Tips for Christmas Mass with kids

It’s almost Christmas! Are you excited?

Depending on when you attend Christmas Mass and whether you travel, you may be facing a whole different set of challenges.

Here are a few tips for Christmas Mass with kids, based on my experience:

1. Arrive early.

Back when it was just my husband and I and a child or mother-in-law, it was easy to slip into wherever we could. Now that we fill a pew by ourselves, those days are gone – at least, they are if we want to sit together. Christmas Mass is always full (and I’m glad for it!), so it’s important to get there early.

2. Dress nicely, but don’t stress about it.

It’s Christmas, the one Mass of the year when I will be guaranteed to be wearing either a dress or heels or, some years, both. I also make a big deal out of having special outfits on all the kids. We’re welcoming the Baby Jesus, and it’s important, and our clothes say that.

That said, when the toddler won’t leave without his Paw Patrol socks or insists on her favorite My Little Pony sneakers, there are times to concede.

3. Sit strategically.

This is actually a multi-layered tip, because I’ve found that it means you need to:

- Have an exit route. (*Someone* is going to have to go out, and you don’t want to have to climb over an army of

other people to make that happen.)
- Be near the front. (When the smallest can’t see, they find things to do and entertain themselves.)
- Have flexibility, because there are always people slipping in late and you still want to welcome them.

Sometimes, you get to sit where you sit (and you can’t throw a fit). Other times, you can control it. Do what you can do, and make the best of it.

4. Don’t be tempted to take a lot of “extra.”

Whether it’s toys or snacks, Christmas Mass is crowded enough without a lot of extra baggage. Let the kids eat on the way to Mass (oh those nice outfits!) and right before you leave. Make sure they know that this is very special. Give them things to watch for and have them listen for special words.

5. Smile! It’s Christmas!

For some people (the vast majority, if the statistics are right), this is the only Mass they’ll attend all year. We’re celebrating! We’re glad to be there! So let that joy and gladness come through, even if you find it difficult.

The children you’re with are making someone else smile, I promise you.

And don’t forget, now you’re IN the Christmas season … feast time!