

A Christmas Carol (Service with a Toddler)

Christmas carol service at the church with a toddler: Day 1 (Luckily I have a friend who felt the same pain...sorry Anna Loxton!)

It went something like this...

1) Get to the church 2 minutes before it starts so everyone stares at you coming in.

2) Get directed by a nice old lady to park the push chair up in a side room to which I reply "can I leave the toddler in there too?" – which was met with a look of utter horror and confusion and potentially left her reaching for the phone so she could call social services. I'm not even joking. I quickly reassured her by saying "I'm only joking! Hahaha! I was joking!" But she really didn't find it very funny. (Note to self: Do not joke about leaving your child on its own with an elderly church going helper).

3) Sit at the side of the church, at the back, and make a note of all escape routes should shi\$ begin to go down with the toddler.

4) Within 30 seconds, Shi\$ starts going down with the toddler. He's running off down the aisles, he's making aeroplane noises and has become an expert in vocal projection of the word "no!!"

5) Friend tries to distract the toddlers with food. Good ploy. Only problem is plastic biscuit wrappers are the noisiest thing known to man when trying to open them in a quiet church service...other than a toddler shouting "no!" that is.

6) Toddler tried to make a run for it across the church so I scoop him up which results in a jelly mode tantrum (where they literally feel like they're melting and you can't get a grip on them) coupled with screaming and face clawing.

7) I see a member of church staff looking at me and gesturing towards a door. Upon looking, the door said toilets. Joy. In we go just to shut the crazed toddler off from the rest of the congregation.

8) After being stuck in the toilets for 5/6 minutes, a nice old lady appears via another door and releases us into a room

with some toys and a sofa. Hallelujah! A sanctuary of plastic crap and safety.

9) We stick it out for a while in the plastic toy sanctuary but he's also had enough of it in there and begins to go into plank mode (one of those 'I'm going rigid' tantrums) and I realise I can't leave as I left my handbag in the church. Arses.

10) After 10 minutes, my friend appears with her toddler looking equally as traumatised as I do.

"Well this was worth it" she says, and I couldn't agree more.

11) I watch the toddlers whilst the bags are retrieved by my friend and we pack the tearaway toddlers up and leave with the Christmas service still going on.

So, in conclusion, I'd say it went pretty much how I expected it to go.

Badly.

Our poor 7 year olds who we went to see didn't see didn't see us at all, but I'm 99% certain they heard us. They are probably now very cross they didn't have their mummies stay and watch and ask mortifyingly embarrassed that their little siblings caused such a kerfuffle.

I don't think I'm going to attempt carol service number 2 tomorrow.

My nerves can't take it and apparently it's frowned upon to take Gin into church...bugger.