

“Rambunctious Kids in Church”

Dear Antwort Mann,

**My husband and I are parents of lively, rambunctious young children. We try to bring them regularly to church and Sunday School, and their behavior is improving as they get older. But another mother with children around the same ages rarely misses an opportunity to make negative comments about my kids’ behavior. Those comments are hurtful and discouraging, and make me want to avoid coming to church altogether. What should I do?**

**Signed, “Help!”**

Dear “Help!,”

First of all: God bless you and your husband for caring enough to bring your kids to church in spite of the challenges. Though your children may be rambunctious at times, you would be surprised at how much of the liturgy and hymns they are absorbing, along with the profoundly positive impression that you and your husband are making on them by coming to church together. You are helping your kids’ faith, and their long term relationship with the church to grow more than you can know.

Understand, though, that the devil does not want your kids exposed to God’s Word, and he will even work through fellow Christians to discourage you, whether by a glare from an older member whose hearing aids squeal when the kids make a loud noise, or by some young mother’s snide comments. Anything the “Old Serpent” can do to keep you and your kids away is to his benefit and your loss.

Not knowing what your relationship is, if any, with this other mother outside of church, it’s hard for me to know what may be behind her comments to you. In some cases, people say things to be helpful but, because a parent is already nervous and embarrassed by any misbehavior of their kids in church, even helpful comments can be interpreted as criticisms. Since I don’t know that to be the case here, my advice below is given with the assumption that your view of her comments is accurate.

Keep bringing your kids to church anyway, even if you have to attend a different Service to avoid these potential comments. Don’t give in to the temptation to do a “Gotcha!” should one of her kids happen to act up at some point (and they probably will). Depending on your relationship with this mother (are you otherwise friends?), perhaps you should take her aside after church is over and privately – *Not confrontationally!* – ask her why she is making these comments. See if she really means to hurt you, or if she understands that her comments are discouraging you from coming to church. If the situation doesn’t improve between the two of you, then get your pastor involved. He would definitely want to have a talk with anyone who, by their words or actions, is making young parents and their children feel unwelcome at church.

As hard as it may be for you right now, pray for that mother and her children. Perhaps things are not as rosy for her as it may appear, and her hurtful comments may betray more about her own fears, uncertainties and, perhaps, even jealousies. When your kids are becoming a little too much to handle, especially when you’re alone with them at church, don’t be afraid to ask for help. I’m sure there are some ladies who would gladly pitch in if asked. That takes some

honesty and humility to admit you need help, but it will make things much easier on you. Also, for those times when a child is in full meltdown, you can always take them into the nursery for a few minutes and still watch the Service on the wall monitor.

In closing: Thank you, again, for faithfully bringing your kids to church. We want them here, and we need them here. Remember, there are many more in church who are *for* you (especially Jesus) than there are against you.

**Note to Everyone:** If you were a member of Der Antwort Mann's congregation, and he found out you were saying or doing things to discourage young parents and their children from attending church, you would not only get "The Hairy Eyeball" from him, but also a severe tongue lashing! Hopefully, your pastor would do the same.

*"They were bringing young children to Jesus to have Him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, He was indignant and said to them, 'Let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.'"*  
*Mark 10:13-14*

Best Regards,  
Der Antwort Mann