

Welcome the Children

"Let the little children come to me ..." Matthew 19:14

Steve, Maria, and their two young children were new to the area and were looking for a church to call "home." After checking the Yellow Pages, they decided to visit First Church, a long-standing congregation not far from where they lived. Upon their arrival, they noticed several things about the congregation:

- There were not many people their age or their children's ages
- There was a nursery, but parents had to remain there with their children during worship as the nursery was not staffed.
- During the Fellowship Hour after worship, there were no refreshment choices for their children. Hot tea and coffee were the only available beverage choices.
- Except for the nursery, there was no age-appropriate furniture anywhere in the building.
- There were no "kid-friendly" activities and/or resources during worship, e.g. children's sermon; children's choir; children's bulletins; or children's activity packs.

Without saying a word, it was obvious to visitors that children were not welcome here.

Questions to Ponder

- 1. What arrangements does your congregation make to "welcome the stranger"?*
- 2. What "unspoken messages" do those who visit your congregation "receive"?*
- 3. How has your congregation addressed any of the issues noticed by Steve and Maria? What else might your congregation do to address these issues?*



Writer: Robert Dealey

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E-Tips, Division for Congregational Ministries - Evangelism.

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