

Going to Church: A Guide for Children with Autism



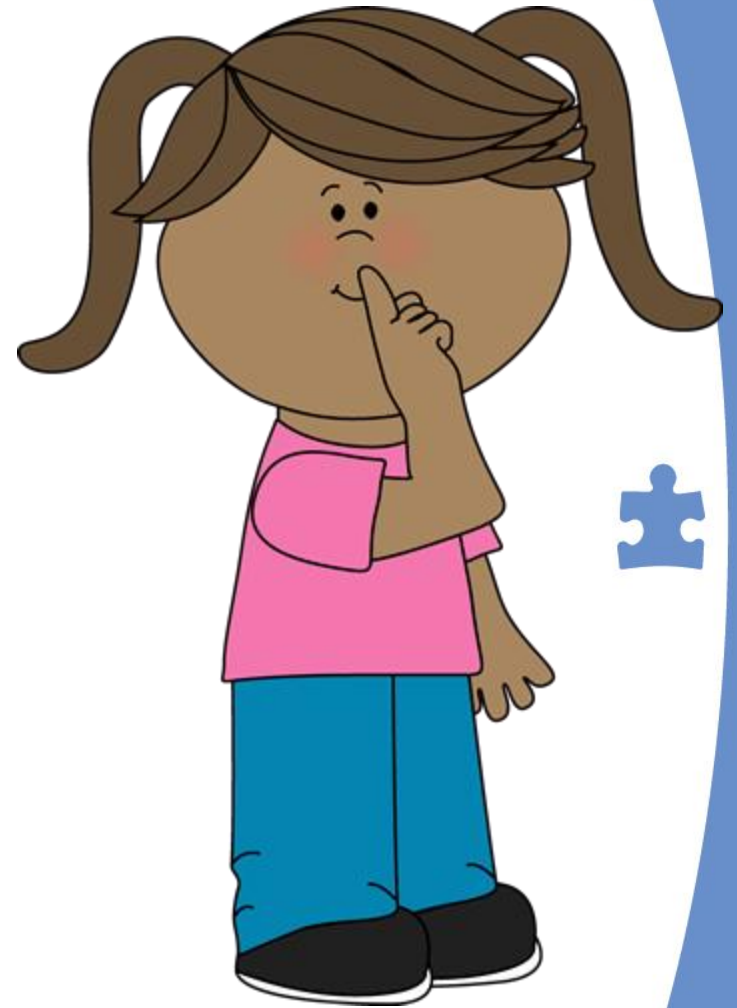


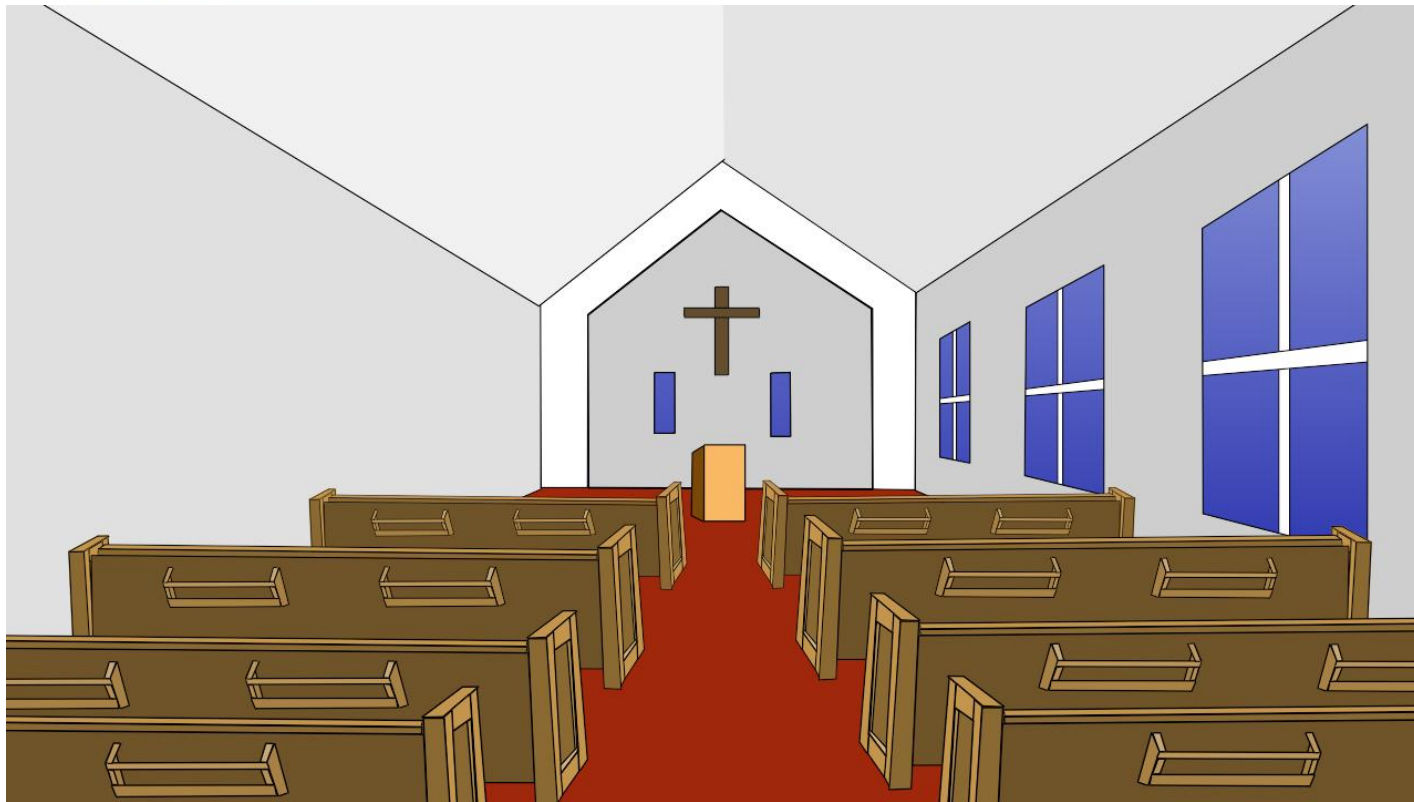
Trips to church are very special times for families.

