

Analysis of "why i make sam go to church" essay sample

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Chances are if you grew up in the south, then you most likely have been to a church service before. I remember as a kid getting the wakeup call every Sunday morning from my mom, “ Get up and get dressed for church!” Even if I did not feel like going, she would drag me out of bed and make me go.

Anne Lamott writes about the same thing in her essay “ Why I Make Sam Go to Church.” Lamott wrote “ Why I Make Sam Go to Church” in 1999 as part of a collection of autobiographical essays in a book called *Traveling Mercies*. My main reaction to this work was a positive one. I thought the essay was eye opening in a sense and it shows that everyone needs guidance and help from others sometimes. In Lamott’s short story, *Why I Make Sam Go to Church*, she talks about the influence the church had on her life while going through single motherhood and raising her son.

Of course she talks about the reasons she makes Sam go to church, it’s in the title, but she also talks about how regularly going to church has positively affected her and her son. Also how the other members of the congregation took her in as one of them without judging and basically supported her. Sam opposes his mother most likely because he is a child and like other children he just wants to do what he wants to do. Lamott even says “ What young boy would rather be in church on the weekends than hanging out with a friend?” (Lamott 99) The main purpose for making Sam be present at church is said on page 100 “ The main reason is to give him what I found in the world, which is to say a path and a little light to see by.”

(Lamott 100) It isn't hard to see here that Lamott just wants the best for her son and wants him to have what she grasped from the church.

There are many supplementary reasons for requiring Sam attend church. These include not only the emotional support but also the financial support given to Lamott by the congregation. The financial support subsided after Anne got on her feet but there was one old little lady, Mary Williams, that continued to give bags of dimes to her even as she is doing better money-wise. Mary Williams was another reason not only because of the money but also because she loved to see Sam and would give him a big hug and smell him behind his ears every time she saw him. Lamott also talks about a sense of stability and belonging to the church. She says " The church became my home in the old meaning of home—that it's where, when you show up, they have to let you in." (Lamott 100)

I believe she just wanted to be a part of something greater than herself, part of the bigger picture. Lamott just wanted her son to be around all of this positive influence. She references this positivity on page 100 " They [the congregation] follow a brighter light than the glimmer of their own candle; they are part of something beautiful." (Lamott 100) The organization of the passage is not necessarily in a chronological order but is still presented in an orderly manner. It is organized in order to keep the reader captivated and still be interesting within the body of the essay. Lamott most probably wrote this passage with intention for either her son to see, to influence other parents to get their children in church, or even for religious skeptics.

The style of this composition evokes a sort of spiritual feeling but is modern at the same time. Since the essay is written in first person, we get to see a small portion of Lamott's outlook on life. The key points she talks about are from her own understanding. Maybe the plot is going from being poor with no one to call a friend to being better off and actually having people that generally care about her. After reading " Why I Make Sam Go to Church" I got to thinking about it and I will most likely make my kids attend church regularly when I become a parent. When I was growing up, being in church every Sunday was the norm. Even though I haven't been in a while since I've come to college and I am nowhere near perfect, I believe my mom forcing me to go to church has helped to shape the person I am today. I would want the same for my kids.