led worship with her husband for 20-plus years.*