Going to church is a great chance to come together to think, pray, thank God, and listen to prayers and other inspiring speeches.



When you enter a church with your family, it is very important to be quiet so that everyone is able to focus on their thoughts and prayers and can hear the priest speaking.





In churches, there is usually a big aisle in the middle that divides the room into 2 sets of rows for us to sit at. These rows are called pews.

When you get there, it is important to walk quietly with your family and friends to take your seat.

Usually the ceilings in church are very high, much higher than at home.

There are also usually very beautiful windows that have pictures in them. These are called stained-glass windows.

Sometimes there are lots of pretty candles!



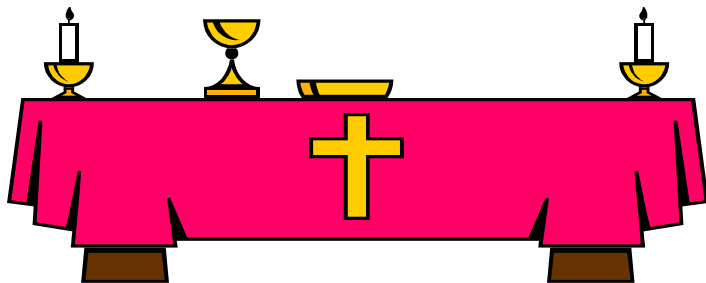


The man who speaks during church is called a priest. Priests usually wear white robes.

Priests are very nice. They say prayers during the mass. Sometimes we are invited to say the prayers with them, like the “Our Father” prayer.



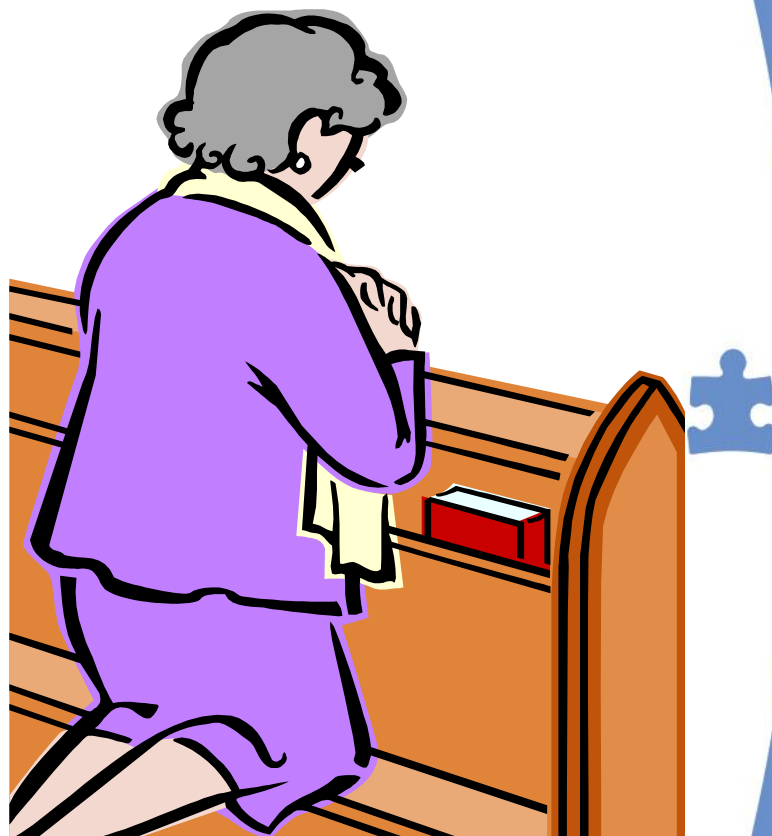
It might be nice to go with your mom or dad to meet him before or after church. That way you can go and say hi to him on all of your trips to church!



