

Trinity Presbyterian Church Young Worshipper in Training Policy

Trinity Presbyterian Church (TPC) provides **Young Worshipper in Training (YWIT)** twice a month during a *portion* of the worship service. While many churches offer a separate service for children during the entire worship service each week, we want our children to join their families in the worship service routinely. This document outlines worship principles, the purpose of YWIT, the expectation for participating families, and YWIT logistics.

Children in Worship

The PCA Book of Church Order (BCO) says in 47-7: "...in public worship God is served by His saints unitedly as His covenant people, the Body of Christ. For this reason the covenant children should be present so far as possible as well as adults." In 49-4, it says: "Since the family, as ordained by God, is the basic institution in society, and God in the Covenant graciously deals with us, not just as individuals but also as families, it is important and desirable that families worship together." Therefore, we intend for children to attend a portion of the worship service with their families *every* week and for children to attend the *entire* worship service routinely. Thus, YWIT is offered only twice each month.

On weeks when YWIT is offered, children will be dismissed during the pastoral prayer. They will return at the conclusion of the sermon, prior to communion. This ensures that children are present for scripture readings, hymns, prayer, confessing the faith, observing the Sacraments, and occasional taking of oaths, all of which the BCO prescribes as proper elements of worship (47-9). BCO 47-9 also includes as essential elements the preaching of the Word and offerings, neither of which YWIT attendees will experience with their families. While YWIT sessions include an offering, they do not include preaching, underscoring why we feel that children should be present for the sermon with regularity.

The Purpose of YWIT

The primary purpose of YWIT is to train children to worship well and understand our liturgical practices. While children benefit from worshipping alongside their parents, YWIT provides an opportunity to engage children with tailored material that increases their understanding of our spiritual practices. The YWIT liturgy mirrors the adult service, including an offering, children's hymns, Scripture memorization, a catechism, and a Bible lesson. YWIT volunteers lead children through this material, teaching them what these activities signify and why we do them.

YWIT also provides an opportunity to engage our children in a manner that increases multi-generational interaction. Members who teach YWIT are helping raise the next generation of Christians in accordance with their membership vows, and for some, this is an excellent introduction to spiritual instruction or a model for family worship with children.

Expectations of Participating Families

Families are *not* required to use YWIT. We do not view children as a nuisance in the service, nor is YWIT designed as a place to exile disruptive children. On the contrary, we value children (even infants) participating simply by being exposed to corporate worship with their families. Eventually, we hope children will actively participate in our worship practices, listening attentively (as age appropriate) during the service. We believe that routinely seeing parents listen and worship during the service is essential to achieving this. While YWIT can help with this instruction, parents are ultimately responsible for training their children in worship. To that end, we hope parents will ask their children about the YWIT lesson, discuss the sermon, and remind children how both the worship service and YWIT are designed to worship God.

Logistics

YWIT is currently offered on the first and third Sundays of each month. YWIT is intended for children at least 3 years old but not yet 6. As the pastoral prayer begins, parents should quietly escort their children to the 4 year old – 1st grade Sunday School classroom. YWIT volunteers will return the children to the sanctuary at the sermon's conclusion. Parents should remind their children to find their seats quietly.

Because YWIT volunteers do not hear the sermon, they cannot participate in communion. Therefore, the Children's Ministry Administrator should ensure volunteers serve in YWIT only once per month. YWIT staff shall not exceed two adults and one teenager.