



We want you and your children to enjoy worshipping with us. Please take this leaflet with you. It will help you all get the most out of your time spent worshipping together.

### COMING TO CHURCH

- ✚ On the way to church talk about what will happen when you get there, what it will be like and any expectations that you have.
- ✚ Encourage your child to choose a favourite doll or teddy to 'take to church' and share in the worship.
- ✚ You can pick up a bag of (quiet!) toys from the back pew when you enter. Don't get them out straightaway but have them ready if your child is getting bored or restless.

### WHERE TO SIT

- ✚ Start by sitting in the main body of the church where your child is able to see what is happening.
- ✚ If (or when!) your child gets restless and needs more space take him or her to the 'Quiet Corner' at the back of the church.
- ✚ If your child becomes upset or overexcited please take him or her out into the Annexe until they are happier.
- ✚ It is better to move to meet your child's needs than for them (and you and your neighbours) to be unhappy.

### BEFORE WORSHIP

- ✚ Listen together to the bells calling people to church.
- ✚ Point out the pulpit, altar, lectern, organ, etc. Explain how they are used.
- ✚ Look for colours and symbols in windows, banners and pictures. Explain that all these things remind us of God's love and care. Help them see what colour it is for this Sunday.
- ✚ Count all the crosses in the church. Tell your child that crosses remind us of Jesus.
- ✚ Talk about the people who help during the service and the jobs they do eg Priest, Deacon, sidespersons, organist, choir
- ✚ Say a simple prayer with your child. Eg "Loving God help us to listen to you and to tell you how much we love you. Amen."

### DURING WORSHIP

- ✚ Try to be consistent in what you expect of your child during the service.
- ✚ Allow your child to sit comfortably.
- ✚ Don't worry if your child wriggles; adults wriggle too!
- ✚ Your child will be watching and modelling your actions. Try to relax and enjoy yourself.
- ✚ Be gentle and forgiving towards your child.
- ✚ Listen with your child for a key word, such as 'Amen'
- ✚ Briefly explain what is happening as the service progresses - eg saying sorry, listening to the Bible, taking the bread and wine.
- ✚ Encourage your child to join in the worship. Hold the hymn book together. Fold your hands for the prayers. Stand and sit at the appropriate times. Perhaps your child can then teach their doll or teddy what to do.

- ✚ For those who are not confirmed, please come to the altar for a blessing. Bring your hymn book so the Priest knows you'd like to be blessed.

### AFTER WORSHIP

- ✚ Investigate the baptismal font, lectern, pulpit, organ, communion rail etc. Explain simply, how and why each is used.
- ✚ Greet those who led the service, at the door. Encourage your child to say hello and shake hands.
- ✚ Share juice and coffee in the Annexe after the service - usually homemade cake!
- ✚ Talk about the service by mentioning things that you particularly enjoyed (singing, prayers, communion etc) or something that happened during the service.
- ✚ Sing a hymn or song together.

### DURING THE WEEK

- ✚ Say simple prayers together, before meals, playgroup/school, or at bedtime
- ✚ Play church at home
- ✚ Buy or borrow a 'toddler's' or 'beginner's' Bible to read at home.
- ✚ Speak positively about worship. Make 'going to church' a special event.
- ✚ With your child, put aside a small amount of money for the offering. Explain that it is a gift for the work of the church.



## WORSHIP IN CHURCH IS.....

### GATHERING

God calls us to meet together

- ✚ Joining in songs of praise
- ✚ Praying for ourselves and others
- ✚ Saying sorry and hearing that God forgives us

### REMEMBERING

God speaks and we listen through

- ✚ Reading the Bible
- ✚ Hearing the sermon
- ✚ Saying the creed - what Christians believe

### CELEBRATING

Jesus invites us to eat and drink in the uniquely Christian celebration of the Eucharist (means 'thanksgiving').

- ✚ Proclaiming that Jesus has died, is risen, and will come again
- ✚ Sharing the special bread and wine as a sign of our sharing with God and with each other

### SENDING

The Holy Spirit nurtures and enables us to go out into our world

- ✚ Loving our neighbours as ourselves
- ✚ Offering the gift of God to others

## THE CHURCH YEAR

The church's year is made of different seasons, special days, holy days and saints' days. Seasons and special days are marked by the use of different colours for altar hangings and clergy dress. The four standard colours are white, purple, green and red and are known as liturgical colours. On very special days we use gold.

**ADVENT** is the time of *waiting* before Christmas.

Colour **Purple**

**CHRISTMAS** celebrates the birth of Jesus. God's *gift* to the world. Colour **white** or **gold**.

**EPIPHANY** is the time when the church thinks about the glory of Jesus. Colour **white** or **gold**.

**LENT** is the six and a half weeks before Easter beginning with Ash Wednesday. Colour **Purple**

**EASTER** is the joyful celebration of the day that Jesus rose from the dead. Colour **white** or **gold**.

**PENTECOST** celebrates the day on which the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus' followers. Colour **red/green**



**Church4U**

[www.stmichaelseasthampstead.org.uk](http://www.stmichaelseasthampstead.org.uk)

# St Michael & St Mary Magdalene



## A survivor's guide to children in church