Welcome the Children

“Let the little children come to me …” Matthew 19:14

Steve, Maria, and their two young children were new to the area and were looking for a church to call “home.” After checking the Yellow Pages, they decided to visit First Church, a long-standing congregation not far from where they lived. Upon their arrival, they noticed several things about the congregation:

- There were not many people their age or their children’s ages
- There was a nursery, but parents had to remain there with their children during worship as the nursery was not staffed.
- During the Fellowship Hour after worship, there were no refreshment choices for their children. Hot tea and coffee were the only available beverage choices.
- Except for the nursery, there was no age-appropriate furniture anywhere in the building.
- There were no “kid-friendly” activities and/or resources during worship, e.g. children’s sermon; children’s choir; children’s bulletins; or children’s activity packs.

Without saying a word, it was obvious to visitors that children were not welcome here.

Questions to Ponder

1. What arrangements does your congregation make to “welcome the stranger”?

2. What “unspoken messages” do those who visit your congregation “receive”?

3. How has your congregation addressed any of the issues noticed by Steve and Maria? What else might your congregation do to address these issues?
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