

Guidelines for Family Worship at Way of the Lord

There are three distinct hallmarks that influence our worship times here at Way of the Lord. In other words, this is **the heart behind what we do**.

CORE VALUES in FAMILY WORSHIP

- 1) **FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION.** We want to foster an atmosphere where there is freedom for both children and adults to creatively express their love for God in our praise and worship times. **2 Corinthians 3:17** says, *“Where the Spirit is, there is freedom.”*
- 2) **INTERGENERATIONAL ENGAGEMENT.** We want the older and mature believers to model Biblical worship for the younger. **Psalms 148:7, 12-13**, *“Praise the Lord... Young men and women alike, old and young together! Let them praise the name of the Lord!”*
- 3) **REVERENCE, RESPECT, & AWE.** We want to cultivate an atmosphere where both young and old experience and worship from a deep sense of awe, reverence, and respect for God. **Hebrews 12:28** says, *“Worship God with reverence and awe.”*

Here are a few *“freedom and respect promoting”* rules and guidelines for all of us present in our worship services:

RULE #1:

1. *Parents and/or guardians must accompany their children during worship. In other words, children need to be in close proximity to their parents/guardians during our worship times.*

RULE #2:

2. *Worshiping on the stage and waving bigger flags are allowed only if the child asks AND receives permission from their parent or guardian.*

GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS & THE CONGREGATION:

- We want to cultivate a **family atmosphere of freedom and respect** where children are joyfully and reverently allowed to express themselves in praise and worship **under the supervision of their parents, grandparents, and/or guardians**.
- We strongly desire and encourage **parental/guardian/congregational involvement** in our family worship times. We do not want adult spectators. We want to foster an environment where parents, grandparents, guardians, and everyone in the congregation **leads by example and worships *with* the children** here.
- We need to have **grace for the mistakes** that children make in our worship times. We do not expect perfect behavior from our children (or adults for that matter!) during our services. Love keeps no record of wrongs!
- If you see a child misbehaving, please 1) **give them grace**, 2) politely **redirect** their behavior to a more appropriate/Biblical one, 3) **please let the parents know**, and/or **direct the child to their parents**. However, if a child is about to accidentally hit another person with a flag, please intervene and stop the incident from happening!
- 99.77% of the time, **running is not allowed**. There will be certain times where the worship leader or a young person facilitates some orderly running.
- **FLAGS:**
 - No dragging, dropping, or running with the flags.
 - For younger children who cannot safely carry a big flag, **parents/guardians must accompany their child** as they handle, wave, and worship with the flag.
 - Please teach your children proper flag etiquette!
 - For *“flag trains,”* the flag carrier leading the group must be responsible, respectful, and mature in how they are guiding the others.
- **STAGE:**
 - **The main center stage/altar area is considered a “holy” space** and not to be used haphazardly or casually in our worship times.
 - Therefore, each child must ask for permission before going up on the stage to worship Jesus with either dancing, waving a flag, etc. **Use your discernment** as you **weigh the motives in your child’s heart** while also providing them an avenue to freely express their love for Jesus.
 - If you see your child acting inappropriately or irreverently, please take them off the stage and have a conversation with them, and/or **discipline them outside of the church service** when appropriate.