



*faith* PATH

**LEARNING** *our*  
**LITURGY**

# LEARNING OUR LITURGY

*Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name;  
worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness.*

Psalm 29:2

For us as Episcopalians, we pray not only with our words, but also with our bodies. We believe that human beings are “enfleshed spirits”, and that our bodies as well as our hearts and minds can and should express worship to God. This is something that your five-year-old will understand instinctively. And he or she can begin to be taught—by you!—how to worship in our services. These “body prayers” are historically called “manual acts of devotion”. Kids love learning by doing! We recommend that you teach them each of the following acts of devotion:

## THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

Touch your forehead, breast and shoulders in this order: up-down-left-right-center. The five points remind us of the five wounds of Christ on the cross. As we do this, we acknowledge ourselves to be united with Christ in our thinking (head), our affections/feelings (heart), and our actions (shoulders).

## KNEELING

Kneeling is a traditional posture for prayer. It is a physical sign of how small and humble we are before the grandeur of the Almighty God. James 4:6 says, “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

## STANDING

We stand at certain solemn moments in the service, such as the reading of the Gospel. If your child is busy coloring or doing something else, tap them on the shoulder and have them stand. Now that they are five years old, they are old enough to join the congregation in its liturgical actions.

## **NOD OF THE HEAD**

This action is done primarily when the Name of Jesus is spoken in the liturgy. Philippians 2:10 says, “At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth.”

## **BOWING**

Bowing is made with a nod of the head and a slight bending at the waist. This is done when the Blessed Trinity is being directly addressed in praise (“Glory to the Father...” or “Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost”), and when important objects pass your pew in procession, such as the cross and the Gospel book.

## **GENUFLECTION**

A genuflection is made with the right knee touching the floor. This is usually done when entering or exiting the pew, facing the altar. This is done to show respect for Jesus’ Body and Blood, which are reserved in the aumbry to the left of the altar on the wall. There is a candle that is lit near the aumbry whenever the Sacraments are inside it. You can point it out to your child when you come forward to receive Communion.

If you aren’t used to these acts of devotion, watch the people around you for cues to help you learn the correct timing for each one.

# INTENTIONAL FAITHPATH PLAN

CHILD'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_

*How will you be intentional this next year?*

- Pray daily for and with my child.
- Attend church regularly.
- Schedule and have regular family times.
- Create a habit of worship with my child, teaching them “why we do what we do”.
- \_\_\_\_\_

The next step on the FaithPath is *Bible*, recommended at age six. You will receive an email in the month of your child's birthday, and the resource will be available for you with your child's name on it at the Bringing Faith Home Center, right outside the Incarnation Bookstore.

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

- *The Liturgy Explained*, by Thomas Howard.
- *Teaching Kids Authentic Worship*, by Kathleen Chapman.
- *An Introduction to the Liturgical Year*, by Inos Biffi is written for grade-school aged children, summary of the seasons of the church calendar.
- *Parenting in the Pew: Guiding Your Children into the Joy of Worship*, by Robbie F. Castleman.

If you or your child ever have further questions about “why we do what we do,” please don't hesitate to email a priest and ask them. Contact info for clergy is found at [incarnation.org/about/clergy-staff-vestry](http://incarnation.org/about/clergy-staff-vestry).

### INCARNATION'S CHILDREN & FAMILY MINISTRY

Bringing Faith Home: [incarnation.org/bringing-faith-home](http://incarnation.org/bringing-faith-home)

Children & Family Ministry: [incarnation.org/grow/children](http://incarnation.org/grow/children)