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# All God's Children!

*Let the children come to me! Jesus*

Jesus tells us that we must become like children, if we are to enter the kingdom of God. Ridgebury Congregational Church cherishes children of all ages *and* celebrates that we are all God's children!

Here at the Meetinghouse, we are committed to growing as a body of believers who are shaped by God's Word. Together, we seek to respond to God's call in our lives, individually and collectively.

We believe our faith is formed in worship. Our commitment, therefore, is to the full inclusion of children in worship enriches the experience for all. With them, we learn by participation.



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## Children & Worship in the Meetinghouse

Serving at the crossroads since 1760.



## The Meetinghouse

Ridgebury Congregational Church  
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[www.RidgeburyCongregationalChurch.org](http://www.RidgeburyCongregationalChurch.org)

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## The Why?

Back in the early 2000s, after studying the spiritual formation of children, Ridgebury Congregational Church made the commitment to fully include children in worship. It is our conviction (along with the Lily Endowment and those who study the spiritual formation of children and youth) that Christian formation is a lifelong process, for both children and adults. It is a journey by which the Holy Spirit serves as teacher and guide, deepening our relationship with God, and transforming us into Christ-likeness (see Romans 8:27-29, 12:1-12; Mark 12:28-31; II Corinthians 3:17-18).

While children might not fully understand, they have a sharp understanding of what it means to be left out. We never want any member of God's family to feel left out, whatever their age. Does this mean that we don't provide guidance or boundaries or model respectful behavior? Of course not! It means that we love children of all ages and try to model behavior that is life-giving.

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## At the Table...

The United Church of Christ welcomes all baptized Christians, whatever their age, to the table. Communion, a visible sign of God's love in Jesus Christ, is a central act of worship.

By participating in communion, a child experiences being accepted into the community of believers. Gathering around the Table, a central symbol of God's grace, children are nurtured and strengthened. Through the repeated gathering to be fed at the Table, we grow in our relationship with God and one another.



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## Steps for Engaging

Some steps for more fully engaging children in worship include:

**Telling the stories...** Exploring the stories of Faith that we hear in worship can help children link the Living Word to their daily lives. It can be fun, as well as formational.

**Invite and welcome into full participation...** Whatever our age, we learn by doing. Participating in the singing, the praying, the hearing, the giving, and the responding allows the experience to take hold of us, child and adult alike.

**Show by example...** the importance of participating in worship regularly. Talk about its meaning to you and why you attend.

**Express God's love for Others...** by engaging in acts of caring and service to others at home, school, work, be it the community in which you live or across the globe.