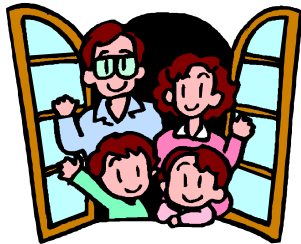


# Back to Church Sunday



## Back to Church Sunday – Don't Forget the Children!

What will happen if some families, including children, arrive for Back to Church Sunday? Will you be caught out because you hadn't expected them? Or will you be glad that you have made a few preparations?



Here is a checklist of things that you might like to consider. You may not manage them all, or you may have ideas of your own.

- Be ready to hand a hymnbook or service sheet to everyone who arrives, however small. Many children like to have their own copy even if they cannot read.
- Try to get down to the child's eye-level to say hello, rather than towering over them.
- Provide some clean soft toys (buy these cheaply in charity shops), and think about contacting the Mothers' Union to borrow a couple of storybags.
- If it is a Communion service, have some Communion Cubes to hand to children so they can follow what is happening. Otherwise coloured picturebooks of Bible stories would be good to hand out to under 7s.
- Don't forget to invite children to the communion rail for a blessing.
- Don't insist that visiting children go out with the other children to the Sunday Club. Be sensitive and give them the choice to stay or go.
- Look around the church for obvious safety hazards and see if any can be removed or reduced.
- If a baby cries and needs to be fed, is there a chair ready at the back of the church to be used?
- What will you do if a toddler decides to walk about during the service? Ignore them and hope their parent gathers them up quickly? Could a church member be ready to walk around alongside the toddler to ensure they do not get hurt?
- If you are providing tea and coffee for adults, think about fruit juice or good-quality lemonade for younger people. Many children don't drink cheap squash these days. Think about providing fun-size chocolate bars, a tube of Pringles or a bowl of Hula Hoops or crisps for them to eat.
- If you have a lavatory, is it clearly marked? Are there clean towels and even a tub of moist wipes?
- Encourage families to sit in the main body of the church so they can see what is happening and follow the lead of people around them.

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