



IDEAS IN

Childhood Ministry

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Successful Arrivals at Church

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When 2-year-old Caleb and his mother arrived at his Sunday School room, he began to cry and to resist going in. So she opened the classroom door and walked in with him, nearly tripping over another child. That child then began to cry, then others joined the chorus. Sound familiar?

For a preschooler, a happy arrival at church can be the ingredient that makes the church experience a good one for the whole family. You can help parents understand the importance of making a successful transition when arriving for a session at church. The following statements may be helpful in talking to parents. *Whether written or spoken, the language you choose should always be positive, tactful, and reassuring.*



Share your experience and insight.

- All children are unique. Your child may have no trouble being left at the door, while another may have some separation anxiety. Your child may be happily oblivious to the stress of others in the room, while another child may cry as soon as another child cries. With time, teachers get to know your child and how to respond to best to her needs.
- Our teachers are trained to begin teaching as soon as the first child arrives. Distractions from other people may interrupt the teaching process. We are planting little seeds of faith, so even our youngest members must be allowed an opportunity to learn about God and Jesus without unnecessary interruption.
- An important goal for our preschool classrooms is to keep them as safe and as sanitary as possible. Any additional people entering the room besides the teachers and children add a potential threat of accidents (tripping over toys or stepping on little fingers) or contamination (adults sneezing, coughing, or handling toys that likely will be mouthed).

Solicit parents' cooperation.

Publish these guidelines in a note card or brochure, and/or talk to parents about them:

- When you bring your child to the classroom door, hand him and his bag to the teacher (pre-walker) or encourage him to walk in to the room. Give brief verbal or written instructions to the teacher as necessary.
- A quick transition, along with reassuring words such as, "I will come back for you," are usually the most effective and least stressful for both parent and child. Please do not stay and visit at the door. The teacher will work to quickly redirect your child to a toy or activity.
- We ask that you do not enter the room unless the teacher asks you to enter. If you are concerned about your child, we will be sure to call for you and let you know about any problems your child may experience (continuous crying, injury, signs of illness, etc). We will not let a child continue to be upset for a long period of time without contacting a parent.
- Please refrain from intentionally interacting with other children already in the classroom. This could upset the child or distract her from a Bible learning activity. As a security measure, we recommend that only parents (or the person leaving the child) give permission for people other than the teachers to have contact with their children while at church.

Promote the partnership.

- Our desire and purpose is that your child to learn to love God and know Jesus as a result of partnering with you during these formative years.
- We are blessed to have such well-trained and experienced teachers. We ask that you please respect the procedures they may employ in greeting, teaching, and caring for your child.
- If you have any questions or concerns about any matter relating to your child at church, do not hesitate to talk to a teacher, administrative leader, or staff person.



A successful arrival helps insure a "win-win" experience for everyone!

Childhood Ministry Resources and events are possible by your gifts through the Cooperative Program

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