The place where the priest stands is called the altar.

At different times during the mass, you will have to stand, sit and kneel.

Sometimes your priest will tell you when it's time to change positions, but when he doesn't, you can just watch your parents or your friends to see when it is time.





There is lots of singing in church. It can be fun to sing songs with your family and friends, but it is okay if you don't want to.



Usually, church music is very soft, and songs are only a few minutes long.

Sometimes bells play inside and outside of church too!

There is a part of mass called “the Sign of the Peace,” when the priest says “Let us now offer each other the sign of peace.”



After this, we shake hands with the people around our seats and say, “Peace be with you.” This symbolizes sharing God’s love and peace with the people in our church family.



It is okay if you don’t want to shake hands with people. You can just smile or wave.



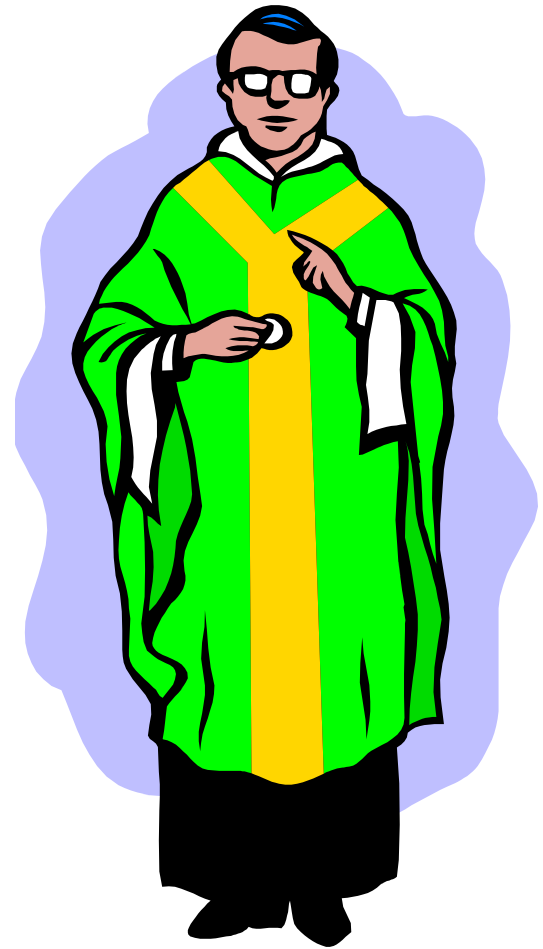
There is a part of mass called Communion. During Communion, the priest blesses and then hands out little pieces of bread called “hosts” and wine.

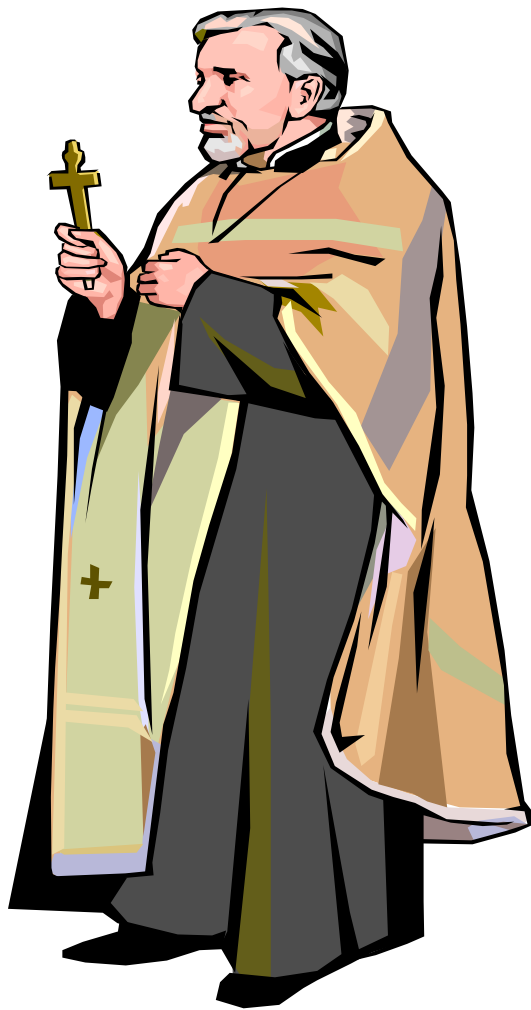


This bread and wine is sometimes called “the Body and Blood of Jesus.” They remind us that Jesus loves us and died for us.

If you don't want to go to Communion or you haven't had your First Communion yet, you are welcome to go up with your parents and get a special blessing from the priest!

It is okay if you want to stay in your seat, too.





When the priest is done saying prayers, a song will play called a “recessional.” During the recessional, the priest will walk down the aisle out of the church, sometimes with other priests or altar servers.



After the priest
leaves and the
song ends, mass
is officially over.

It is time to go
home!

