



Bringing Children to Eucharistic Adoration

When Jesus said, “Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them” (Matthew 19:14), did he have Eucharistic adoration in mind? Any parent who has sat through a holy hour (or even a holy half-hour) with a young child might have his doubts. While helping a child benefit from time before the Blessed Sacrament may seem daunting at first, its rewards can be great for both parent and child. But how can a parent help?

First—and perhaps most difficultly—demonstrate and teach how to sit still in silence. Silence and stillness, as most of us can attest, are in short supply these days. St. John Paul II once encouraged the Church to start “a specific education in silence.” Silence and stillness are not simply the absence of noise and activity: rather, they create a space for God to fill. Adoration may be the only place throughout the week where silence and stillness exist—even for a child.

Second, and after entering the silence that adoration affords, demonstrate how to talk to God. God has never simply wanted to monologue with his people, but he desires a heart-to-heart dialogue with them. Indeed, the words or sentiments offered to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament spring not only from the mind but also (and perhaps more so) from the heart. In openness and sincerity, we can say anything to Jesus. In that classic book on contemplative prayer, *Conversations with Christ*, the author recounts the words to Jesus of one young girl after her first holy Communion. What did she say? “I prayed to Our Lord for Mommy and Daddy, and for my sister Helen, and my brother George; and then I recited the alphabet to Our Lord and told him a ghost story.” Jesus doesn’t need a treatise, but the words of a child’s heart.

Finally, as much as we parents demonstrate how to be still, silent, and talk to Jesus, we should expect to learn a thing or two from our children at adoration. “The kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these,” that is, the children (Matthew 19:14). While there may be a good amount of “sit still,” “be quiet,” and “face forward” at adoration, we shouldn’t underestimate the potential of a child’s prayer and presence. Indeed, all the lessons we might give kids are equally applicable to us. Father Peyton, the “Rosary Priest,” was fond of saying that “The family that prays together, stays together.” If this maxim is true of the family Rosary, it is especially true of a family praying at adoration.

Questions for reflection:

1. Do I, as a parent, know how to be still and silent? How can I demonstrate such to my child?
2. How do I talk to Jesus? If I were to give an example to my child, what would it be?
3. Have I ever learned anything from witnessing my child at prayer? If, as Jesus says, children are especially suited for the kingdom of God, what should I see in them?

Ideas:

1. Do not be afraid! Try bringing children to adoration, at least in short periods.
2. Talk about ahead of time what adoration “looks like”—what to do, how to listen etc. While God can and does work as he wants, beginning with some direction between Christ, the parent, and the child may help.
3. Talk with your child after adoration: How did it go? What did you say? What did Jesus say to you? And answer these same questions for the child.