



## NIGHT OF PRAYER AND WORSHIP

### **I have kids. Will there be something for them to do? YES!**

- Nursery will be available for children aged 2 and under. You will check in the same way that you do for weekend services.
- Preschool kids (3- to 5-year-olds who are potty-trained and not yet in kindergarten) will have prayer-focused activities and worship. A light snack will be provided. You will check in as at weekend services.
- For elementary aged kids, we will not be providing any programming, but your kids can participate in the Night of Prayer and Worship with you. Your whole family is encouraged to worship and pray together.

**What will the format be?** The service will last 90 minutes, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Worship through music will be interspersed with times of guided prayer. The tips below will help you think about how to best participate with your whole family.

### **Why you should attend as a family:**

You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:5–9 ESV)

There are some church experiences that your kids will only have by your side. Praying and worshiping together with the family of God is an invaluable opportunity for young disciples to grow in awe of God and develop deeper, stronger faith in his goodness. They may not relish every moment or behave in the

way you hope the first time, but bringing them with you as you participate as a member of the body allows them to see God at work in your life and in the lives of other adults.

### **How to prepare:**

- 1) Talk with your kids about what is going to happen.

Before you attend, explain to kids that we are going to meet together on a special night to pray as a church. There will be times of singing praises when they can stand and worship together with everyone, and there will be times of praying when they will need to focus on talking with God, along with short times when they need to listen quietly to a Scripture reading or other talking from the stage. Remind them that we can **love each other** by being still and quiet when it's time to listen and that we can **love God** by worshiping and praying when those times come (this is a familiar concept from Summit Kids!).

- 2) Consider planning to participate with friends.

Sometimes, as parents, we can allow stress to creep in because we're worried about our children's behavior during a service. Making plans to attend with friends and welcoming them to engage with our kids during the service can take some of this pressure off. It allows your kids to see other people they love in worship, and it can help move your focus from parent to disciple-maker.

- 3) Choose your seating carefully.

Will your seating provide a clear view of the stage or make restroom visits easy? You know your kids. Would sitting near the front hold their attention better? Should kids be separated by adults during the service?

### **How to engage**

- Ways to include kids during the service
  - First and foremost, model good participation. Shift your focus from telling to showing.
  - Invite kids to pray along with adults. Whisper prompts to help them if needed.

- Turn prayer prompts into simple questions for kids to answer so that they can connect to what is being prayed.
- Quietly narrate what is happening so that kids are better able to participate and anticipate what is coming.
- How to manage restlessness and short attention spans
  - When kids get antsy, gently repeat quiet phrases you have predetermined, such as “We love others by keeping our bodies still.”
  - If needed, take a quick break. Let kids stretch their legs and move their bodies, as is their natural inclination. Three minutes in the lobby may make the next half hour go more smoothly.

## What if ...

- **I have a baby who can't participate?**
  - We have calming rooms available at each campus as well as nursery volunteers who are eager to serve your family. Talk to your Summit Kids staff to determine the best fit.
- **my kid doesn't cooperate?**
  - It's OK to take a break. Walk out for water. Let your child jump up and down for one minute in the lobby to get their wiggles out. Take a walk and take 10 deep breaths together before trying again. If your child is not accustomed to participating in corporate worship, this will be a big change for them. It may take time for them to learn how to participate in this setting, but the effort is worthwhile!
- **my kids fall asleep during the service?**
  - Let them sleep! No one minds. If you need to leave early, feel free to do so, knowing that God loves and cares for you and your child.
- **this feels impossible?**
  - Reach out to your Summit Kids staff. We are ready and happy to help you.